

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 25 September 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Moira Westley
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings

In Attendance:

Bill Cullen	Interim Head of Paid Service
Peter Davy	Director of Finance and Assets (Section 151 Officer)
Alan Bowley	Interim Director of Operational and Commercial Services
Sally Grindrod-Smith	Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Nova Roberts	Director Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Lisa Langdon	Assistant Director People and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)
Claire Hill	Economic Growth Officer
Veronica Edwards	Senior Homes, Health & Wellbeing Officer
Matthew Lill	Support Officer - Property and Assets
Lyn Marlow	Customer Strategy and Services Manager
Jannine Nixon	Senior Customer Services Officer
Rachael Hughes	Head of Policy and Strategy
Ellen King	Policy & Strategy Officer – Corporate Strategy & Business Planning
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Paul Swift
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Baptiste Velan

Membership: Councillor J. Brockway was appointed substitute for Councillor P. Key
Councillor K. Carless was appointed substitute for Councillor P. Swift
Councillor L. Rollings was appointed substitute for Councillor B. Velan

31 TO OPEN THE MEETING AND APPOINT A VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present. He explained that apologies had been received from Vice Chairman Councillor P. Swift and as such, sought nominations to appoint a Vice Chairman for the meeting.

A Member of the Committee proposed Councillor M. Boles, which was duly seconded.

With no further nominations, the Chairman took the vote, and it was

RESOLVED that Councillor M. Boles be appointed Vice Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

32 MOTION TO WITHDRAW AGENDA ITEM

Prior to starting on the agenda'd business, the Chairman proposed that, under Council Procedure Rules Section 11.1 (g), agenda item 6e, the Establishment of the West Lindsey Leisure Centre Task & Finish Group report, be withdrawn. He noted that Members who were present at the previous meeting of the Committee would recall that it was resolved that a task and finish group be established, with the membership and terms of reference to be presented for approval at a future meeting. The Chairman highlighted there had been a very informative Member briefing held on 18 September 2025, where it was agreed that engagement continued on an all-Member basis at this point, with the Task and Finish Group to be formally established a little later in the year.

The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee would therefore receive the report detailing the membership and terms of reference of the group at a future meeting, as previously resolved, and from the Chair it was proposed that the item be withdrawn from this agenda.

The proposal was duly seconded and the vote taken, and it was

RESOLVED that agenda item 6e, the Establishment of the West Lindsey Leisure Centre Task & Finish Group report, be withdrawn.

33 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

34 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S

The Chairman explained there were two sets of minutes, one for approving and one 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, 24 July 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct

record.

With no comments or questions, the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on Thursday, 11 September 2025, were **NOTED**.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

36 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments or questions, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the position of previously agreed actions as at 17 September 2025, was **DULY NOTED**.

37 REVIEW OF BANKING FACILITIES - GAINSBOROUGH AND SURROUNDING AREA

Members gave consideration to a report presented by the Economic Growth Officer, which was presented as response to a motion to Council from Councillor M. Snee. At its meeting on 27 January 2025 Council resolved unanimously that a review of the banking facilities available in the Gainsborough and surrounding area be considered as part of the wider market place regeneration, and a report be submitted to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee by November 2025 detailing whether a banking hub, like that in Market Rasen is necessary and deliverable.

Members heard that recommendations for Banking Hub provision were made by LINK to Cash Access UK who were tasked with delivery, the process for which was set out within the report. It was noted that the Financial Services and Markets Act 2023 only provided protections for cash access, not face-to-face banking services or advice. Gainsborough's current provision, as assessed by LINK in January 2025 (which incorporated the planned closure of Halifax), was above the threshold for recommendation of additional services.

It was explained that the criteria used by LINK to assess a community's needs had been developed and agreed following extensive consumer and small business group input. Their considerations included rurality, demographics, business profile, financial vulnerability, physical geography, transport options/ease and seasonal demand for services. The January 2025 assessment made no recommendations for further facilities within Gainsborough as the remaining services met the criteria for the size of population, number of businesses, demographic and geography. A reassessment of this position could not be requested through the LINK process within 12 months of an existing assessment being carried out, unless the community's circumstances or provision had significantly changed.

Members were advised that whilst it was not possible to request a review at this time, there was an outline communications plan presented with the report, which sought to publicise the available provision in Gainsborough as had been identified in the 2025 assessment.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for her thorough and well-presented report, and invited

the Interim Head of Paid Service to comment.

Mr Cullen highlighted to Members the incredible work undertaken by the Economic Growth Officer, Claire Hill, and asked that the Committee recognised what she had achieved, noting it was not an easy task to gain access to the companies involved. The Chairman concurred with the comments and requested that the Committee's commendation for the Officer's work be recorded.

A Member of the Committee shared Councillor M. Snee's apologies for not being able to attend the meeting, and noted her disappointment that another review of facilities was not possible. However, Councillor Snee had welcomed the recommendations within the report and extended her thanks to Officers for their efforts and continued support.

Members continued to express their thanks for the work undertaken, noting that the outcome was not surprising but had provided excellent opportunity to raise awareness of local issues. It was noted that, whilst the focus remained on access to cash, many concerns had been raised regarding businesses being able to deposit cash. There was provision for businesses to deposit cash, for example at the Post Office, however clearance times meant there were several working days between the cash being deposited and being available in the account. For small businesses this was having a serious impact on their cash flows and causing potential difficulties with making payments.

Additionally, Members raised concerns regarding the security implications of potentially carrying significant amounts of cash in public areas, depending on the location of available facilities, as well as the lack of services available to those who could not use internet or telephone services. It was recognised that the legislation did not prioritise those considerations, and Members suggested there was a case for further lobbying, for the legislation to be reviewed. It was acknowledged that whilst it would not only be problematic for those in rural districts, it was likely that the lack of service provision was of greater concern in rural areas compared to urban communities.

It was enquired as to whether there would be opportunity for the regeneration of the high street area to support a re-assessment of facilities, with the example being given that there was no facility open on a Saturday, which was a key shopping and trading day. The suggestion of further lobbying was reiterated, focusing on the need for facilities being available, which would in turn aid economic growth.

With thanks once again extended to the Officer, and having been proposed, seconded and voted on, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the review of banking provision within Gainsborough and the surrounding area be noted; and
- b) the LINK Cash Access Assessment Outcome for Gainsborough published in January 2025 be noted; and
- c) the proposed next steps and Communications Plan in relation to banking facilities within Gainsborough be noted; and

d) a letter from the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee be sent to:

- LINK, encouraging them to reconsider their current protocols in relation to assessment notification and to include District Councils in this process whilst the re-organisation of local government is still to be finalised; and
- Lloyds Banking Group, encouraging them to consider ongoing community banking provision in Gainsborough.

38 CHANGING PLACES

The Committee heard from the Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities regarding the next steps for the provision of a Changing Places facility within the district. It was highlighted that at their meeting in June 2025, the Committee had approved allocation of a £100k budget to develop a Changing Places provision, with the report presenting a series of options and officer recommendations to enable Members to agree which option to take forwards.

It was explained that whilst there was a recommendation for one facility to be located in Gainsborough, Officers would continue to monitor other funding opportunities particularly to support those businesses who wished to deliver Changing Places facilities at their premises.

Having debated the matter in detail at their meeting in June 2025, Members expressed their thanks and appreciation for the swiftness of action in bringing the paper forward. Members were fully supportive of the proposals, and enquired as to specifics of the arrangements, for example insurance for the use of the mobility and lifting equipment, and regular safety inspections, as well as how the facility would be accessed by users.

It was explained that those specific details would be addressed throughout the process, with specialist input required for the specification and build. In response to a question regarding provision at the West Lindsey Leisure Centre, it was explained that any potential refurbishments would be required to include accessible facilities, with work ongoing to consider best options for the leisure centre.

Members reiterated their full support for the proposal, and thanked Officers for their diligence in working with local businesses and stakeholders to identify other potential locations. With regard to recommendation two contained within the report, it was suggested that it implied a full refurbishment of the WC provision, rather than just the addition of a modular unit. It was therefore proposed that the wording be amended to read

“Approve the installation of a Changing Places toilet, in the form of a modular unit, at Roseway Car Park, Gainsborough.”

The Chairman sought confirmation from the Committee that all were content with the amendment. This being confirmed, and having been moved, seconded, and voted upon, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the background work and engagement completed to date be noted; and
- b) the installation of a Changing Places toilet, in the form of a modular unit, at Roseway Car Park, Gainsborough, be approved; and
- c) the capital expenditure of the allocated budget of £100,000 in General Fund Balances for the purpose of delivering a Changing Places Toilet at Roseway Car Park, Gainsborough, be approved, and added into the Capital Programme for 2025/2026; and
- d) the ongoing revenue budget pressure of £10,000 pa from 2026/2027 for facility repairs and maintenance be approved; and
- e) Officers be tasked to continue engagement and investigations into district wide options for Changing Places Facilities.

39 WARM HOMES LOCAL GRANT

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Healthy and Accessible Homes Team Leader regarding the Warm Homes Local Grant. It was explained that Midlands Net Zero Hub had secured funding via the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero for Government funding through Warm Homes Local Grant on behalf of Midlands Councils. This included the Central and South Lincolnshire Consortium comprising of West Lindsey, North Kesteven, City of Lincoln and South Kesteven Councils.

An allocation of £5,027,000 had been allocated to the consortium to deliver the new grant initiatives under the Warm Homes Local Grant scheme. Funding secured from the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero would be used to carry out a range of improvements on homes owned by low-income families in the district, making them warmer, reducing energy bills, and improving the quality of residents' lives.

It was highlighted that a decision was required to accept the grant award, and sanction return of the grant funding agreement from the S151 Officer. This approval would enable delivery of the scheme to start immediately, with installations commencing as soon as contracts were in place, and release spend from the administration allocation which would fund the Energy Efficiency Project Officer post hosted by the council.

The Chairman invited the Interim Head of Paid Service to comment, who highlighted the profile and confidence given to the Healthy and Accessible Homes Team Leader and her team by the consortium. The Chairman echoed the comments and noted it was excellent to see the council as the lead Local Authority, requesting for the commendation to be recorded.

Members of the Committee expressed their support for the scheme, however it was enquired as to whether there was scope to lobby government for more to be done regarding low-income families living in poor quality rented accommodation, with no ability to access the funding for improvements. It was recognised to be a national issue, with rural localities struggling in comparison with urban areas. Members were encouraged to consider using the District Councils Network as a lobbying avenue to government. On further discussion, it was proposed and seconded that there be a third recommendation relating to further lobbying,

and on being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that an additional recommendation be added to read “Members approve that a request be taken forward to make representation to the District Councils Network to lobby government regarding the access to grant funding.”

It was highlighted that the team provided first class support and trusted information, with Members encouraged to share the details of the team in order to maximise the communities involved with the scheme.

With no further comments, and repeated thanks to the team involved, the printed recommendations, and the additional as detailed above, were duly proposed and seconded. On taking the vote it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the award of £5,027,000 funding on behalf of Central and South Lincolnshire Consortium for the Warm Homes Local Grant from Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) be accepted, and signing of the grant funding agreement by Section 151 Officer be authorised, for return to Midlands Net Zero Hub; and
- b) the creation of a new capital scheme in the Capital Programme be approved, and a capital and revenue budget be created for the Warm Homes Local Grant once funding agreement has been signed; and
- c) a request be taken forward to make representation to the District Councils Network to lobby government regarding the access to grant funding.

40 RECOMMENDATION FROM JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: TELEPHONE AND SCREEN RECORDING PROCEDURE & POLICY

The Committee received a presentation from the Customer Strategy and Services Manager regarding updates to the Telephone and Screen Recording Procedure and Policy. It was explained that the council’s Telephone Call Recording procedure and policy had been in place since 2009, with updates occurring when Contact Centre software changes were introduced and applied, or for legislation and compliance requirements. Due to improvements in Contact Centre technology, part of the standard software package was that the platform recorded both telephone calls and officer screen activity whilst handling a customer telephone call.

Members heard that following the recent installation of the new Contact Centre technology to the Genesys CX Platform, it was appropriate to review and update the Telephone Call Recording procedure and policy, to also include screen recording and to update any legislative changes. The software allowed for officer screen recordings to take place, which was optional and controlled by the council, while telephone call recording was mandatory and already in use. It was noted there had been a request from the Joint Staff Consultative Committee relating to wording regarding the retention of screen recordings, and this amendment would be made according to delegated authority as a housekeeping amendment.

Members of the Committee thanked Officers for their diligence and also extended thanks to the Joint Staff Consultative Committee for their thorough appraisal of the updated policy. Thanks were also recorded for the Customer Strategy and Services Manager and her team for their work, both on the updated policy and on a day-to-day basis.

With stated confidence in the work of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee, the written recommendations were duly proposed, seconded and voted upon, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the recommendation from JSCC be accepted and the updated Telephone Call and Screen Recording Policy and appendices within the report be approved, to provide the right guidance to employees and customers regarding this matter; and
- b) any future minor housekeeping amendments be delegated to the Director of Change, ICT and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Chairs of the Joint Staff Consultative and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees.

41 ESTABLISHMENT OF WEST LINDSEY LEISURE CENTRE TASK & FINISH GROUP

Further to the resolution at the commencement of the meeting, this item was withdrawn from the agenda.

42 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR)

Members gave consideration to a report presented by the Head of Policy and Strategy, regarding Local Government Reorganisation. It was explained that the paper provided an overview on activity over the summer, building on that reported to Council on 7 July and 8 September 2025, in relation to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), specifically the development of key materials and evidence which had been used by the Council to undertake 'Supportive Engagement' with all Greater Lincolnshire authorities.

The paper also provided a forward look at activities required to be undertaken by the Council in preparation for LGR following the Final Submission date in November, the statutory consultation and subsequent decision by Government in early to mid-Spring and beyond to transition and vesting day of the new authority(s).

In acknowledging the scale, complexity, and evolving nature of work related to the LGR programme, it was essential for West Lindsey to stay actively involved, both to meet government requirements and advocate for district interests. The paper requested approval for a budget to support these efforts and achieve the best outcomes for West Lindsey residents after the new unitary authority(s) Vesting Day.

It was considered that due to the extent and specialist nature of the ongoing work required, a

total of £150,000 be approved, with delegated authority to spend on activities relating to LGR, up to the decision by ministers on the final geography. This would consist of a sum of up to £50,000 which could be drawn down through existing delegation, as detailed in the Council report on LGR on 7 July and a further £100,000 from the Project Investment Reserve.

Updates on the work being undertaken and activity against spend would be reported to Council as part of the on-going decision-making process relating to wider LGR programme of work and timeframes established by Government.

Members expressed their consternation at the costs involved with LGR, noting that the government had proposed the reorganisation on the basis that savings would be achieved. It was questioned whether Officers could share how much money had been spent to date across Lincolnshire, with Members commenting that the costs involved could not be in line with the expected efficiency savings. With the Committee concurring with the concerns raised, Members requested that Officers ascertain and present the collective spend on LGR across the county.

In reference to recent changes of Ministers at Whitehall, it was enquired whether there had been further updates in relation to LGR, to which it was confirmed that Senior Officials had confirmed the continuation of the work and a vesting day of 1 April 2028. It was also noted that efficiency savings may have been predicted over the long term, meaning current spends would be expected to balance out in savings over years to come.

Members noted the difference for large rural districts in comparison with urban localities, with there being unique challenges as to how to equitably provide for residents with differing requirements according to location.

Despite concerns raised, Committee Members recognised the importance of continuing to be involved with discussions and next steps, and requested the Officers undertook to share as much detail as possible, in as timely a manner as possible. Members were assured this was the intention of Officers, with several briefings having taken place already, and more planned to be held.

On being proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote. It was

RESOLVED that

- a) the matters set out within the report be noted, specifically acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges that Local Government Reorganisation presented; and
- b) a spend of £150,000 be approved from the Project Investment Reserve to support the Council's on-going work in relation to preparing the organisation for Local Government Reorganisation.

43 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

With no comments or questions, the Committee Work Plan was **DULY NOTED**.

44 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 paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The meeting entered into closed session at 7.51pm

45 LGR CONSULTANT CONTRACT AWARD

Members heard again from the Head of Policy and Strategy, regarding the ongoing work to do with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It was explained that since the announcement and receipt of the Statutory Invitation on 5 February 2025, which set out the parameters and timescales for LGR, the Council had worked with consultants to support the development of the Council's response to Government requirements with the focus of ensuring that the outcome of LGR would meet the needs of West Lindsey residents, businesses and stakeholders.

The ongoing support from the consultants had also enabled the Council to enhance its capacity for delivering complex programmes and driving organisational transformation. Continuing the positive relationship with the consultants to support with the Council's response to LGR was considered the most appropriate approach to take, specifically when considering what the partnership had delivered to date and their knowledge of the Council, which was particularly important when considering the timescales for response to Government requirements which continued to be very short.

Members of the Committee reiterated previous concerns regarding the costs involved with LGR. The breakdown of costs as presented in the report were clarified by the Section 151 Officer, explaining the contract was to be funded from a variety of budgets, given the remit of work being undertaken.

With the details of the arrangements confirmed, and having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the matters set out within the report, specifically acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges that Local Government Reorganisation presents, be noted; and
- b) the award of a contract through the Crown Commercial Services procurement framework to the nominated consultants for the value of £225,000 be approved, and authority delegated to the Section 151 Officer to sign the contract on the Council's behalf.

Note: Councillor T. Young and Councillor L. Rollings requested that their abstention from voting be recorded in the minutes.

46 FOOD WASTE COLLECTION RECRUITMENT

Members heard from the Interim Director of Commercial and Operational Services regarding the need to recruit operatives ahead of the upcoming food waste collections, due to start 1 April 2026. It was explained that DEFRA had announced Councils would be supported with funding to introduce weekly food waste collections, however at the time of the report, no confirmation had been received as to the amount of support, timing of funding or how it would be dispersed. As such, it was suggested to build the costs of service into the MTFP as a pressure, pending further information from DEFRA.

Members expressed significant concerns regarding the lack of clarity from government, also highlighting comments that had been raised in the community around the caddies, use of liners, space for extra bins and suchlike. It was recognised that the service was mandated by government and there was the suggestion of financial penalties for not delivering it, therefore it was important to continue with plans for implementation.

With further comments from Members regarding trials undertaken across the county, and the experience of other councils where separate collections had already been introduced, the Interim Head of Paid Service assured the Committee there were conversations being held, for example with the District Councils Network, around the nationwide concerns which echoed those comments from the Committee.

In recognising that there were local recruitment implications, the recommendations contained within the report were duly moved and seconded. On taking the vote, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) 19 permanent FTE posts be added to the establishment to deliver the Food Waste Collection, along with a budget for agency cover for annual leave and sickness; and
- b) the use of earmarked reserves to the value of £135.9k in 2025/26 be approved.

47 BUILDING CONTROL ICT CONTRACT

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services, regarding the ongoing provision of business-specific software for the Building Control Team. It was explained that there had been several recent changes to the Building Control Services across both Local Authority Building Control and the private sector, which impacted on service provision. Additionally, broader impacts of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) had meant it had been necessary to pause the implementation of the Council's digital vision for Building Control and therefore not change the team's current ICT System in the short term.

Members acknowledged the importance of having software which was fit for purpose, and also the implications on the team should it not be in place. Therefore, having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the content of the report, specifically the total contract cost of Civica Flare, £112,036.35, and the short time frame to agree this cost with the provider (contracts signed by end Oct 2025) be noted; and
- b) it be noted that the contract with Civica Flare be by procurement exemption, agreed by Management Team at the meeting on 23 September 2025; and
- c) the ongoing pressure of £17,000 pa be built into the base budget through the 2026/2027 MTFP.

48 REPLACEMENT OF GUILDHALL EMERGENCY STANDBY GENERATOR

The Director of Finance and Assets presented the Committee with the details of an Urgent Delegated Decision which had been taken by the Interim Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, with regards to the need to replace the emergency stand-by generator at the Council's Guildhall in Gainsborough. This had previously been shared with all Councillors, as was the process for such delegated decisions, however it was presented to the Committee for additional transparency of decision making.

Members of the Committee expressed their understanding of the requirement to replace the stand-by generator, as well as the considerations needed regarding the logistics of such a replacement.

With no requirement for a vote, the detail and outcome of the Urgent Delegated Decision was **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 8.40 pm.

Chairman