

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL** held in the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 21 April 2026 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)
L J Eldridge (Vice-Chairman)

D Ashby
P Barnes
A C Beal

M Geaney
R A Gibson
M Hasan

J L Reynolds
J Whitbourn

In Attendance: The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), the Service Director – Communities and Housing Services, the Business Intelligence and Change Manager, the Group Manager - Public Protection, the Change and Improvement Manager (HRA), the Housing Repairs Manager, the Cultural Venues and Creative Art Manager, the Deputy Head of Revenues and Benefits (PSPS), the Democratic Services Team Leader and the Democratic Services Support Officer.

Apologies of absence were received from or on behalf of Councillor M Le Sage.

83. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the following meetings be signed by the Chairman as a correct record:

- Joint Performance Monitoring Panel/Policy Development Panel held on 13 January 2026;
- Policy Development Panel held on 3 February 2026; and
- Special Policy Development Panel held on 9 February 2026.

84. ACTIONS

Consideration was given to the update on actions which arose at the 3 February 2026 Policy Development Panel meeting and the tracking of outstanding actions.

The following updates were provided:

- In respect of action 76.25/26 regarding the 'SHDC Markets Policy Review', a further update was provided by the Markets Manager; *'The Markets Team are now looking into*

Action By

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the possibility of the Markets Officer receiving first aid training;

- In respect of action 52.25/26 regarding the delay in the review of the 'Data Protection Policy', the following response was provided by the Business Intelligence and Change Manager, *'The Data Protection Policy had been aligned across the partnership and approved'*;
- In respect of action 53c.25/26 regarding the 'Artificial Intelligence Policy', the following response was provided by the Business Intelligence and Change Manager: *'the policy work remained ongoing, including considerations around firewalls and pilot arrangements and advised that future updates would be provided'*;
- In respect of action 58.25/26, the following response was provided by the Business Intelligence and Change Manager: *'work on the Net Zero Action Plan was still progressing and that the action should therefore remain open'*; and
- In respect of action 65.22/23, it was noted that the matter remained ongoing with further work still required.

Members considered the response to action 76.25/26 regarding first aid training for the Markets Manager and queried the extent of the training and resulting responsibility - would the officer be expected to provide first aid to stallholders, members of the public, or to fulfil a more limited role. Members raised concerns regarding the legal implications of officers administering first aid in a public setting and the distinction between workplace and public first-aid training. Clarification was required regarding the most appropriate form of training, with a suggestion that officers could be trained to manage incidents and support emergency response rather than administer first aid directly.

- The Business Intelligence and Change Manager agreed to seek additional advice on the matter from the Markets Manager.

AGREED:

That the update regarding actions be noted.

85. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

86. QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

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87. TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

**88. ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING
PANEL**

There were none.

89. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan dated 13 April 2026.

AGREED:

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

90. SHDC POLICY REGISTER & SELCP POLICY REGISTER

Consideration was given to the SHDC Policy Register and the S&ELCP Policy Register.

The Business Intelligence and Change Manager introduced the report and provided members with the following update:

- The Graffiti and Street Art Management Policy review was overdue but was to be considered at the current meeting. No other policies were overdue;
- A number of ICT-related policies were scheduled for review in July 2025 and were expected to involve only minor amendments before being brought to the Panel;
- The Communications Strategy was scheduled for review in September 2026; and
- First year review commentary had been provided for the Customer Feedback Policy.

Members considered the update and made the following comments:

- Members suggested that policies listed as 'approved' but due to be reviewed, should now be marked as 'in review'.
 - The Business Intelligence and Change Manager confirmed that the register could be updated to reflect 'in review' status once active review was underway.

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- Members commented positively on the presentation of reports, particularly where amendments had been clearly highlighted, and requested that minor amendments to forthcoming ICT policies be clearly marked to assist readability.
 - The Business Intelligence and Change Manager agreed to pass this feedback to the relevant policy owners and confirmed that efforts would be made to ensure amendments were clearly highlighted in future reports.
- Members thanked the Business Intelligence and Change Manager for his work on the registers which considered to be in a healthy position.

AGREED:

That the SHDC Policy Register, and the S&ELCP Policy Register be noted.

91. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY – GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT AND ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director - Regulatory to seek views from Policy Development Panel on proposed amendments to the Council's Health and Safety Policy.

The Group Manager – Public Protection introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- That the changes were minor and formed part of the scheduled three-yearly review, with amendments highlighted within the document; and
- That updates primarily enabled the policy to be adopted separately by each sovereign council, providing greater flexibility, and that some detailed content had been removed to sit more appropriately within supporting documents such as terms of reference.

Members considered the report and supported the highlighted amendments.

AGREED:

That following consideration of the proposed amendments to the Health and Safety Policy (Appendix 1), the Policy Development Panel recommended the policy to Cabinet for approval.

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92. FINAL REPORT OF THE DERELICT AND UNTIDY SITES TASK GROUP

The Chairman of the Policy Development Panel informed the members that he had agreed that the Final Report of the Derelict and Untidy Sites Task group be deferred to the Policy Development Panel meeting being held on 2 June 2026.

93. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) AND HATE CRIME POLICY FOR THE HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICE

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Housing, which asked the members to consider the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Crime Policy for the Housing Landlord Service.

The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) presented the report which provided an update on the ASB Framework that was adopted in July 2025.

Members considered the report and made the following comments:

- Members asked how frequently the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy would be applied in practice and how many reports were received by the Council.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) advised that, between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026, 117 cases had been reported which met the relevant thresholds, excluding reports that were assessed as not constituting ASB or hate crime.
- Members queried the scope of the policy and asked how many properties were managed by the Council on behalf of other landlords.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) advised that this information was not available at the meeting but undertook to provide the details to Members outside of the meeting.
- Members sought clarification on the meaning of 'reasonable hours' referenced within the list of behaviours not classified as anti-social behaviour, particularly in relation to noise from children.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) acknowledged that interpretations could vary depending on individual circumstances and advised that further clarification and examples could be

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included within the policy, reflecting feedback received from tenants.

- Members commented on the ordering of the appendices and suggested that placing the summary of amendments before the policy itself would improve readability.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) acknowledged the suggestion and noted it for future reports.
- Members asked about the proposal to introduce A5 fridge magnets containing key service contacts, noting that many households now had integrated appliances.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) explained that this suggestion had come from tenant feedback and confirmed that existing repair-service magnets were already distributed. It was advised that alternative formats would be explored with tenants to ensure accessibility.
- Members queried whether the section on reporting domestic abuse should include explicit reference to reporting incidents directly to the police.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) responded that:
 - Tenants could choose to report ASB to the police and that safeguarding referrals would be made where appropriate; however, it was noted that overt reference to the police could deter reporting; and
 - Best practice across landlord policies would be reviewed to determine whether amendments were required.
- Members suggested that responsible domestic fires should be included within the list of behaviours not classed as anti-social behaviour, with a link to existing fire safety guidance.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) confirmed that this issue had also been raised by tenants and agreed that the policy could be updated accordingly.
- Members asked whether clearer links could be provided to the Tenancy Management Policy in relation to follow-up timescales set out within the ASB policy.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) agreed that adding a link to the Tenancy

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Management Policy would provide helpful context and confirmed this would be included.

- Members queried whether the 'key facts' summary and proposed video version of the policy would be shared with Members before publication.
 - The Change and Improvement Manager (HRA) advised that these materials would not normally return to the Panel but confirmed that they would be circulated to Members once finalised and published.

AGREED:

- 1) That Tenant feedback on the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Crime Policy for the Housing Landlord Service be noted.
- 2) That following the noting of feedback from the Policy Development Panel on the Anti-Social (ASB) Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy for the Housing Landlord Service, the policy be recommended to Cabinet for adoption.
- 3) That the recommendation to delegate minor operational amendments or legislative changes to the Assistant Director - Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing, be supported.

94. HOUSING (HRA) DAMP CONDENSATION AND MOULD POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Housing which asked members to consider the updated Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy 2026 (Appendix 2).

The Housing Repairs Manager presented the updated Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy for 2026, and the following main points were highlighted:

- The policy had been revised to comply with Awaab's Law and had been informed by extensive tenant engagement;
- Feedback from focus groups, surveys and tenant panels had highlighted the need for clearer communication, timely updates and better understanding of responsibilities; and
- Such improvements, alongside learning from complaints and stock condition data, had been incorporated into the revised policy to strengthen processes, transparency and tenant support, while maintaining legislative compliance.

Members considered the report and made the following

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comments:

- Members sought reassurance that the revised policy would lead to clearer and more consistent communication with tenants throughout the damp, condensation, and mould process, and asked what safeguards were in place to maintain contact where officers were on leave or absent.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager explained that a dedicated Damp and Mould Team had been established, with revised scripts, follow-up letters and defined contact points introduced to better manage tenant expectations. Ownership of cases now remained with the Damp and Mould Team throughout, supported by shared inboxes, a central telephone number and office cover arrangements to ensure continuity of communication.
- Members asked whether the policy applied to outbuildings such as external toilets or washing facilities.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager responded that:
 - The Council remained responsible for the external structure of all buildings and for internal areas classed as habitable or providing essential facilities, such as outside toilets. Non-habitable structures, such as storage sheds, were generally excluded; and
 - Each case would be assessed individually, and that advice or low-level treatment would still be offered where appropriate.
- Members queried the use of the term 'decanted' within the policy flowchart and sought clarity on whether this referred to temporarily removing tenants from their homes.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager confirmed that decanting referred to temporary relocation in circumstances where tenant safety required this, such as significant hazards requiring urgent repair. The terminology could be softened, for example by using 'temporarily relocated', while maintaining clarity around the process.
- Members asked whether they would be able to view the risk assessment and triage tools used to assess damp and mould cases.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager responded that:
 - The triage tools assessed both the severity of the issue and household vulnerabilities to determine response priority. That the

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documentation would be circulated to members by email after the meeting.

- Members identified an error within the table at the bottom of Appendix 3 and asked whether the date should read 16 December 2025.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager confirmed this would be corrected.
- Members raised concerns about contractors cancelling or attending appointments at short notice and asked how contractors were being held to account and whether repeat issues were monitored.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager explained that contractor performance was reviewed regularly through contract meetings, that a strengthened code of conduct was being introduced, and that future contracts would require clearer evidence of appointment confirmation through written and electronic notifications.
- Members queried the tender process used to appoint contractors undertaking damp and mould works and how contractor performance was assessed.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager advised that the current contract had been appointed through an open tender process, evaluated on both cost and quality, in line with procurement requirements.
- Members expressed concern that a proportion of contractor visits had taken place without prior notice to tenants and asked how this would be prevented in future.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager advised that this issue linked to wider contract management improvements and that clearer appointment confirmation processes were being implemented to strengthen accountability.
- Members asked whether follow-up contact for tenants requiring additional support, including the six-month review, would be limited to telephone contact.
 - The Housing Repairs Manager confirmed that whilst initial follow-ups were usually by phone, home visits could be arranged where appropriate and that cases could be flagged for earlier or more frequent contact depending on risk and vulnerability.
- Members commented on the low response rate to the

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tenant survey and queried how the Council could ensure wider awareness of reporting routes for damp and mould issues.

- The Housing Repairs Manager acknowledged the low response rate, advising that this could skew results, and confirmed that reporting awareness continued to be promoted through handbooks, campaigns, and direct engagement, enabling officers to act where concerns were raised.

AGREED:

- 1) That Tenant feedback on the revised Housing Damp Condensation and Mould (DCM) Policy 2026 be noted;
- 2) That following the noting of feedback from the Policy Development Panel on the revised Housing Damp Condensation and Mould (DCM) Policy 2026, the policy be recommended to Cabinet for adoption; and
- 3) That the recommendation to delegate minor operational amendments to the Assistant Director - Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing, be supported.

95. GRAFFITI AND STREET ART MANAGEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Housing and Communities which presented to members an updated Street Art Management Policy and outlined the rationale for separating graffiti from street art within the Council policy.

The Cultural Venues and Creative Arts Manager and the Group Manager – Public Protection were in attendance for this item.

The Cultural Venues and Creative Arts Manager introduced the report which reviewed the Street Art Management Policy, originally approved in 2022. The revised policy clarified its focus on supporting community-led street art, while removing references to graffiti, which was addressed separately as a criminal matter under the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy. The proposed changes aimed to reduce confusion to ensure a clearer distinction between permitted street art and enforcement activity.

Members considered the report and made the following comments:

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- Members queried the rationale for removing graffiti from the Graffiti and Street Art Management Policy and asked how graffiti would otherwise be addressed.
 - The Group Manager – Public Protection explained that graffiti continued to be treated as a criminal and environmental enforcement matter and would be managed through the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy and Enviro-Crime processes, including partnership working with the Police, cleansing teams and enforcement officers, and that this change did not alter the Council's approach to tackling graffiti.
- Members sought clarification on the scope of the policy and whether street art was limited to Council-owned land.
 - The Cultural Venues and Creative Arts Manager advised that whilst the policy primarily supported street art on Council-owned or community-supported sites, street art could also take place on private property with the landowner's consent, and that in such cases the Council could not insist on compliance but would encourage engagement with officers and the community.
- Members queried how officers distinguished between authorised street art and unauthorised graffiti, particularly where artwork might be visible from public areas.
 - The Cultural Venues and Creative Arts Manager explained that the determining factor was landowner consent and the consultation process set out in the policy, with unauthorised works continuing to be treated as graffiti and addressed through enforcement routes.
- Members raised concerns that members of the public might not easily be able to identify whether artwork had been formally approved and suggested whether approved street art should be visibly marked or labelled.
 - The Cultural Venues and Creative Arts Manager advised that, in practice, approved street art projects usually involved consultation, funding and promotional activity, and undertook to explore whether clearer identification or promotion of approved works could be incorporated.
- Members expressed concern that encouraging street art could lead to copycat graffiti on nearby properties.
 - The Cultural Venues and Creative Arts Manager

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explained that authorised street art projects were often delivered through workshops and educational activity, making clear distinctions between designated authorised spaces and unlawful graffiti.

- Members sought clarity on the relationship between the Street Art Management Policy and the Corporate Enforcement Policy, expressing concern that the enforcement policy did not include specific examples such as graffiti.
 - The Group Manager – Public Protection confirmed that the Corporate Policy was intentionally generic due to the breadth of legislation enforced by the Council and undertook to review accompanying web-based guidance to clarify the Council's practical approach to managing graffiti.

AGREED:

- 1) That the separation of the Street Art Management Policy from the Graffiti Policy be supported;
- 2) That as graffiti was already governed by national legislation and the Corporate Enforcement Policy, the proposal that a separate Graffiti Policy was not required, be noted;
- 3) That the Panel's comments be noted.

96. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer) which set out the Work Programme of the Policy Development Panel.

- Appendix 1 listed the schedule of meetings for 2026/27 with expected items populated against each meeting; and
- Appendix 2 outlined the task groups of the panel.

The Chairman invited the panel to propose any items that they wished to explore further, including any suggestions for a potential task group for future consideration by the Policy Development Panel.

Members discussed concerns regarding the operation of the Council's brown bin service, highlighting that:

- The service was not operating as intended, with no new brown bins having been issued for a significant period despite continued demand from residents;

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- Persistent software and IT issues had been encountered which were preventing residents from checking collection dates online, requesting new bins, or reporting missed collections electronically. These issues were described as having remained unresolved for some time, leading to confusion and frustration for residents;
- They had particular concern that residents paid an additional charge for the brown bin service and therefore reasonably expected a reliable and responsive service. It was noted that missed brown bin collections were not consistently being rectified promptly, contrary to members' understanding of the agreed arrangements. The inability to report missed brown bin collections online was also raised as a service failure;
- There was uncertainty around the policy framework governing the brown bin service. Members were unclear whether a standalone brown bin policy existed or whether the service was covered within a wider waste and recycling policy. It was acknowledged that, without clarity on the policy position, it was difficult to determine whether the operational issues stemmed from failures in delivery or from an outdated or inadequate policy;
- While the value of dialogue with the Portfolio Holder was recognised, members noted that repeated assurances at Council meetings had not resulted in tangible improvements. Members therefore agreed that a more structured and transparent approach was required;
- Members agreed that the first step should be to identify and review the relevant policy. Members considered it essential to establish what the service was intended to provide and whether this aligned with current resident expectations before undertaking further scrutiny of operational performance. It was noted that, depending on the outcome of this initial review, further work could include a dedicated task group jointly with the Performance Monitoring Panel; and
- Members requested that the Brown Bin policy (if there was one) be circulated to members via Democratic Services at the earliest opportunity in advance of the next meeting, and that a report come forward to the next meeting with attendance by the PFH and relevant officer.

Members further queried the work programme entry relating to the Derelict and Untidy Sites Task Group and noted a typographical error in the date recorded.

- The Democratic Services Support Officer confirmed that the date would be corrected in the minutes of the next meeting.

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Members asked for clarification regarding the work programme entry for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), including when work would commence and who would be involved.

- The Chairman of the Panel advised that the task group had previously been agreed in principle, that further details including membership would be considered once more information was available, and that updates would be brought forward as the timetable became clearer.

AGREED:

That the Work Programme of the Policy Development Panel be noted.

97. DEBT WRITE OFF POLICY

The Chairman proposed that this item be considered together with item 19 in exempt session.

AGREED:

That agenda item 16 be considered as part of consideration of agenda item 19 in exempt session.

98. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT.

There were none.

99. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

100. DEBT WRITE OFF POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) which asked members to review the Debt Write Off Policy.

AGREED:

That the Panel's comments on the Debt Write Off Policy be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

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(The meeting ended at 8.33 pm)

(End of minutes)