

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall on 10 March 2026 commencing at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillor Stephen Bunney (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John Barrett
Councillor Eve Bennett
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Alison Adams
Alexio Chandiwana
Andrew Morriss

In Attendance:
Lisa Langdon Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Aaron Macdonald Client Manager RSM
Katy Allen Corporate Governance Officer
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor David Dobbie
Councillor Paul Swift

At the commencement of the meeting at 2.00pm the committee was not quorate. The meeting was adjourned at 2.02pm and resumed at 2.17pm when the quorum was achieved.

55 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

56 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2026 were approved as a correct record.

57 MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this juncture.

58 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The committee received a report outlining the Matters Arising identified at previous meetings.

With no further comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the position of previously agreed actions was **NOTED**.

The committee, at the request of the Chairman, agreed to take Agenda Item No. 6 c) – Partnership Report before Agenda Item No. 6 a).

59 PARTNERSHIP REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Governance Officer providing the Committee with updated details of the key strategic partnerships that the Council are involved in and associated costs.

A councillor referred to the Central Lincs Local Plan and asked whether those costs could be reduced. It was advised that there was a lead officer for each partnership and a response would be provided directly.

A member asked how value for money was assessed, whether an audit process was in place and how this could be reported. In response it was confirmed that more information would be gathered from April onwards to assess value for money. Details of individual partnership audits was included in the report but was also an issue for members to discuss in more detail.

The Chairman asked if there were any partnerships that needed to be added to the audit process. Members agreed further information was needed regarding the Central Lincs Local Plan and that the lead officer be invited to give more detail to the committee.

The committee highlighted that the amount of officer time spent on partnership working should be part of any audit process.

RESOLVED:

That the details provided of the key partnerships be noted and the Council approach to partnership working be noted.

60 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2026

A report was considered presenting the committee with the Internal Audit progress report for March 2026.

It was noted that all audits were on track to be completed on time in accordance with the timetable. Members welcomed the progress that had been made.

RESOLVED:

That the progress to date be noted and the content of the report be agreed.

61 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2026/27

The committee considered a report outlining the Internal Audit Plan for 2026-27 and seeking approval of the plan.

A councillor asked if there was any concern about complacency, whether it was considered to have become overly systemised and whether there was anything that wasn't on the plan that should be. In response it was confirmed that all opinions were considered carefully and if it was felt there were any gaps then these would be raised with members.

A member made reference to the partnership report considered earlier in the meeting and asked if it was possible to link the audit process to partnerships so there was a thread connecting them. In response it was agreed this could be done and this would be reported through the executive summaries for each audit.

A councillor noted there was no mention of Local Government Reorganisation in the risks and whether this needed to be included. It was clarified that the audits dealt with the current position and priorities so any changes would need to be considered as and when they happened and the plan changed as required.

It was highlighted by a councillor that it was important that when using consultants it was important that value for money was achieved and that the workload across departments needed to be monitored to ensure best use of workforce resources.

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Audit Plan for 2026-27 be approved

62 REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING ACTIVITY 2024-25

Consideration was given to a report providing the committee with an update of Whistleblowing incidents received in the Financial Year ended 31 March 2025.

Members noted there had been no incidents reported for the period.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be noted and the committee should continue to receive annual updates in relation to any incidents.

63 REVISED MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL

The committee received a report seeking consideration of the revised Member and Officer Protocol and seeking its recommendation for approval at the full Council meeting.

Members welcomed the document and requested that it was widely shared with members and officers so that it was fully understood by all. In response it was confirmed that political awareness training would be provided and once it was approved it would be widely promoted.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Member and Officer Protocol be **RECOMMENDED** to full Council for approval.

64 WORKPLAN

With no comments or further questions from members, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 3.32 pm.

Chairman