

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 16 April 2026 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
Councillor Paul Swift (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Baptiste Velan
Councillor Moira Westley
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan

Also Present: Councillor Stephen Bunney

In Attendance:

Peter Davy	Director Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)
Lisa Langdon	Assistant Chief Executive - Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Rachael Hughes	Assistant Chief Executive - Policy, Strategy and Performance
Veronica Edwards	Senior Homes, Health & Wellbeing Officer
Adam Newman-Pring	Healthy and Accessible Homes Lead
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Trevor Young

Membership: Councillor P Howitt-Cowan was appointed substitute for Councillor T Young

103 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

104 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S

The Chairman explained there were three sets of minutes, one for approving and two for noting.

Having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday, 12 February 2026 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

With no comments or questions, the minutes of the meetings of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 27 November 2025, and Thursday 3 March 2026, were **NOTED**.

105 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest as this point in the meeting.

106 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the position of previously agreed actions as at 8 April 2026, was **DULY NOTED**.

107 BUILDING SAFETY LEVY (BSL)

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Head of Policy and Strategy, seeking approval to spend the Building Safety Levy New Burdens Funding to develop and implement a compliant administration system. It was explained that the Building Safety Levy (BSL) was introduced by Section 58 of the Building Safety Act 2022, which amended the Building Act 1984 to give the Secretary of State powers to impose the charge. The BSL was a key component of the government's response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017.

Members heard that the government aimed to raise funding from applicable developments across the country to support the remedial works required to make a number of high-rise buildings safe for residents. The Council was required to have arrangements in place to calculate charges, apply exemptions, issue notices, collect payments, and provide accurate reporting and audit information to central government.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirmed on 27 January 2026 Building Safety Levy – New Burdens funding of £132,900, payable in 2026/2027. It was explained that the revenue costs of developing the system would be met through the BSL New Burdens funding. Members were presented with a selection of options, however, it was highlighted that by approving option two, that being to utilise Microsoft Power Platform and Dataverse, it was unlikely there would be any additional revenue costs usually associated with a new commercial system, as this would be covered under an existing professional services agreement with the Council.

The Committee heard that any additional costs, including licence fees, would be covered by the BSL administration fee which was calculated on a cost recovery basis and included officer time, software subscriptions and any other activities associated with the processing

and administering of the BSL. The initial expenditure was classified as revenue spend as the system was cloud based and a SAAS (software as a service) agreement. This meant, as with other cloud based systems, the Council would not retain ownership of the software and it was therefore not possible to capitalise the expenditure.

The Head of Policy and Strategy reiterated the request for approval to spend the Building Safety Levy New Burdens Funding to develop and implement a compliant administration system, and offered to answer questions from the Committee.

Members expressed their views on the introduction of the levy, whilst recognising there was a requirement on the Council for implementation. Concerns were raised regarding how the levy may impact the speed and extent of new developments in the district, and for ensuring cross-authority working partnerships were effective in the provision of housing.

In response, the Head of Policy and Strategy explained that in setting policy and whole plan viability for the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP), a buffer was included for costs over which authorities had no control of which this was a prime example. Members heard that the broader mitigation was the desire to review the CLLP, with the levy having been implemented, for the wider impact to be reviewed. Additionally, the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority was to develop a special policy for housing and development across the Greater Lincolnshire area, in which district and county partners were heavily involved.

Further comments from Members of the Committee reiterated Councillors' displeasure with the introduction of the levy, the use of a national framework rather than local to set charges, and asserting the opinion that it was seen as a retrograde step. The risk of losing small developers was seen as a real concern, with Members expressing the assumption that large scale developers would be able to absorb the increased costs whereas small developers would not be able to.

In response to a question regarding the costing of the different options contained within the report, it was explained that one option was to repeat the process used for CIL and S106 contributions, however that did not use a corporate system and relied on individual officer knowledge and expertise. An alternative option of specialist software would have limited options available, given the speed of the levy being introduced, and was considered impractical in the lead up to Local Government Reorganisation.

With concluding comments recognising the need to balance concerns raised with the reality of introducing the levy, as well as the necessity of avoiding any future events like the Grenfell fire, the paper was duly moved, seconded, and voted upon. It was

RESOLVED that the spending of £90,871 from the ring-fenced £132,900 New Burdens Funding Building Safety Levy be approved to implement a compliant administration system using Microsoft Power Platform and Dataverse.

108 GOOD HOMES ALLIANCE

The Committee heard from the Healthy and Accessible Homes Team Leader with a report regarding an update on the progress of the Good Homes Alliance work, and seeking

approval for funding for an extension of the project. Members also welcomed Mr Adam Newman-Pring, the Healthy and Accessible Homes Lead for Lincolnshire and the Lead for the Good Home Alliance Project. The report set out the key findings from the first year of operations, and the funding contributions required to continue the advice and casework pilot for a further 21 months from 1 July 2026, which was when the current pilot and funding period ended, to 31 March 2028.

The Chairman highlighted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a presentation from Mr Newman-Pring regarding the work of the alliance, and invited Councillor J McGhee, as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to put forward her comments. She reiterated the support from the Committee, and summarised their areas of attention, namely how to increase referral numbers in West Lindsey, options of best practice for retrofitting properties, and lobbying government for improved grant systems.

Members of the Committee enquired as to the proportionality of referrals from West Lindsey, to which it was explained that there had been targeted activity in the area to raise awareness and encourage referrals. Should the pilot be extended, this work would continue. In response to a question regarding measurable benefits of the scheme, it was explained that the commissioned report into the first year of activity had demonstrated sufficient benefit to prove value for money, however the final evaluation, including cost analysis, would not be completed until after 30 June 2026, the outcome of which would be presented in due course.

Members enquired as to where that outcome report would be presented, to which it was confirmed that any decision-making request would be referred through the relevant policy committee, with the option for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to also receive the evaluation report.

With Members reiterating their support for the scheme, and the Chairman issuing thanks to all involved, and Mr Newman-Pring for his time with the Committee, the recommendations within the report were duly moved and seconded. On taking the vote it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the positive impact of the Good Homes Alliance work to date be acknowledged; and
- b) it be agreed to fund the Good Homes Alliance for a further two years to 31 March 2028 to the sum of £33,871 from the Health and Wellbeing reserve.

109 RECOMMENDATION FROM JSCC: REVIEW OF THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND FINANCIAL CRIME PREVENTION POLICY

The Committee gave consideration to a report which stood recommended from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC). The Chairman invited Councillor P. Key, as Chairman of JSCC, to make comment. Councillor Key confirmed that the policy had been vigorously scrutinised by the JSCC and received full support, He recommended approval and adoption of the reviewed policy to the Committee.

Members heard that the report presented a revised policy which outlined the Council's

approach to preventing and responding to anti money laundering and now incorporated the prevention of financial crime. The previous Anti Money Laundering Policy had been in place for a number of years and, following an audit of the council's fraud policies and processes, a review of the existing policy was recommended, specifically, to combine the Prevention of Financial Crime Policy and the Anti-Money Laundering Policy.

The revised policy provided a clear framework for the Council to undertake necessary, legal, and proportionate actions where evidence supported an investigation into an allegation of money laundering or financial crime, and set out that the Council would seek to deal with cases brought to its attention. The policy detailed the Council's no tolerance stance to all forms of money laundering and financial crime, and referenced the policy framework with which staff, contractors, members and suppliers must comply. Reporting mechanisms were also included.

With Members expressed their thanks to the JSCC for their consideration and recommendation of the policy, the paper was duly seconded and voted upon. It was

RESOLVED that

- a) the recommendation from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee be accepted, and the revised Anti-Money Laundering and Financial Crime Prevention Policy be approved; and
- b) minor housekeeping amendments be delegated to the Section 151 Officer following consultation with the Chairman of the JSCC and CP&R Committees.

110 COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER POLICY

Members heard from the Director of Finance and Assets (S151 Officer) who presented a new Community Asset Transfer Policy for approval. He explained that Community Asset Transfer was the permanent or temporary transfer of land or buildings from the Council into the stewardship and/or ownership of a voluntary or community organisation or Town or Parish Council. The Council did not have a formal community asset transfer policy, and therefore the report sought approval of a new policy as set out at appendix one of the report.

It was highlighted that the policy looked to put in place a framework and an objective way of assessing if and when a transfer was appropriate, and whether it met certain criteria. When looking at asset transfer requests the Council must fully consider the risks and benefits of any transfer whilst ensuring community assets were protected. The General Disposals Consent (England) 2003 allowed the Council to transfer the ownership and management of land and buildings they owned to local communities at less than best consideration (less than the full market value) where it could demonstrate the promotion of social, economic and environmental wellbeing. Any decision to dispose at less than market value would need to be a transparent and evidenced decision.

In seeking approval for the policy, it was concluded that, if approved, it would be publicised to community groups, and parish and town councils around the district. A full list of the assets owned by the Council was available on the Council's website.

During the course of debate, Members supported the premise of the policy, however concerns were raised regarding the clarity of wording. For example, Members questioned the reference to no asset being used solely for religious purposes, highlighting that many groups of a religious nature focused on the promotion of social, economic, and environmental wellbeing, rather than only religious activity. Likewise, it was felt the same could be said for some groups that may fall under the category of a political group.

Additionally, whilst Members welcomed the inclusion of consultation with Ward Members, it was requested that the consultation be extended, for example to all Members in the relevant town or parish. Concerns were also raised that Member consultation should be prioritised within the application process, proceeding to Committee if required, however the policy was worded in such a way as to suggest Officer determination.

Further comments were made regarding the review of the policy, with Members requesting that, in light of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), there was likely to be need of early review of the policy.

Given the nature of concerns raised, it was enquired as to whether approval of the policy could be deferred, potentially for review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to return for approval at a later date. Advice was given by the Democratic Services Officer and Section 151 Officer, that the policy could be approved subject to the amendments as discussed within the meeting, and those would be enacted through consultation with the Chairman. Additionally, Members could seek an additional resolution that the policy be brought for review to the relevant policy committee as soon as practicable in consideration of LGR timeframes once known.

A Member of the Committee proposed the amendments to the recommendations as per the advice received. This was seconded, and voted upon. It was therefore

RESOLVED that recommendation one within the report be amended to include the words ‘subject to the suggested amendments being made by the Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the Committee Chairman’; and that a second recommendation be added for an update position to be brought back to the relevant policy committee as soon as practicable.

On summarising the content of debate, the Chairman thanked all Members for their input and reiterated the importance of the policy moving forward. Having sought a proposer and a seconder, The Chairman took the vote and it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the new Community Asset Transfer Policy be approved, subject to the suggested amendments being made by the Section 151 Officer following consultation with the Committee Chairman; and
- b) an update position to be brought back to the relevant policy committee as soon as practicable.

111 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2026/27 FOR APPROVAL

The Chairman introduced the committee timetable detailing the schedule of meetings for the upcoming civic year. With no comments or questions, the recommendation was proposed, seconded, and voted upon. It was

RESOLVED that the timetable for the 2026/27 civic year be approved.

112 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Chairman advised the work plan would be formalised subject to the committee timetable being approved.

113 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The meeting entered into closed session at 8.00pm

114 SURESTAFF/WLDC STAFFING SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2026/2027

The Committee heard from the Section 151 Officer regarding the Surestaff / WLDC Staffing Services Business Plan 2026/2027.

Members discussed the impact of international factors, noting significant changes since the report had been written, such as rates of inflation, as well as local factors such as Local Government Reorganisation.

The importance of business continuity was noted, and Members heard that under a new local government structure, the shareholder roles would be transferred to the new council.

With no further comments or questions, the recommendations contained within the report were moved, seconded, and voted upon. It was

RESOLVED that

- a) the contents of the Business Plan 2026/2027 provided in Appendix 1 be approved; and
- b) the vacancy on the board following the departure of the Interim Director be noted, with a further paper required to be considered by the committee on completion of the review of the Council's Senior Structure.

115 THURROCK/APSE LITIGATION UPDATE

The Committee heard from the Monitoring Officer regarding an update on the current position relating to the legal action being pursued by Thurrock Borough Council. The contents of the report were for noting only, and, following relevant discussion, the report was **DULY NOTED**.

Prior to bringing the meeting to a close, the Chairman expressed his thanks to all involved with the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, past and present, at this, its last meeting. He noted it had been a valuable committee, and he looked forward to the implementation of the new committee structure from May onwards.

With repeat thanks all round, the meeting was closed.

The meeting concluded at 8.25 pm.

Chairman