

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chambers, the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Wednesday, 8th October, 2025 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Terry Taylor (Chairman)
Councillor Neil Jones (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Terry Aldridge, Tom Ashton, Richard Avison, Wendy Bowkett, Stef Bristow, Billy Brookes, Danny Brookes, Jimmy Brookes, Graham Cullen, Richard Cunnington, Mark Dannatt, Colin Davie, Roger Dawson, Sarah Devereux, Carl Drury, Dick Edginton, Martin Foster, Richard Fry, William Gray, Will Grover, Alex Hall, David Hall, Travis Hesketh, Darren Hobson, Rosalind Jackson, Neil Jones, Sam Kemp, Thomas Kemp, Steve Kirk, James Knowles, Andrew Leonard, Craig Leyland, Stephen Lyons, Steve McMillan, Carl Macey, Jill Makinson-Sanders, Kate Marnoch, Ellie Marsh, Graham Marsh, Fiona Martin, M.B.E., Edward Mossop, Daniel Simpson, Terry Taylor, Robert Watson and Ruchira Yarsley.

The Chairman led a minute's silence in respect of the late Councillors Stan Avison and Bill Aron and offered his sincere condolences to their families.

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Claire Arnold, Sandra Campbell-Wardman, Carleen Dickinson, Stephen Eyre, Adam Grist, George Horton, Terry Knowles, Daniel McNally and Paul Rickett.

In response to the kind wishes received, Councillor Richard Avison thanked everybody for the respect shown to his late father Councillor Stan Avison and thanked all Members of the Council, staff and officers for the letters of condolence and messages received by his mother, brother and himself which was greatly appreciated.

40. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

At this point in the Meeting, Members were invited to declare any relevant interests.

- Councillors Carl Drury and Wendy Bowkett asked it be noted that they were members of Wainfleet All Saints Town Council, Item No. 10 'Use of the Council's Capital Reserve' refers.
- Councillors Craig Leyland and Thomas Kemp asked it be noted that they were Ward Members for Woodhall Spa and ELDC representatives on Woodhall Spa Parish Council, Item No. 10 'Use of the Council's Capital Reserve' refers.

- Councillors Thomas Kemp and Ellie Marsh asked it be noted that they were members of Spilsby Town Council, Item No. 10 'Use of the Council's Capital Reserve' refers.
- Councillors Richard Avison and Fiona Martin asked it be noted that they were members of Horncastle Town Council, Item No. 10 'Use of the Council's Capital Reserve' refers.
- Councillor Fiona Martin asked it be noted that her grandson participated in the Teenage Markets in Horncastle, Item 8 'Report of the Chairman of Executive Board' refers.

41. MINUTES:

The Open and Exempt Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 July 2025 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

42. ACTION SHEETS:

The Chief Executive advised Members that all actions were complete, with the exception of Action No. 27(a) which was a request for an update report to come to Council on the Campus for Future Living, scheduled for the January Meeting of Full Council.

In response, the following comments were received.

With regards to Action No. 27(a) concerns were raised why the update for the Campus for Future Living was delayed until January 2026. It was further considered that it was important to receive an update on the business plan and operational mode of the facility for a clearer understanding of its direction.

The Chief Executive clarified that the facility was newly opened in June 2025, and a more meaningful update would be possible after it had been operational for six months.

Action 27 c (ii), with regards to the reform of flood funding and given its significance to East Lindsey, a Member considered that the Council should respond to the consultation independently as it was a matter of great importance to its residents.

To reassure Members, the Portfolio Holder for Planning advised that the consultation responses had been thorough and reflected the views of the flood and water management sector across East Lindsey and Lincolnshire. However, he cautioned against excessive optimism as it was not about increasing funding, but redistributing existing resources and welcomed the shift towards maintenance priorities, however advised that this would not necessarily mean more money for Lincolnshire.

43. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

The Chairman advised he had attended the following events:

- North Kesteven District Council Chairman's Civic Service on Sunday 7th September 2025.
- South Holland District Council Chairman's Civic Service on Sunday 28th September 2025.

The Chairman also attended the late Councillor Bill Aron's funeral on Thursday 18th September 2025 and the late Councillor Stan Avison's funeral on Monday 29th September 2025.

Members were advised that the Chief Executive had exercised his delegation in consultation with himself as Chairman of the Council to move the January Council meeting, currently programmed for 29th January 2026 to Wednesday 28th January 2026 at 2:00pm.

44. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC:

No questions by the public were received.

45. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF EXECUTIVE BOARD:

The Leader of the Council presented Members with his report, pages 55 to 58 of the Agenda refer.

Following which, Members were invited to put their questions and comments forward.

Resignation

Members noted the resignation of Councillor Stephen Evans, who represented the Chapel St Leonards Ward. This would necessitate a by-election, scheduled to take place in mid-November. On behalf of all Members, the Leader extended his sincere thanks and best wishes to Councillor Evans for his service to the Council and advised Members he would pass their best wishes on to him.

The Campus for Future Living (CFL)

The Leader advised that a full update on the CFL would be provided by the Portfolio Holder for Housing Communities and Better Ageing at the Council meeting to be held on 28 January 2026. The facility was officially opened in June 2025 and was already making a significant impact by integrating health, wellbeing, research and community support services in an underserved coastal area. The Council was proud to be working in partnership with the Lincolnshire Institute of Rural Coastal Health and Coastal Health, who launched their coastal research programme in July. This was supported by a

presentation from former Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty. The Leader added that he anticipated further exciting developments to be shared in January as the project progressed.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group advised Members that she attended the opening of the CFL and enjoyed the presentation provided by Professor Whitty which was engaging and interactive. Furthermore, she found it particularly valuable to meet academics from the Institute of Coastal and Rural Health and welcomed this investment in the local communities.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that he had received very positive feedback for the CFL and highlighted that the site held great promise and he was encouraged to see such strong engagement.

Best Community & Neighbourhood Initiative Award at APSE

The Leader was pleased to report that officers had received this prestigious recognition, awarded for the innovative Energy and Retrofit Information Clinic Van which had transformed the way community advice and support was delivered across East Lindsey. This initiative provided local energy advice and demonstrations whilst gathering valuable feedback from communities to help officers and teams respond more effectively to local needs.

A Member echoed the congratulations to the HEART team on their recent APSE award and considered it an excellent achievement.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked Members for their positive comments regarding the HEART team which had done an outstanding job, and was pleased to see their efforts recognised with the APSE award.

ELIF and UKSPF Grants

The Leader advised that new funding was now available and strongly encouraged all ward councillors to ensure their communities and parish councils were aware of these opportunities which were making a real difference across the district.

ELDC Teenage Markets – Empowering Young Creatives Across East Lindsey

The Leader was pleased to report that the teenage markets continued to be well received.

Several Members stated that they were very inspired by the continued success of the Teenage Market initiative, which was clearly having a positive impact encouraging young entrepreneurs.

A Member was disappointed by the number of attendees when the market was officially opened and highlighted the lack of visible promotion, for example no posters in shops or flyers distributed. It was also considered that

the Council needed people on the ground engaging with traders to understand their needs and challenges.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised Members that he would request a review of publicity efforts to ensure future events were better promoted.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group advised Members that she met two brothers from Loughborough University involved in the initiative. Further to this, more information was requested on how the Council was supporting these young people beyond the market and what follow-up assistance was available to help them develop their businesses.

In response, the Leader of the Council thanked Members for their support and positive comments on the teenage markets and advised that he would follow up to provide more information on how the Council supported young entrepreneurs beyond the market itself.

At this point in the meeting, the Leader of the District Independent/Liberal Democrat Group asked it be noted that her grandson participated in the Teenage Markets in Horncastle. She continued that it had given him a real sense of purpose and had been a brilliant experience for him.

In response, the Leader of the Council stated that it was a great example of how these initiatives could have a real, tangible impact and seeing young people thrive and gain confidence was exactly what the Council hoped to achieve.

Horncastle Horse Fair - 9th August 2025

The Leader was pleased to report that the Horncastle Horse Fair was a successful and well-attended event.

Art Aspirations: A summer of Creative Collaboration

The Leader advised that the Arts Aspirations programme was progressing well, fostering creative collaborations that were having a positive impact in the areas where they were delivered.

During a brief discussion, the lack of publicity for this event was further highlighted as a drawback to securing good attendance.

Louth Food and Drink Festival: A Feast for the Senses

The Leader reported that the Louth Food and Drink Festival was significantly affected by poor weather which impacted attendance and was hugely disappointing. Further to previous comments made, he confirmed that the Council would take on board the feedback around communication and publicity and would review what had changed and how the Council could improve this going forward.

A Member queried whether the Shop Front Grant Scheme would be reinstated in Louth, highlighting that investment was needed due to many tired-looking shopfronts,

It was further emphasised that Louth was the largest market town in the district, yet it often seemed to receive the least support with the Friday and Saturday markets struggling and queried when more investment would be made.

In response, the Leader of the Council informed Members that he had worked closely with Louth over the years, both as a Councillor and Portfolio Holder, and recalled when Louth had a town manager. The Leader encouraged Louth residents, community groups, and ward councillors to engage proactively and highlighted that funding was available for initiatives like the Shop Front Grant scheme.

The Leader continued that if Louth Town Council was willing to develop a proposal, the Council could explore involving Heritage Lincolnshire and was happy to facilitate discussions with relevant officer teams to ensure Louth benefited fully from the opportunities available.

The Leader provided Members with an update on Local Government Reorganisation as follows:

'Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland Councils are well into drafting our LGR proposal and the submission deadline remains 28th November 2025.

It is expected there will be 5 other proposals submitted to government from this area, one from North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, City of Lincoln Council, Lincolnshire County Council bid, and a joint bid from North Kesteven and South Kesteven Councils.

We firmly believe that our proposed geography and vision is the most compelling from Greater Lincolnshire and delivers on all the government's criteria.

In relation to our proposal, a Greater Lincolnshire for All, in recent weeks we have undertaken significant engagement with MPs, Strategic partners, town and parish councils and their representative bodies and the wider community.

We have three public engagement sessions remaining in Boston, Louth and Skegness, and we look forward to discussing the Greater Lincolnshire for all bid with all those attending.

Along with the senior officer, group leaders continue to be updated on our LGR proposals, and we continue to share correspondence from government with all councillors when we receive it. The final monthly member discussion sessions ahead of submission is tomorrow night via teams, and the focus is adults and children services. Thereafter, we have sessions planned for all

councillors and these are in your Diaries for 3rd November, one daytime and one evening and an opportunity for you to share input into the draft proposal. We will share the draft around a week before, so you have the opportunity to read and digest.

After our proposal has been submitted, we expect government to undertake a statutory consultation early 2026 with the final proposal known in mid-2026. At present, we believe the shadow Councils will be formed from April 2027 and the new Councils will go live in 2028'.

Following which, the Leader added that there had been a lot of speculation around the timeline for the LGR process and while there may be time pressures due to current government capacity, the Council was preparing for all possible outcomes. If the proposal proceeded as planned, the Council had a strong and credible submission. If there was a delay, the Council would respond accordingly and adapt its approach. If the process was halted altogether, the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership was in a strong position as demonstrated by its recent collaborative work.

A Member acknowledged the ongoing councillor briefings for LGR, however considered given the scale of the change being the most significant in local government in 50 years, queried whether an extraordinary Full Council meeting would be appropriate to allow all Members to formally scrutinise, comment on, and potentially vote on the proposals.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the decision-making process was an executive function. However, he was very open to engaging as widely as possible and bringing councillors together to discuss the proposals, even if it did not constitute a formal decision-making forum. Members were advised that the following evening's session for Members was part of that engagement process and whilst he appreciated that availability could be a challenge, highlighted that attendance at previous councillor sessions has been lower than hoped. The Leader strongly encouraged Members to attend and participate as it was a valuable opportunity to contribute.

The Leader continued and provided Members with an update on the recent Peer Review as follows:

'Last week we were pleased to welcome the peer team from the LGA back to our Council. Since their first visit in November 2024, we have been working to deliver the action plan we agreed and we're grateful to Overview Committee for their ongoing oversight and support in this. I'd also like to thank those Members who engaged in the visit itself.

The Peers in their follow up visit were impressed with the progress made. They described us as 'a very good Council' reinforcing this point from their first visit. Clearly, as with any peer review, there are areas that they have identified for us to focus on and we now await the follow up report that we will

share with all Councillors. We did share a recording of the feedback session with all Councillors, so hopefully you've been able to review this'.

No comments or questions were received.

46. 2025/26 QUARTER 1 FINANCE UPDATE - CAPITAL:

A report was presented that set out a summary of the current capital financial position for the Council at the end of the first quarter of 2025/26 forecasting to the year end for Members' consideration.

During his introduction of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance highlighted the key issues as follows:

Revenue Outturn

- The Q1 forecast revenue outturn for 2025/26 was an overspend of £280,000 at the present time. Steps were being taken to manage these pressures, and a further report would cover these when the quarter two position had been assessed.
- Income forecasts remained broadly in line with full year budgets following Q1 meetings. Forecasts for Planning Application fees and Car Parking charges remained under review and would be reflected appropriately in Q2.
- The Council's 2025/26 net budget for investment income was £2.149m, the forecast outturn for investment income was £2.955m, contributing to a possible overachievement of £806k.
- The Government announced during 2025/26 that it would provide £5m of additional funding to support Councils significantly impacted by Internal Drainage Board levies. East Lindsey District Council was awarded £1.164m for 2025/26 which was included within the Outturn figures.

Capital

For Capital, Table 1 of Appendix A provided details of all capital schemes and their forecast position. The total Capital Programme for 2025/26 was approved at £43.465m and forecast expenditure for 2025/26 was £39.795m an underspend of £4.984m against a revised budget of £44.779m. Further to this, the report presented detailed adjustments to the programme of £1.314m detailed in Table 3 of Appendix A.

It was highlighted to Members that Section B of Table 3 required Council's consideration in line with the Constitution, those aspects to be considered related to;

- UKSPF grant of £531k received now confirmed from Combined Mayoral Authority via North East Lincolnshire Council.
- UKSPF Rural grant £538k received now confirmed from Combined Mayoral Authority via North East Lincolnshire Council.
- Spilsby Session House £1.006m additional funding received from Heritage at Risk to bolster this scheme.

The full background to the report was detailed at Sections 1 and 2, page 60 of the Agenda refers.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward and during discussion the following queries and comments were made:

A Member referred to Table 3 – Changes to Approved Capital Budgets, page 65 of the Agenda refers and in relation to the 3G Football Pitch was disappointed that the funding had been removed without any reinvestment into sports provision in Louth, particularly as free and accessible physical activities was urgently needed in the area, which was vital for the health and wellbeing of the residents.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group echoed her concerns with regards to the 3G pitch, Table 1 – Capital Programme 2025/26, page 63 of the Agenda refers and queried why the Council was abandoning what could be a vital sporting legacy for Louth, particularly as the town lacked adequate football facilities.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance acknowledged the concerns raised, however advised that there were compelling reasons behind the decisions made at the time. However, reinvestment in Louth remained a priority for the Council and it was committed to supporting projects that were both beneficial to the community and financially viable, and such proposals would always be given due consideration.

With regard to the Car Park Solar Panels, Table 1: 'Capital Programme 2025/26', page 63 of the Agenda refers. A Member stated that this project was a key priority for the Labour Group and was also considered essential for the Council to achieve its net zero targets. However, given that the project had been under consideration for some time, a question was raised regarding the reasons for the delay in its implementation.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised Members that there was a plan in place for the installation of the solar panels and was confident that this remained on track.

A Member queried why expenditure was being reported for Kingfisher Caravan Park as a financially independent organisation, (Table 1), page 63 of the Agenda refers. In relation to the Kingfisher enhancements and lawnmower entry, it was further queried what the rationale was behind these investments

and what return the Council expected from this. It was further considered that the term 'enhancement' was too broad and lacked specificity.

In response, the Leader of the Council highlighted to Members that while Invest East Lindsey operated from the Kingfisher Caravan Park, the site itself was owned by East Lindsey District Council. Therefore, the proposed enhancements related specifically to the Council's ownership and responsibilities for the site.

A further comment was made that the entry in Table 1 for 'Food Waste', page 63 of the Agenda refers was vague and queried whether this related to the government's caddy scheme and highlighted that the lack of clarity was concerning.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised Members that he had spoken with the Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and was assured that everything relating to the food waste collection was in order, and there were no significant concerns at present.

The Decarbonisation of Assets (Table 1, page 63 of the Agenda refers) was highlighted and whilst it was considered that it was good to see a budget allocated, with no clear plan or justification outlined it was queried whether this was financially sound and how long it would take to recoup the investment.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised Members that a plan had been established, and the Council was adhering to it. Both himself and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction were strong advocates for this initiative and remained committed to its progress.

A Member commented on the £1.5m allocation for the Broadway and Colonnade Car Park (Table 1), page 64 of the Agenda refers and queried the justification of this should it not generate additional income and considered that the investment would be better used on the adjacent unused land.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the Sutton on Sea car park had long been an aspiration and was included in the original business plan and added that this development represented the culmination of sustained work and planning and would enhance the facilities available at the Colonnade, delivering on a long-standing objective.

Reference was made to Table 4 – 'Capital 5 Year Programme', page 66 of the Agenda refers. A query was raised why the Swimming Pool Support Fund (£222k) was listed under capital when it seemed more appropriate for revenue.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group stated that she would like to see capital investment directed towards Louth Industrial Estate, particularly due to the growth pressures the Council was facing.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the Council was currently in discussions with Lincolnshire County Council about how this could be moved forward, including potential funding options. This initiative was being supported through the Invest East Lindsey Fund, which was encouraging news and showed that progress was being made as swiftly as possible.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group highlighted her disappointment with regards to the Decommitment of ICT investment, (Table 3), page 65 of the Agenda refers and it was considered that the Council should be investing in modern technologies otherwise it risked falling behind.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that the Council fully recognised the importance of technology and was investing significantly in areas such as artificial intelligence, ensuring it was well-prepared for the future.

A Member referred to the £7k allocated for portable CCTV (Table 1), page 67 of the Agenda refers and queried the intended use of this equipment and whether this could be used to monitor fly-tipping and similar issues.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance advised Members that further to a conversation with the Portfolio Holder for Operational Services, he could confirm that tackling fly-tipping was one of the primary purposes behind the deployment of CCTV.

RESOLVED:

That amendments to the Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A – Table 3 – Section B of the report referred be approved.

47. USE OF THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL RESERVE:

A report was presented to consider use of the Council's Capital Reserve.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council advised Members that at its meeting on 24 September 2025, Executive Board supported the use of up to £1,650,000 from the Council's capital reserve to fund the full refurbishment of six sets of Public Conveniences (PC's) across East Lindsey and the replacement of a seventh set with a new modular unit, Minute No 112 refers. As the Council's Constitution required Council approval for the use of the Capital Reserve above £500,000, Executive Board resolved to recommend the use of up to £1.65 million of the reserve to Council accordingly.

The public conveniences it agreed for traditional refurbishment were:

- Spa Road PCs, Woodhall Spa.
- St. Lawrence Street PCs, Horncastle

- Market Place, Wragby
- High Street PCs, Spilsby
- Pullover PCs, Anderby Creek
- Brooks Walk PCs, Wainfleet All Saints, with Castle Lane PCs, Coningsby, being agreed for replacement with a modular suite.

The full background to the report was detailed at Sections 1 and 2, pages 70 to 71 of the Agenda refers.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward and during discussion the following queries and comments were made:

A Member questioned whether it would have been more appropriate to consult with relevant parish councils at the outset, asking if they would be willing to take on responsibility for the public conveniences following refurbishment rather than proceeding with the works and only then initiating discussions.

A Member expressed concern regarding the proposed £1 million investment in toilet refurbishments, particularly in the context of the upcoming devolution agenda. He recalled that prior to 2019, the Council had resolved that all public conveniences would either be outsourced or managed by town and parish councils. He suggested that consultation should take place with those councils to determine their willingness to take on the facilities post-refurbishment, to avoid the risk of investing in assets that may later be declined. He also raised concerns about the inconsistency in charging for public toilet use across the district, noting that some towns charged 40p while others offered free access, which he felt was inequitable.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group welcomed the report and highlighted that Horncastle had long campaigned for improvements to its public conveniences. She recalled an historical Council programme that refurbished one or two toilet blocks annually, which had lapsed due to resource constraints. She expressed hope that the internal condition of Horncastle's toilets would soon match their improved exterior. She confirmed that Horncastle Town Council had previously indicated a willingness to take on the facilities, provided they had been refurbished.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Progressives Group echoed the comments made and expressed her support for the investment. As Chair of the most recent Public Conveniences Scrutiny Panel, she highlighted that the group had visited every facility and made informed recommendations. She highlighted that some facilities, such as those in Spilsby, were in particularly poor condition and welcomed the investment as a positive step, particularly in the context of devolution, and emphasised that town and parish councils were more likely to accept asset transfers if the facilities were in good condition.

A Member supported the investment, describing it as essential for both residents' quality of life and the local tourism industry. He reiterated previous comments made and praised the initiative as a positive move.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning described the refurbishment programme as a genuine investment in local economies, particularly in smaller and sometimes overlooked communities. He highlighted the Council's strong financial position, contrasting it with other authorities facing difficult budget decisions. He reflected that had similar financial flexibility existed in 2017 during a previous scrutiny review, more options might have been available and welcomed the current progress as a sign of the district's positive trajectory.

The Ward Member for Wragby highlighted the importance of the Wragby facilities, noting their high usage and contribution to local business and tourism. She reported that Wragby Parish Council had previously declined to take on the toilets in their current condition but would be open to consider doing so if they were refurbished.

A Member reflected on past experiences, such as the costly repairs to the cattle market roof in Louth, as a reminder that preventative investment was often more cost-effective. She welcomed the toilets refurbishment as a worthwhile investment, particularly for its tourism and public health benefits, and confirmed the Labour Group's support.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group raised concerns about the continued use of the SCAPE Regional Construction Framework, which she described as expensive and inefficient. She questioned why local businesses were not being engaged to carry out the work, which could support the local economy.

In response to questions about the continued use of the SCAPE Regional Construction Framework, the Leader explained that the Council was bound by legal procurement requirements. While Members may have concerns about the cost and effectiveness of SCAPE, the Council must adhere to established procurement processes. It was noted that in some cases, contracts may include provisions for a percentage of work to be delivered by local contractors and further detail on procurement processes could be provided upon request.

A Member added her support for the investment, echoing the positive sentiments of previous speakers. As a member of the scrutiny group, she expressed satisfaction at seeing the recommendations being acted upon.

The Leader of the Reform UK Group also voiced his support for the refurbishment programme, noting his involvement in the scrutiny process and agreeing that the facilities needed upgrading.

In response to the comments made, the Leader of the Council clarified that public conveniences were not a statutory service but a discretionary one. The

rationale for introducing charges at certain facilities was established at the time and remained valid.

The Leader further acknowledged the comments regarding whether asset transfers to town and parish councils should have been offered prior to refurbishment. It was confirmed that a comprehensive engagement exercise had taken place several years previous, during which asset transfers were offered to local councils. A recurring theme in the feedback received was concern over the condition of the facilities, which impacted the willingness of councils to take them on.

The Leader also addressed the broader context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), stating that the prospect of LGR should not prevent the Council from continuing to invest in its communities. Regardless of whether LGR proceeded, the Council had a responsibility to deliver positive outcomes for residents and businesses. Should LGR go ahead, the investment would leave a strong legacy by ensuring that key community assets, particularly those supporting tourism were in good condition. If LGR did not proceed, the Council would still have acted in the best interests of its communities.

The Leader concluded by welcoming the positive contributions made by Members and reiterated that the refurbishment programme represented a significant benefit for communities across the district, both coastal and inland.

RESOLVED:

That the use of up to £1.65m from the Council's capital reserve to fund the Public Conveniences refurbishment/replacement works as set out in the report be approved.

N.B. Councillor Richard Fry left the room at 7.38pm and re-joined the Meeting at 7.43pm.

N.B. Councillor Colin Davie left the room at 7.38pm and re-joined the Meeting at 7.44pm.

48. DESIGNATION OF SECTION 151 OFFICER:

A report was presented to consider the designation of Section 151 Officer.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the Council had an obligation to designate a suitably qualified Section 151 Officer. The Council's interim Section 151 Officer, Brendan Arnold, would leave the Council at the end of his contract.

The report brought to Council the designation of a Section 151 Officer to ensure the statutory functions associated with the role were fulfilled. As at present, the role would be undertaken on a shared basis across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

The Leader of the Council expressed his thanks to Mr. Arnold for his service to the Council.

The full background to the report was detailed at Sections 1 and 2, page 76 of the Agenda refers.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward and during discussion the following comments were made:

Councillor Ros Jackson, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee offered her thanks to Brendan Arnold for his impactful contribution during his tenure and expressed her anticipation in working with Russell Stone.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group echoed these sentiments, thanking Mr. Arnold for transforming the way all Members were engaged in the budget-setting process. She noted that this inclusive approach had been long sought after and on behalf of the East Lindsey Independent Group expressed sincere appreciation for his work.

RESOLVED:

That Russell Stone, the Council's incoming Director of Finance be designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer with effect from 3rd November 2025.

49. SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT:

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs presented a report that set out the progress of the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership since the last update on 21st May 2025.

The background and detail to the report was highlighted to Members, as set out at Sections 1 to 4, pages 80 to 85 of the Agenda refer, and particular reference was made to the following:

- Alignment and Delivery Plan (Section 2)
- Priority Partnerships Updates (Section 3)
- Local Government Reform (Section 4)

The Leader of the Council highlighted that as a partnership, there was now a notably more positive and aligned political atmosphere across all three councils. The Partnership was working collaboratively and effectively in shaping its Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals, which was an encouraging sign for the future. Importantly, even if LGR did not proceed, the Partnership remained a strong and viable entity, continuing to deliver the benefits of a shared management structure and an expanded footprint for engagement with central government.

Following which the recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

A Member raised a concern regarding the presentation of savings data in the financial graphs detailed in Section 2 'Alignment and Delivery Plan', pages 80 to 81 of the Agenda refer. He noted that the figures for cashable and non-cashable savings were not clearly separated, making it difficult to interpret the actual cash flow impact. He requested that future reports distinguish between these categories to provide greater clarity, particularly in understanding whether savings resulted in actual cash in hand or were derived from operational efficiencies.

The Chief Executive responded that a detailed Excel spreadsheet existed which itemised all savings and clearly identified whether they were cashable or non-cashable. He confirmed that officers would look into amending the presentation of this data to make it clearer for Members.

A Member asked for a brief summary of the top three savings contributing to the reported £4 million achieved this year and projected for the next. He suggested that highlighting these would help communicate the success of the savings programme and allow Members to celebrate the achievements.

The Chief Executive noted the importance of maintaining the meeting's format, and advised Members that detailed questions should be addressed outside the formal session.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council would be happy to provide a breakdown of the key savings. He noted that a significant portion of the savings stemmed from the shared management arrangements, along with procurement efficiencies and other operational improvements. He offered to provide further detail to Members upon request.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group referred to Section 2.3 page 80 of the Agenda refers, which highlighted the importance of securing external funding. She expressed concern that market towns and rural villages appeared to benefit only marginally from such funding. She questioned further whether the Council was receiving a fair return on its 47% contribution to the Partnership and raised broader concerns about local service provision, including policing.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the distribution of funding and benefits across the Partnership was under active review. While he could not yet share the outcome, he assured Members that the matter had been raised and was being addressed. He reiterated that the current political alignment across the partner councils had created a more positive environment for collaboration. He also highlighted that the successful securing of external funding had enabled the Council to reinvest business rates uplift into the East Lindsey Investment Fund. This in turn allowed for

broader investment across communities, including market towns and villages, by freeing up internal resources that would otherwise have been required.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

N.B. Councillor Richard Fry left the room at 7.38pm and re-joined the Meeting at 7.43pm.

N.B. Councillor Colin Davie left the room at 7.38pm and re-joined the Meeting at 7.44pm.

50. COMMITTEE SEATS REVIEW:

A report was presented to review committee seat allocations to political groups in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and confirm appointments to committees.

During his introduction of the report, the Chief Executive advised Members that the purpose of the report was to set out a revised allocation of seats and associated appointments for committees following a review undertaken in response to a recent change in political group membership.

This paper reviewed committee seat allocations to political groups in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Members were referred to Appendix A 'Allocation of Committee seats' and Appendix B 'Appointments to Committees, pages 1 to 4 of the Supplementary Agenda refer.

The Chief Executive read out a statement as follows:

'I received notice on 21 August 2025 that Councillor Carleen Dickinson had joined the Reform UK Group. Councillor Dickinson had, until that point, been a member of the East Lindsey Independent Group (ELIG). Further to this, a request for a review of committee seats was received.

I received a further notification on 22 September 2025 that Councillor Stephen Evans (Conservative Group), had resigned as a District Councillor for Chapel St Leonards Ward.

Further to the publication of the report and appendices, notification was received and acknowledged that Councillor Ru Yarsley has joined the Conservative Group from the East Lindsey Independent Group. Appendices A & B have been updated and are tabled to reflect this. Please note the following information has been updated:

The East Lindsey Independent Group vacancy on Planning Committee will be filled by Councillor Richard Cunnington.

The Conservative vacancy on Planning Policy Committee will be filled by Councillor Ru Yarsley'.

N.B. A copy of the updated Appendices A and B are attached to the Minutes.

The Recommendation was duly Proposed and Seconded.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Independent Group noted the outcome of the 2024 elections, highlighting that Independent candidates had performed well, which she attributed to the electorate's confidence in their integrity and commitment. She expressed concern that some Members had since changed political affiliation without consulting their constituents, potentially resulting in representation that may not reflect the voters' original intentions. She questioned how such changes could be considered truly representative.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Progressives Group further queried the status of the two remaining Conservative vacancies.

The Leader of the Council responded that the Conservative vacancies referenced were not related to Members changing political groups. He confirmed that the matter was an internal issue for him to address in his capacity as Leader.

RESOLVED

That the revised allocation of seats to political groups as detailed in the tabled Appendix A to the report referred and appointments to committees as detailed in the tabled Appendix B to the report referred be approved.

N.B. Councillor Steve Kirk left the room at 7.48pm and re-joined the Meeting at 7.50pm.

51. MOTIONS ON NOTICE:

There were no Motions received for this Meeting.

52. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

Members received the draft Open and Exempt Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 10th September 2025 for noting, pages 95 to 115 of the Agenda refer.

Councillor Ros Jackson, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee highlighted key elements from the Minutes as follows:

- During the meeting, there was a discussion about the budget plan and budget planning process with a Reserved Members' Day scheduled to ensure all councillors had the opportunity to contribute and ask questions.
- Reference to insufficient controls', page 103 of the Agenda refers. This referred specifically to a lack of controls in identifying and monitoring savings. The absence of expected processes meant that no proper assurance or standard assessment could be made. This was considered worse than receiving a no assurance rating, as it indicated a fundamental failure in internal controls.

Members were assured that the Committee took this matter very seriously and would be seeking improvements in the processes going forward. It was worth noting that an 'insufficient controls' assessment was rare, which further underlined the seriousness of the issue.

No comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

That the draft Open and Exempt Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 10th September 2025 be noted.

53. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25:

Members received the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/25 from Councillor Ros Jackson, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, pages 117 to 130 of the Agenda refer.

Members were referred to the details which included the following areas:

- Audit and Governance Committee Membership 2024/25
- Committee Meetings and Summary of Work
- Internal and External Audit
- Governance
- Treasury and Accounts
- Risk Management
- Training and Development

Councillor Ros Jackson, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee highlighted key elements from the Annual Report and commented as follows:

- The catch-up work completed on audits and accounts, as well as the emerging governance issues and challenges arising from local government reorganisation remained ongoing areas of focus for the Committee.

- The Committee had struggled to achieve full attendance, which the Chairman of the Committee considered a serious governance issue and emphasised the importance of sending substitutes when Members were unable to attend. This was a key area for improvement within the Council.
- The list of items and reports considered by the committee were more extensive than usual, reflecting the catch-up work undertaken.

N.B. Councillors Richard Fry and Daniel Simpson left the Meeting at 7.54pm.

N.B. Councillor Alex Hall left the room at 7.52pm and re-joined the Meeting at 7.54pm.

N.B. Councillor Will Grover left the room at 7.54pm and re-joined the Meeting at 8.02pm.

N.B. Councillor Fiona Martin left the room at 7.51pm and re-joined the Meeting at 7.55pm.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

- A Member of the Audit and Governance Committee stated that he would like to acknowledge and commend the two newly co-opted members, Ian Silcox Crow and Chris Pilkington for achieving 100% attendance throughout the year.
- It was further considered that it was important to highlight that the independent members had shown full commitment, which set a strong example and that Councillor Members should feel a duty to attend and ensure substitutes were arranged if they could not attend as it was a matter of governance and accountability.
- The Vice-Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee fully supported the comments made and thanked Councillor Jackson as Chairman of the Committee who she considered exceptionally diligent and her attention to detail and thoroughness was greatly appreciated.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the recent peer review highlighted that it was rare for councils to have opposition members leading Audit, Governance and Overview and this was seen as a significant strength of the Council and echoed his thanks to Cllr Jackson and all committee members for their work.

The Leader added that while attendance concerns were noted, he also wanted to recognise that when issues were raised, officers and the Portfolio Holder responded swiftly and effectively.

The Leader added further that the Executive Board took the work of Audit and Governance Committee very seriously, as it underpinned the governance

framework, not just the decisions made, but the processes behind those decisions.

Further to a query raised in relation to the insufficient controls highlighted at Item 15 'Draft Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee', it was agreed that the Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee would provide further clarification on the matter of insufficient controls to the Member concerned.

RESOLVED:

That the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2024/25 be noted.

54. URGENCY DECISIONS - CALL IN APPLICATION:

A report was presented to Council to note decisions taken under urgency provisions.

During his introduction of the report, the Leader of the Council advised Members that the Council's Constitution required that decisions taken as a matter of urgency should be reported to the Council, together with the reasons for urgency. The report provided details of decisions that were taken to date during the Municipal Year 2025/26 under urgency provisions.

The Leader advised Members that between 22 May 2025 and 7 October 2025 one decision had been taken to waive call-in, Section 2, page 132 of the Agenda refers.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

- The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee stated that she would like to understand the reason for the delay in finalising the insurance contracts to the point where they needed to be approved under urgency provisions, Section 2.1, page 132 of the Agenda refers. It was highlighted that this issue was previously raised by the Audit and Governance Committee in 2024/25, where insurance received a limited assurance rating. Following this, Internal Audit flagged the need for improvement as far back as January 2025, therefore it was concerning that the matter had progressed to this stage without resolution.

The Leader of the East Lindsey Progressives Group responded that she was not surprised by the delay, as the insurance market had become increasingly difficult, with many insurers now reluctant to provide quotations more than 30 to 45 days in advance. This time constraint made it difficult to complete the procurement process and schedule the necessary meetings for approval in a timely manner.

No further comments or questions were received.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

N.B. Councillor Terry Aldridge left the Meeting at 8.02pm.

N.B. Councillor Jimmy Brookes left the Meeting at 8.03pm.

55. QUESTIONS:

Question 1	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Sexual Harassment and Bullying training
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 2	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Alternative site for 3G pitch in Louth
Response by	Councillor Graham Marsh, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Leisure and Culture and Carbon Reduction.
Supplementary	None
Question 3	Councillor George Horton
Subject	Data on Fly Tipping
Response by	Councillor Martin Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	None
Question 4	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Louth and Drink Festival
Response by	Councillor Adam Grist, Portfolio Holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy/Councillor Thomas Kemp, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Supplementary	None
Question 5	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Louth Market
Response by	Councillor Martin Foster, Portfolio Holder for Operational Services
Supplementary	I've had a request from stallholders who are height-challenged and struggle to put covers on their stalls. Telling them to bring steps isn't practical. Can we do more to support traders with these kinds of issues?
Response	There's a lot of positive work happening with the new market initiatives. I've noted your concerns about stall setup assistance and will pass this on to the market officers. Our team is present on market days and does try to help, especially in poor weather conditions.

Question 6	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Councillor attendance on Outside Bodies
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 7	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Progression of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 8	Councillor Daniel Simpson
Subject	Costs for developing LGR options
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	None
Question 9	Councillor Edward Mossop
Subject	Sutton on Sea Colonnade
Response by	Councillor Steve Kirk, Portfolio Holder for the Coastal Economy
Supplementary	What is the actual plan for the space in the Colonnade and how will it fulfil the original bid's ambitions?
Response	I'll respond in writing due to the commercially sensitive nature of the details.
Question 10	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Development of new houses in Louth
Response by	Councillor Tom Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Supplementary	I'm raising concerns from Louth. We don't have enough doctors and more housing keeps being added. The government wants growth, but we can't take any more. I know you support growth, but we haven't resolved the conservation area either. What are you going to do about this?
Response	The government's housing targets represent a 150% increase, which is a major challenge. We believe the methodology behind these targets is flawed and are actively challenging it with MHCLG. Due to the loss of our five-year housing supply, there's a presumption in favour of sustainable development, making it hard to resist certain applications. We won't see more houses built than market demand allows, and we'll continue to fight for realistic targets and work toward a revised spatial strategy.

Question 11	Councillor Jill Makinson-Sanders
Subject	Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Council processes
Response by	Councillor Craig Leyland, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Affairs
Supplementary	All services are 'empowered to consider' how AI might be used. I'd like to see stronger language. AI has many applications, in planning, environment, revenues and benefits and could help us save money for other priorities. Is the Council dragging its heels? Can we use a more proactive term than 'consider'?
Response	We do consider AI where appropriate, but not all services are suited to it. We aim to match technology to service needs, and I believe the current response is fair and balanced.

A full copy of the questions is attached at **Appendix 1** to these Minutes.

56. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The programmed date for the next Meeting of the Council was noted as Wednesday 28th January 2026 commencing at 2.00pm.

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm.