



**Annual Council**

**Monday, 11 May 2026**

**Subject: Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26 and Review of Operating Methodology**

Report by:

Councillor J. McGhee  
Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To present the Annual Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That Members receive the Annual Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:** The Chairman of the Committee is required constitutionally (Part II, Article 7, paragraph 7.6) to submit an annual report to Council on the work the Committee has undertaken.

**Financial:** FIN/22/27/CL/SSc

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**Staffing:** The Committee is supported from existing resources and there are no other implications arising from this report.

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

**Data Protection Implications:**

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:**

**Health Implications:**

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Agenda and minutes arising from the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held during the 2025/2026 civic year, all of which are located on the West Lindsey District Council website and can be found [here](#)

<https://democracy.west-lindsey.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=386&Year=0>

**Risk Assessment:**

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Chairman of the Committee is required constitutionally (Part II, Article 7, paragraph 7.6) to submit an annual report to council, in which she details the work the committee has undertaken through the previous civic year and summarise the proposals for the work plan over the coming year. In line with the terms of reference for the committee, the Chairman should also update Annual Council with any amendments to the committee's operating methodology.
- 1.2 The Chairman's Annual Report is set out below.

## **2 Chairman's Annual Report**

- 2.1 I must first express my gratitude to my predecessor for his excellent stewardship of the Committee, and whose kind guidance when I was Vice-Chair helped prepare me for this role.
- 2.2 The current year has seen many changes across the Council, as well as the announcement of several significant national programmes of change. Throughout uncertain times, the work of our committee has continued at pace, with guests and officers attending our meetings as we exercise both our scrutiny and overview functions. I would like to thank the Committee for being so supportive and accommodating as I have had the privilege of holding my first Chair of a Committee. The weight of the responsibility has not been lost on me but the input of the whole committee and their enthusiasm for the work that we do has made that both enjoyable and highly effective.
- 2.3 There has been a shift in the ethos of the committee in that we see Overview and Scrutiny as having a horizon scanning function, being aware of not just the workings and scrutiny of upcoming council items, but also of anything that might affect West Lindsey residents and how that in turn might affect the council and its functions. This is in line with the training we have received regarding the purpose and scope of Overview and Scrutiny.
- 2.4 The Committee has continued to be involved with the Progress and Delivery reporting cycle, including inputting to the reviewed measure setting approach for 2026/27, although our focus has been more aimed towards our external partners this year. Our Members have helped shape the work plan over the year, with items received regarding Battery Energy Storage Systems, and Emergency Planning, amongst others. More information on these items is provided in sections 3 and 4 of this report.
- 2.5 At our first meeting of the year we approved the unaltered Operating Methodology, as is required of the Committee each Civic Year. In anticipation of this year's review, the Operating Methodology is attached at Appendix 1, with further details of the review provided in section 5 of this report.

- 2.6 Outside of committee business, in October 2025 we received a timely refresher of our scrutiny training, which helped focus our thinking as a collective, and as Chairman, my briefings with officers ahead of each meeting have helped to build those strong working relationships needed for effective scrutiny. The upcoming year will see the continued focus on strengthening our ties with our external partners, especially when we consider the Local Government Reorganisation and where we sit within that.

### **3 Consideration of Public Reports**

- 3.1 We have considered a number of items this past year which have either been focused topics for our committee, or where we have added comments prior to approval by other committees or Full Council.
- 3.2 The first example of our overview focused work was the presentation from officers regarding the planning processes around Battery Energy Storage Systems. This was a matter of concern across the council which had been picked up by the committee for a deeper review. Whilst it isn't an area we can directly manage within the council, it was important for us to understand where we are able to influence, and increase our understanding to be able to offer reassurance to our residents.
- 3.3 We also received the early scope and explanation of the Pride in Place programme. This is a Gainsborough focused programme from central government, but as a committee we were able to hear the early implementation plans as well as the potential benefits for the district as a whole. The possibilities for wider investment being encouraged in West Lindsey are exciting to follow, and as a committee there will be opportunities for us to work closely with other agencies involved in the programme.
- 3.4 Another key area of work on which the committee was able to offer comment and feedback, was the refreshed Corporate Plan. This is an area of work which has been developed over many months with key input from officers and Members, and we were pleased to see our feedback helping form the final plan as it was given final approval by Full Council in March 2026.
- 3.5 The opportunity for pre-decision scrutiny is something this committee has taken to heart, and I would like to thank officers involved in those items for their clear presentations and for welcoming the committee's feedback.

### **4 Programme of Outside Agencies and Presentation Items**

- 4.1 The year has seen a varied programme of invited guests and presenters, covering public health matters, local leisure provision, emergency planning, and the annual presentation from Lincolnshire Police, which,

although comes under statutory requirements, it is always a pleasure to welcome Inspector Head to hear his local updates and view on policing matters.

- 4.2 In January this year we welcomed representatives from Lincolnshire Resilience Forum, who provided details around the role they play in resilience and emergency planning, as well as offering suggestions for how we can help support our Parish Councils with their own emergency plans. This came about following an earlier debate in one of our meetings, and demonstrates the importance of the committee's overview function, being able to understand the wider involvement of other agencies in our district and beyond, as well as being able to highlight potential improvements in how we engage with our partner organisations.
- 4.3 We have also welcomed representatives from Everyone Active, regarding leisure provision not just in Gainsborough but across the district. This has become an annual attendance and, with the work underway for a refresh of the leisure centre in Gainsborough, their attendance at our April meeting was a timely opportunity to hear of their progress.
- 4.4 At our first meeting in the new Civic Year, when we start to shape the work plan for the year, we will be continuing the focus on invitations to outside agencies, recognising the importance of increasingly close working relationships as LGR approaches.

## **5 Operating Methodology**

- 5.1 Following the amendments which had been enacted after the 2023/24 review, this year again saw no changes being made to the Operating Methodology (Appendix 1).
- 5.2 In line with the established approach to review the Operating Methodology at the end of each civic year, for any proposed amendments to be considered in line with the Constitution Review and for approval by the O&S Committee at the start of the next civic year, the current Operating Methodology formed a part of the discussions at our meeting in April 2026. There were no suggested amendments arising from those discussions and the document will now proceed for agreement at the first meeting of the O&S Committee in the new Civic Year.

## **6 Look Forward to Next Year**

- 6.1 As we move into this next year, in what is our final year of this term of office but may also prove to be the penultimate year of West Lindsey District Council, I feel strongly that it is essential for the committee to continue driving forward the functions of overview and scrutiny.

- 6.2 With a new Corporate Plan in place, as well as detailed delivery plans, the scrutiny of performance data will likely take on a different meaning for our committee. The option for the policy committees to refer performance reviews to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will provide a clear route through, if or when there are concerns raised.
- 6.3 The engagement with partner agencies is going to prove key over the coming months, and by having clear oversight of the full Forward Plan, it is my intention for us to build a work plan which uses all tools available to us, including the pre-decision scrutiny which has worked well this year.

## **7 Concluding Remarks**

- 7.1 I would like to reiterate my comments from earlier in this report and express my thanks to the Committee Members and Officers who have so enthusiastically supported me in my role as Chair of this Committee. A special thank you again goes to our previous Chairman.
- 7.2 As Chairman, and as a Committee, we look forward to the year ahead, and welcome the opportunities to continue our roles as scrutineers.