

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held in the MS Teams on Thursday, 3 July 2025 commencing at 4.00 pm.

Members:	Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway (Chairman) Councillor John Barrett Councillor Moira Westley
Staff Representatives:	James Deacon (Vice-Chairman) Amy Potts Tom Duffield
In attendance:	Peter Davy, Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer) Lisa Langdon, Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer) Lynne Thomsett, People Services Manager Molly Spencer, Democratic & Civic Officer
Apologies:	Councillor Matthew Boles

9 **MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

10 **MINUTES**

Having been proposed, seconded and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 3 July 2025, be confirmed as an accurate record.

11 **MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE**

With no comments the Matters Arising Schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

12 **REVIEW OF THE COUNTER FRAUD, CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY POLICY**

A revised version of the Fraud, Corruption and Bribery Policy was presented to the Committee. It was noted that the policy had been reviewed following an internal audit, which had identified several recommendations.

Members were informed that, in addition to this revision, a Financial Crime Strategy was being developed. It was explained that, although various service-level policies were already in place, the new strategy would consolidate these into a single, comprehensive document. This strategy was expected to be brought forward later in the year.

It was confirmed that a dedicated area on the intranet would be established to host all relevant policies, registers of fraud, risk documentation, and training materials. The revised policy had incorporated updated references to legislation, changes in Officer responsibilities, and feedback received from the internal audit.

The Committee was advised that the authority's approach was based on the principles of "Govern, Acknowledge, Prevent, Pursue, Protect," as outlined in Section 3 of the policy. This approach was intended to promote a culture of awareness among staff and Members. It was stated that relevant training was provided during induction and reinforced through online training.

Staff were expected to report any concerns to their line managers or, where appropriate, through the whistleblowing procedure. It was emphasised that the whistleblowing process allowed for anonymous reporting, thereby ensuring that employees felt empowered to raise concerns.

Oversight of the strategy was assigned to the Governance and Audit Committee, which would receive annual updates from the Monitoring Officer on any instances of whistleblowing or fraud. In cases of serious fraud, the relevant external authorities would be contacted.

It was reported that the internal audit had assessed the authority as low risk, with all known risks documented. Members and Officers were reminded of the responsibility to report any suspicious behaviour, including that of contractors or members of the public.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Finance and Assets for his presentation of the policy and opened the floor for debate.

It was noted by a Member that fraudulent conduct often involved manipulation and deception, and that certain behaviours, while not explicitly defined as fraud, could still be considered dishonest. An example was provided involving the misuse of another person's address for the delivery of goods without payment, which had not been classified as fraud by the relevant authorities. Concern was expressed that such cases highlighted the need for clearer definitions.

Further comments were made regarding the potential for manipulation within workplace settings, such as misleading a colleague to gain advantage in a recruitment process. It was questioned whether such actions would fall under the scope of the policy.

It was suggested by a Member that deception remained a central element of

fraudulent behaviour and that historical legal consequences had existed for such actions, although enforcement had since shifted to organisational responsibility.

It was proposed that examples, including borderline scenarios and cases involving bribery, should be incorporated into staff training. Support was expressed for the use of scenario-based discussions during the training, to assist in understanding and engagement. It was agreed that the inclusion of practical examples within training materials would be beneficial and that this approach should be taken forward.

The Director of Finance and Assets suggested adding a sentence to the policy advising staff to contact either himself or the Monitoring Officer if they were unsure whether a situation fell within the scope of the policy. While the policy itself was considered clear, it was acknowledged that real-life scenarios could sometimes be open to interpretation. It was therefore proposed that future training sessions include more detailed discussion of such scenarios to support understanding and application. A Member proposed that an additional example relating to secondary employment be included, and it was confirmed that this would be added.

A final point was raised regarding the presence of a former Head of Paid Services' name within the appendices of the policy. It was agreed that this would be corrected as part of a wider update being undertaken across the organisation.

With no further comments from Members or Officers and having been proposed, seconded and voted upon it was

RESOLVED that

- a) The counter fraud, corruption and bribery policy be supported for submission to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- b) Minor housekeeping amendments be delegated to the Section 151 Officer.

13 WORK PLAN

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

The meeting closed at 4.22 pm.

Chairman