

Minutes of a meeting of the **CABINET** held in the Meeting Room 1, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Tuesday, 28 April 2026 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

C N Worth (Leader)

P A Redgate (Deputy
Leader)
H J W Bingham

T A Carter
A Casson

E J Sneath
G J Taylor

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillor J R Astill.

In Attendance: Councillor G P Scalese (Cabinet Support Member), Councillor B Alcock (Chairman, Performance Monitoring Panel), Councillor A C Beal (Chairman, Governance and Audit Committee), Councillor A R Woolf (Chairman, Policy Development Panel), Councillor P Barnes, the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), the Service Director – Regulatory, the Service Director – Housing, the Service Director – Leisure and Local Services, the Executive Director - Finance (Section 151 Officer), the Service Director – Culture & Regeneration, the Executive Director - Economic Development and the Democratic Services Manager.

108. MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 February 2026 were agreed and signed by the Leader.

109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Carter advised that she was involved with a group that had submitted a bid in relation to Item 16 and therefore would leave the room during consideration of that item.

110. QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC UNDER THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION (STANDING ORDERS).

There were none.

111. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO CALL-IN.

There were none.

Action By

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112. TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANELS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE OR THE BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES.

There were none.

113. QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT 2025/26

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Legal and Governance and Service Director – Corporate which provided an update on performance and risk as at the end of December 2025.

Cllr Redgate introduced the report which had previously been presented to both Scrutiny and Governance and Audit committees and asked that Cabinet considered and noted the quarterly risk and performance monitoring report.

DECISION:

That the Cabinet considers and notes the quarterly risk monitoring and performance information for Q3 of 2025/26.

(Other options considered:

- *Alternative reporting arrangements*

Reasons for decision:

- *Cabinet is responsible for overseeing the effectiveness of the Council's risk and performance management arrangements)*

114. 2025/26 QUARTER THREE FINANCE UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report of the S151 Officer which set out the current financial position for the Council at the end of the third quarter of 2025/26.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report and advised members that throughout the year quarterly budget monitoring reports are completed forecasting the expected year end outturn compared to the approved budget. This report provided information on the forecast year-end financial performance as at 31 December 2025.

The actual 2025/26 year-end position was currently being worked on and would to be presented to Cabinet when completed. The Portfolio Holder for Finance updated as follows:

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General Fund

The revenue forecast on the General Fund was projecting an underspend position of £187,000. Table 1 to the report provided an analysis of the forecast position.

Members were aware when the 2025/26 budget had been agreed it had included an efficiency target of around £1.2 million. Therefore, based on the forecast underspend of £187,000, Cllr Redgate was confident in saying that the overall efficiency target was forecast to be exceeded.

General Fund Capital

Appendix B, Table 1a gave an overview of all the General Fund capital schemes. As things stood at Quarter 3, the total capital budget was £14.6 million. The authority was currently forecasting spend of £13 million by the end of the year, a variance of £1.6 million some of which would be slippage and some underspend. This would be decided once the year end closure process had been completed.

Reserves

Table 2 of Appendix A set out the forecast balances for specific and general reserves. General fund reserves were forecast at around £8.2 million, and the HRA reserves at around £8.6 million.

HRA Revenue

Section 2.4 of the report outlined that the Housing Revenue Account, was projected to have a surplus of £890,000 at year end. This was mainly due to a reduction in interest payable (£244,000) and an increase in investment income (£307,000).

HRA Capital

For HRA Capital, Table 4 provided details of all capital schemes with the programme totalling £20.4 million for 2025/26. HRA forecasted capital spend at the end of Quarter 3 was around £15.2 million, a variance of £5.2 million, some which would be slippage and some underspend. This would be decided once the year end closure processes had been completed.

Treasury

Section 2.6 of Appendix A detailed the Council's treasury investments.

The Council's cash flow management continued to perform well with £833,000 forecasted to be achieved in excess of the budget.

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The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that members should also note that in March 2026 the Council restructured its HRA debt by repaying its £67.5 million of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) HRA borrowing. In doing so the Council received a discount of around £18.4 million. The debt had been replaced with £50 million of PWLB HRA borrowing, leading to the annual interest payments reducing by around £83,000. In addition to the savings on the interest to be paid, the Council would be able to credit the revenue account with one tenth of the discount (£1.8 million) each year for the next ten years commencing in 2025/26.

There was a request for a paper to be produced setting out the full financial implications of the repayment of existing debt and the new loan that had been taken. It was explained that, as a non-specialist, it was difficult to understand how repaying a PWLB loan at a lower interest rate and borrowing at a higher rate resulted in a saving. It was requested that an explanatory note be prepared for all Members, not just Cabinet or Committee Members, to aid understanding and scrutiny.

Members queried the reported underspend variance of £2.984m and asked whether the associated works were expected to be completed within the current year or would be carried forward.

It was explained that works within the capital programme were ongoing and were monitored through regular capital programme clinics. Some of the variance related to a deliberate underspend following stock condition surveys, which had identified that certain components did not yet require replacement. The Green Homes programme was continuing, with works planned over the next five years. It was confirmed that the variance reflected the profiling of expenditure rather than delays, and that funding would be rolled forward into the 2026/27 budget and beyond. Members were advised that there were no current supply chain issues, programmes were on track, a recent phase covering 470 properties had been completed, and the next phase would involve approximately 1,000 properties. It was also noted that the Council was considering bidding for additional available government grant funding.

It was queried what preparations were being undertaken considering emerging legal and wider economic risks, including the potential longer-term implications for fuel and utility costs, and what contingency planning was being considered under a worst-case scenario.

Officers advised that initial work was focused on understanding and assessing potential impacts, with information being gathered on immediate pressures such as fuel prices, material costs, and

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potential contractual implications. It was noted that there were also likely to be longer-term effects, including impacts on service delivery, collection rates, council tax, and business rates as cost-of-living pressures fed through to residents and businesses. Members were advised that mechanisms were being developed to track these impacts accurately. It was further highlighted that, from an operational perspective, the Council was mindful of the need to maintain critical services, including waste collection, and to consider contingencies such as fuel availability to mitigate service disruption should costs rise significantly.

DECISION:

That Cabinet notes:

- 1) The forecast revenue position of a projected £187,000 underspend for 2025/26 as detailed in Table 1 and the need for continued focus on the savings and efficiency programme.
- 2) The forecast revenue position of the HRA for 2025/26 (projected surplus of £890,000) as detailed in Table 3.
- 3) The HRA Capital Programme position as detailed in Table 4 of Appendix A and the changes set out in this report.
- 4) Note that the Council carried out debt restructuring on the HRA borrowing in March 2026 as outlined in Appendix A, Section 2.6
- 5) The amendments to the Capital Programme at Appendix B – Table 1c.

(Other options considered:

- *To not approve the financial movements outlined.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To ensure the Council's forecast financial position for 2025/26 is considered and related decisions approved. It is important that the Cabinet are aware of the financial position of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account to ensure that they can make informed decisions that are affordable and financially sustainable for the Council)*

115. SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL (SHDC) MARKETS POLICY REVIEW

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Leisure & Local Services which presented an update to SHDC's existing Markets Policy and the introduction of a new SHDC

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Markets Severe Weather Policy.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and advised that its purpose had been to review and update the existing Markets Policy. This was to ensure it aligned with the introduction of a new DOS-based online open payment system (set out at Appendix 2) and to introduce a new Severe Weather Policy to improve safety and consistency across market operations.

The Leader summarised that the revised policy included several key changes. These comprised the classification of traders as either regular or casual at the application stage; the introduction of promotional fees for specialist markets such as makers' markets; and a requirement for traders using their own stalls and equipment to submit appropriate risk assessments.

Clearer application and payment processes had been established through the new online system, and the advance booking period for casual traders had been extended from 14 days to 28 days.

Members were advised that new incentives had been introduced to encourage new and returning traders who had not traded for over 12 months. Disciplinary and conduct procedures had been updated to include inappropriate online behaviour, revised health and safety inspection arrangements, and the inclusion of Trading Standards requirements linked to the 2019 framework.

It was noted that the updated booking costs and payment system were scheduled to be rolled out in Quarter One. In addition, new funding had been secured for marketing activity, including banners, leaflets, promotional boards and paid Facebook advertising.

The Leader highlighted the strong digital performance to date, particularly the South Holland Markets Facebook page, which had achieved 1.7 million views during 2025/26 without any paid advertising.

The Leader also outlined the introduction of the new Severe Weather Policy, explaining that it had been developed in response to the increasing frequency of adverse weather, particularly high winds, which had a significant impact on market safety.

The policy was based on best practice already in operation at Boston Markets since April 2025, where no incidents had been reported. Decisions under the policy would be informed by Met Office weather warnings or on-the-day safety assessments by the markets team.

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Finally, Cabinet was advised that the Severe Weather Policy had been considered by the Policy Development Panel on 3 February. Feedback from the Panel had focused on notice periods for market restrictions or cancellations and clarification on how trader illness during a market day would be handled – it was confirmed that this would be managed at the discretion of the markets team, including the option of offering a free future market where appropriate.

Support was expressed for the report, particularly highlighting the improvements in incentives, including additional support for charities and makers' markets. The value of ongoing advertising and promotional activity was also welcomed.

Reference was made to increased market occupancy and strong online engagement, including significant Facebook views. While it was acknowledged that online views did not directly equate to physical attendance, it was emphasised that encouraging those engaging digitally to visit markets in person would be an important next step.

It was noted that even a modest increase in footfall could make a meaningful difference to traders and potentially encourage new businesses to establish themselves within the district. It was suggested that the effectiveness of the new policies should be monitored and reviewed in future.

Observations from a recent market visit were shared, noting good attendance during favourable weather and a full complement of traders. However, it was recognised that footfall could still be improved overall.

Initiatives being delivered jointly by the Council and the Business Improvement District, including an increased programme of events, were expected to help drive additional footfall into the town centre.

It was also noted that weather conditions had a clear impact on trader attendance, with poor weather discouraging participation. The updated market policy was welcomed as a means of improving consistency and administration, particularly through encouraging traders to become regular attendees and comply with minimum attendance requirements, rather than choosing to attend only in favourable conditions. Overall, the policy was considered positive, with continued emphasis on increasing footfall to support traders.

Members sought clarification on whether the Markets Policy specified a maximum physical pitch size, noting that gazebos

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varied in size and that flexibility could lead to inconsistency. In response, it was explained that the policy charged traders per standard 3.5 metre pitch, which applied to both width and depth. Gazebos were considered to be of a standard size, and traders operating from vehicles were charged on the same basis. While some flexibility was acknowledged, the principle was to ensure fairness by providing equivalent trading space for all traders, with allowances made where vehicles were deeper than standard pitches.

Members also queried whether current promotional activity, particularly via Facebook and other social media, was effectively reaching potential traders, given historic challenges in maintaining trader numbers. It was confirmed that significant efforts were being made to attract traders through multiple channels, including encouraging traders operating in neighbouring areas to also trade locally. The role of the Market Manager in working across several markets was highlighted as an opportunity to increase trader numbers.

Suggestions were made about expanding the market offer to attract specific groups, including younger people at lunchtime, for example through hot food stalls. Members were encouraged to promote opportunities to potential traders where possible.

Clarification was sought on the requirement for trader risk assessments where traders provided their own stalls or equipment, and whether these would need to be repeated frequently. It was confirmed that traders would be able to use a standard risk assessment which could be reused, with updates required only where there were material changes. Officers confirmed that support would be provided to traders to avoid unnecessary burden, and that market officers would monitor compliance and safety on the day.

Finally, Members queried the minimum £5 million public liability insurance requirement, including when it had been set and whether it should be reviewed. Officers advised that the requirement aligned with the Council's standard policy for contractors and traders and was consistent with arrangements at other markets.

DECISION:

That Cabinet:

1. Review and approve the draft Market Policy (Appendix 2) and Severe Weather policy (Appendix 3) as provided in this report.

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2. Agrees the delegation to the Assistant Director Leisure and Local Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make future minor policy revisions as might be needed to ensure the continued good running of the markets.

(Other options considered:

- *To not progress the reviewed draft Markets Policies. This was discounted to ensure through a review, the commitments made by Cabinet were delivered against, to ensure the market was operated efficiently, consistently, and safely.*

Reasons for decision:

- *To enable members to review, comment and challenge the information presented, and consider the new measures being proposed.)*

116. LINCOLNSHIRE GOOD HOME ALLIANCE AND DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT FUNDING

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Communities and Housing Services which sought acceptance and approval of the use of Better Care/Disabled Facilities Grant funding received from Lincolnshire County Council to contribute funding to an extension of the Lincolnshire Good Home Alliance Advice and Casework service.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing introduced the report and sought cabinet approval to accept additional disabled facilities grants funding for 25-26 and to allocate part of that funding to support the continuation of the Lincolnshire Good Home Alliance Advice and Casework Service.

The Good Home Alliance was launched in September 24 as a county-wide partnership involving all the Lincolnshire districts and the County Council. It was funded by contributions from both the county and district councils and the two-year pilot was initially funded to the 30th June 2026, with the aim to help residents of all ages live safely, warmly and independently in their homes. Through the Good Home Alliance online resources, a new healthy home assessment tool and a dedicated advice and casework service, the Alliance provided clear information, practical support and hands-on help for vulnerable residents who may struggle to navigate undertaking repairs, improvements or accessing funding.

An independent evaluation by the London School of Economics had been funded by the Centre for Ageing Better and was demonstrating that the model was delivering real benefits, reducing hazards, improving wellbeing and offered strong

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potential value for money as more cases progressed.

In its first year alone, the casework service supported over 200 referrals, completed improvements to 40 homes with a further 28 households having works underway. Half of the 153 cases closed in the first year, received advice and guidance and engaged thousands of residents and professionals across the county.

To date, the service had received more than 470 referrals, with more than 90 of those being for South Holland residents. Referrals had been received from a wide range of partners, with the South Holland Disabled Facilities Grants team and Wellbeing Links being some of the highest utilisers of the service.

It was explained that the service was primarily accessed through referrals, including from residents contacting Wellbeing Links and other partners. Health professionals were aware of the service, and residents were also able to self-refer via the website. The service was promoted through both online and face-to-face engagement, with proactive outreach at local events and fairs, resulting in strong links with third-sector organisations. Overall, the service was well known and easily accessible to both professionals and individual residents.

DECISION:

That Cabinet:

1. Accepts the additional allocation of £67,398 Disabled Facilities Grant funding for 2025/26 received from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and:
 - a. Approves the use of £32,946 to contribute funding to a 21-month extension of the Good Home Alliance advice and casework service from 1 July 2026 to 31 March 2028, funded in total by Lincolnshire District Councils and LCC contributions and hosted by East Lindsey District Council; and
 - b. Approves the use of £34,452 to support the delivery of DFG and, where appropriate, Discretionary Housing Financial Assistance (DHFA).
2. Approves amendment of the Council's capital and revenue budgets to reflect the above decisions and as set out in financial section of the report.

(Other options considered:

- *(‘Do nothing’) To allocate the total additional DFG funding*

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for received 2025/26 to support the delivery of DFGs and where appropriate, DHFA. This option does not deliver against the SHDC commitment to support the delivery of identified actions within the Lincolnshire Homes for Independence Blueprint for people to live independently, stay connected and have greater choice in where and how they live. This option does not support the continued development of the work that has been undertaken between the Centre for Ageing Better (AB), Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), and all participating Lincolnshire District Councils to deliver against a key recommendation of the AB Good Home Inquiry “- placing a duty on local authorities to ensure every authority has a local ‘Good Home Agency’, a public-facing hub providing access to information and advice, finance schemes, and a range of home improvement services including maintenance and repair, accessibility adaptations and energy retrofit”

- *To allow the pilot to cease on 30 June 2026 at the end of the current funding period and consider reestablishing the service and model on receipt of the final evaluation report in September 2026. This option would see a loss of skills, knowledge and experience gained during the initial pilot period due to fix-term contracts ending, and result in significant service disruption to existing recipients and partners of the Good Home Alliance. GHA evaluators have noted that caseworkers have proven to be adaptable and effective practical problem solvers, having been able to build relationships of trust with clients, which has often required significant time and patience. The skillset developed by caseworkers in the first year is identified by evaluators as one of the project’s biggest assets.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The Lincolnshire Good Home Alliance provides information and signposting – via the Good Home Lincs resources, hosted on Connect to Support Lincolnshire – and additional advice and casework support for more vulnerable clients, where additional assistance is required to address housing condition issues.*
- *The advice and casework pilot is funded by participating Lincolnshire councils for a 2- year pilot period to 30 June 2026. The Centre for Ageing Better has funded an independent evaluation of the pilot period, to provide an evidence base for further development of the Good Home Hub model, both locally and nationally.*
- *Evaluation of the first year of GHA delivery indicates that the benefits of the service and model are potentially high. Positive effects in terms of reduced hazards and greater client wellbeing began to appear as the first cases were closed, and the flow of benefits is now accelerating. In the*

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next phase of the evaluation, evaluators will collect more robust evidence on the type and magnitude of benefits, including importantly reductions in public-sector costs, to inform a more detailed cost-benefit analysis.

- *Overall, however, evaluators note that the experience of the first year suggests that the advice and casework service represents good value for money. A final evaluation report, covering the full 2-year pilot period, is expected in September 2026.*
- *The additional in-year DFG allocation announced by Government in February 2026 provides sufficient funding to meet South Holland District Council's identified contribution whilst maintaining existing DFG and DHFA delivery.*
- *Engagement with participating council leads has identified support for continuation of the current service model for a further 21 months to 31 March 2028, and retention of the incumbent advice and casework officers within ELDC.)*

117. EXTENSION OF THE HOUSING LANDLORD STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Housing which sought adoption of a one-year extension to the Housing Landlord Strategy (2024-2027) (Appendix 2) aligning it with ongoing service transformation activity and enabling deeper tenant engagement in shaping the next strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing introduced the report which provided an update on progress against the Housing Landlord Strategy and sought approval for a one-year extension, moving the end date to 2027.

Extending the strategy ensured alignment with ongoing transformation activity and allowed additional time for deeper and more meaningful tenant engagement in shaping the next landlord strategy.

Key progress to date included enhanced accountability and transparency through the adoption of the HRA governance framework, regular reporting of performance data, and increased opportunities for tenant scrutiny through the establishment of new tenant focus groups.

Operational improvements included updated stock condition data, which would be discussed later, the establishment of compliance and performance clinics, and the development of a contractor code of conduct, which was co-designed with tenants.

The tenant voice had been further strengthened through more

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flexible engagement opportunities, the formation of a Tenant Influence Panel, and active tenant involvement in shaping policies and services, including the new Aids and Adaptations Policy.

The proposed extension provided the necessary space for tenants to meaningfully co-design the next strategy and ensured continued progress towards meeting regulatory expectations. Tenants had clearly expressed their support for this approach.

The low level of complaint satisfaction figures at TP09 was questioned, noting that the results appeared disappointing, and asked whether any action was being taken to improve them.

The Portfolio Holder explained that complaints were actively encouraged and that satisfaction continued to be closely monitored through regular surveys. They highlighted actions already in place, including the operation of a complaints clinic where complaint responses were reviewed internally to ensure residents had been listened to and their issues appropriately addressed. It was noted that these measures were contributing to ongoing improvement, while also acknowledging that satisfaction scores were often lower as complaints were made when residents were already dissatisfied.

Members noted that satisfaction scores for treating residents fairly and with respect were relatively high. It was queried whether aspects of the question wording might be influencing the results and whether respondents were expressing dissatisfaction due to the outcome of their issue rather than the way they had been treated. Officers advised that the Tenant Satisfaction Measures wording was nationally standardised, though it was suggested that providing tenants with clearer guidance on what the question was asking might help improve understanding and interpretation.

DECISION:

1. That Cabinet adopts the Housing Landlord Strategy 2024-2027 (attached at Appendix 2)

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing - Allow the current strategy to lapse without extension or formal closure. This would mean operating without a strategic framework and without capturing or reporting on progress made to date. This option risks losing momentum, reducing transparency, and missing the opportunity to build on recent service improvements.*
- *Develop a new strategy immediately - Begin drafting a new strategy now, without aligning with ongoing transformation activity or allowing time for deeper tenant engagement.*

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While this would meet the original timeline, it may result in a strategy that is disconnected from current service developments and lacks meaningful tenant input.

Reasons for decision:

- To ensure the Council continues to have a clear approach for the delivery of the Landlord Services. To ensure tenants have the opportunity to shape and co create the next strategy once more meaningful tenant engagement opportunities have been embedded.)*

118. HOUSING LANDLORD SERVICE - ACCESS TO SERVICE

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Housing which noted the analysis of the access to the Housing Landlord Service across key protected characteristics.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing presented the report which detailed an assessment of how tenants across key protected characteristics accessed housing landlord services.

The analysis reviewed service use between April 2024 and December 2025 across ten core service areas, including repairs, rent arrears, complaints, antisocial behaviour, and tenancy support.

The findings demonstrated that services were broadly accessible and that tenants with different needs, communication preferences and backgrounds engaged with services proportionately.

The assessment identified no evidence of systemic or structural barriers relating to age, gender, disability, ethnicity or nationality. Where small variations were identified, such as slightly lower levels of access among some minority ethnic groups and younger tenants, these were minimal and not indicative of inequality.

An action plan was therefore developed to further strengthen communication pathways, improve the visibility of translation and interpreter services, enhance access for younger tenants, and ensure consistent and appropriate accessibility adjustments, including the provision of large-print correspondence.

The findings and proposed actions were reviewed with tenants at the Tenant Forum and the Complaints and Performance Focus Groups in March 2026. Tenants were supportive of the conclusions reached and of the recommended actions, which were presented to Members for consideration.

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DECISION:

1. That Cabinet notes the contents of the report (including action plan).

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing – this option is not considered. Ignoring these findings may lead to ongoing unequal service access, noncompliance with RSH Consumer Standards, and persistent disparities in tenant outcomes.*

Reasons for decision:

- *The Regulator of Social Housing is clear that Councillors are responsible for ensuring that the Council, in its role as a registered provider, is meeting the regulatory standards set. Performance data assists Councillors in scrutinising the service.)*

119. HOUSING STOCK CONDITION SURVEY

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Housing which presented findings from the HRA stock condition surveys.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing presented the report which provided an update on the stock condition surveys undertaken across the HRA housing stock.

At the time the report was prepared, 92.8% of homes had been surveyed, providing a robust and detailed understanding of the overall condition of the stock.

The surveys assessed property condition, compliance with the Decent Homes Standard, Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazards and, where applicable, energy performance. The findings indicated that the majority of building components were performing as expected, or better than expected. A small number of Category One hazards identified through the surveys had been fully remedied.

The data gathered had directly informed the recently approved HRA Business Plan and Asset Management Strategy, ensuring that investment decisions were evidence-based, financially sustainable and aligned with national requirements. Work was continuing to access the remaining properties, with the objective of completing surveys across 100% of the housing stock.

The report noted that the contract with the current survey provider was due to conclude in the coming months, and that preparations

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were underway to procure a new supplier. This would ensure the continuation of a rolling programme of stock condition surveys, maintaining accurate and up-to-date data. This approach would support the provision of safe, well-maintained and energy-efficient homes, ensure ongoing compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing, and contribute to the Council's ambition to achieve a C1 grading.

Members noted the increase in survey completion from 90% to 92.8% and sought assurance that access would be achieved to 100% of HRA properties.

Officers confirmed that all reasonable steps were being taken to secure access, including extended appointments with the current provider, increased officer involvement, and the use of a no-access group to address difficult cases. It was reported that progress continued to improve and that the survey completion rate was expected to increase beyond 92.8%.

Members were assured that the Council remained committed to achieving 100% access and that a firmer approach had been adopted where necessary, while seeking to avoid enforcement action wherever possible. It was noted that legal routes, such as injunctions, were available if required, though engagement was the preferred approach.

Officers highlighted that access had already been achieved in 100% of cases for gas and electrical safety checks.

Members queried patterns in no-access properties, including a higher proportion of larger homes, and were advised that this was being monitored.

Officers confirmed that the survey results had aligned with existing data expectations and that no significant unexpected issues had arisen.

DECISION:

To note the findings from the stock condition surveys and the strategy for using and maintaining data.

(Other options considered:

- *Do nothing. In this event, PMP and Cabinet would not consider information regarding stock condition. This option is not preferred because the safety and quality standard set by the Regulator of Social Housing requires landlords to have an accurate, up to date and evidenced*

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understanding of the condition of their homes.

Reasons for decision:

- *To ensure the Council is informed about the condition of its housing stock; the data is used to inform investment strategies; and there is a plan in place for ensuring robust up to date data is maintained.)*

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

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Regulatory which sought approval from the Cabinet for amendments to the Health and Safety Policy (V5.0).

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report and advised that one of the explicit duties imposed on the Council as an employer was the requirement to provide a written health and safety policy and to review the Policy from time to time to ensure that it remained compliant and fit for purpose, in accordance with our statutory responsibilities.

He noted that it was an executive decision of the council to adopt and make amendments to the health and safety policy arrangements and the last time Cabinet did so was in 2024.

He advised that the changes proposed to be made were relatively minor and were highlighted in the health and safety policy document at Appendix 1.

The changes sought to bring consistency to health and safety working arrangements at each council in the partnership and pave the way for modifications in how we engaged staff and trade unions so as to optimise opportunities for shared learning and to bring efficiencies to our ways of working.

The Policy Development Panel had been consulted on 21st April however no material changes to the policy document as appended were offered.

A query was raised in reference to page 287 of the report and whether the Terms of Reference document, including details of the group's membership, was available, noting that it would be helpful to understand who would be represented on the group.

Officers confirmed that the Terms of Reference document had been prepared and was available to view. It was confirmed that the document could be shared with Members following the meeting, including details of the group's membership.

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DECISION:

That Cabinet;

1. Approve the Health and Safety Policy (V5.0) (Appendix 1) having considered feedback from the Policy Development Panel.
2. Delegate to the Assistant Director Regulatory, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, authority to make such amendments to this policy as may from time to time be required in order to (i) reference any links or amended links to other documents as may be required; and (ii) reflect any issues over which the Council has no discretion including, but not limited to, references to any legislative changes and amended guidance. Any material amendments to the policy will be subject to the usual approval process in line with the Constitution.

(Other options considered:

- *None*

Reasons for decision:

- *It is the statutory duty of every employer to review the health and safety policy from time to time to ensure it remains fit for purpose, up to date and reflects current best practice and guidance.)*

121. DATA PROTECTION POLICY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer which considered policies for approval.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance clarified that the item before Members related specifically to the Data Protection and Records Management Policy and not to any incidents that may or may not have been occurring at that time.

In presenting the policy, the Portfolio Holder highlighted that the Council was entirely reliant on the availability and quality of the information it held.

It was noted that the policy had been updated to ensure compliance with the latest statutory requirements, including UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Data Use and Access Act 2025. The updates aimed to ensure consistency across the partnership, and the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been incorporated.

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The Portfolio Holder added that by way of overview, the Records Management Policy established a clear framework to ensure records were accurate, accessible, secure, and retained appropriately. It supported compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and applied to all staff, elected Members, contractors, and partners.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the scope of the policy covered all recorded information, regardless of format, including paper, digital records, emails, audio and video, and applied across the full information lifecycle from creation and collection through storage, use, processing, sharing, archiving, and final deletion or destruction. This also included records generated through artificial intelligence.

It was noted that the policy was based on the Information Commissioner's Office Code of Practice issued under Section 46 and was underpinned by the principles of accountability, integrity, accessibility, security, and appropriate retention.

DECISION:

That the Cabinet approves the draft Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy attached at Appendices 1 and 2.

That Cabinet approves delegation of amendments to the records management policy to the Assistant Director Governance in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to reflect changes in ICO guidance when issued.

That Cabinet approves delegation of amendments to the data protection policy to the Data Protection Officer in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to reflect changes in ICO guidance when issued.

(Other options considered:

- *Not to recommend or make suggested changes to the policies.*

Reasons for decision:

- *Reviewing and adopting revised policies demonstrates the Council's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the protection of individual rights, which is vital for public trust.*
- *The impact of the Data Use and Access Act means that the ICO will issue new mandatory guidance to be followed. To reflect this the policies may need to be adapted to accommodate these changes before the policy refresh lifecycle.)*

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122. PRIDE IN PLACE PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Consideration was given to the report of the Service Director – Culture and Regeneration which sought acceptance of the UK Government’s Memorandum of Understanding to enable delivery of the ten-year Pride in Place programme for Spalding to commence in 2026/27. It also requested delegated authority arrangements to ensure effective and lawful use of public funds under the programme and that robust decision-making arrangements were in place throughout the subsequent investment periods.

The Leader introduced the report which explained that the Pride in Place Memorandum of Understanding had been issued by the UK Government and required the Council to act as the accountable body.

The Leader advised that the Memorandum set out the delivery arrangements for the ten-year Pride in Place programme and clearly detailed the funding profile to be paid over that period, with specific allocations identified for years one to four.

The Leader added that the Memorandum confirmed that the Council, as accountable body, held responsibility for the programme, while the Supporting Neighbourhood Board was responsible for recommending how funding should be allocated to individual projects. Cabinet would be kept informed and updated on Board priorities, project approvals, funding allocations, and spend profiles, and would monitor risks and benefits on a regular basis.

Members discussed the funding, governance, and delivery arrangements for the Pride in Place programme in detail. It was confirmed that the costs associated with the programme related primarily to staffing and that all staffing costs, including any support from PSPS Ltd if required, were fully funded by UK Government grant. No Council funding was being used.

It was explained that Boston and Spalding Town Boards had agreed to share a delivery team to ensure efficiency and appropriate capacity. This comprised a Pride in Place Programme Manager, split equally between the two Boards, and a Programme Coordinator, thereby avoiding duplication and ensuring both strategic oversight and operational delivery. Both posts had been appointed following interviews, with external resources used only on an interim basis prior to those appointments. The delivery of the programme was funded entirely

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through the Boards, and where possible, staffing costs were capitalised, as they represented a significant element of the overall funding.

Members noted that the funding related specifically to Spalding and did not impact the wider South Holland District. Assurance was given that the grant was ring-fenced government funding intended for the Pride in Place programme.

In relation to governance, reference was made to the Memorandum of Understanding, which appointed the Leader of the Council to the Neighbourhood Board to represent South Holland District Council. It was acknowledged that this arrangement would inevitably change as a result of Local Government Reorganisation, at which point the Council would cease to be the accountable body. It was anticipated that a revised Memorandum would be issued by Government at that stage. Current guidance required representation from the local Member of Parliament and an elected representative, and this would transfer to the new unitary authority.

The overall governance arrangements were explained, with confirmation that the Council acted as the accountable body and that all funding required Cabinet approval. Any significant changes would also be subject to Cabinet approval and, where appropriate, Council approval. While project-level decisions were made by the Town Board, these were reported to Cabinet for noting. The Council retained responsibility for ensuring that public money was spent properly, with appropriate due diligence, and that projects aligned with the priorities approved by Cabinet in November.

It was acknowledged that the programme represented a shift in decision-making towards the Town Board, making strong oversight and accountability essential. The presence of the MP and the elected Member on the Board was seen as critical to maintaining democratic accountability.

Regular reports would be brought to Cabinet covering spend, risks, benefits, and progress, with relevant matters also reported through Governance and Audit processes. It was noted that Overview and Scrutiny Committees retained the ability to examine the programme if required.

Members emphasised that Pride in Place funding was public money and must be spent wisely on projects delivering clear benefits to Spalding and improving the local environment. The programme's purpose was to rebuild civic pride, with success ultimately judged through delivery outcomes. It was noted that the

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majority of the funding had not yet been spent, given the ten-year life of the programme, and that significant work was taking place behind the scenes to develop projects.

Safety and security were highlighted as key priorities, including hotspot policing initiatives, the introduction of Community Wardens, and continued lobbying for improved policing resources across Lincolnshire, recognising that the county remained under-funded for policing. It was also noted that one of the Board's remits was to seek additional external funding from both public and private sectors to maximise the impact of the initial £20m allocation and leave a sustainable legacy beyond the ten-year period.

Members considered the implications of Local Government Reorganisation and changes in national government, and it was stated that Town Boards and their associated funding were expected to remain in place, with only the accountable body changing.

In respect of Community Wardens, it was confirmed that they were not intended to replace hotspot policing but to complement existing arrangements. Recruitment and training would take time, and in the interim, private sector security would be deployed where funding permitted to provide a visible presence and support events. The distinction between enforcement-powered Community Wardens and private security staff was noted, and continued close working with the police was confirmed, including discussions regarding the potential involvement of PCSOs. It was also clarified that wardens would operate across Spalding and surrounding areas as required.

DECISION:

That Cabinet:

- Recommends that Council amends the Capital and Revenue budgets to reflect the funding as set out in Section 2 of this report and delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer to vary the Council's Capital and Revenue base budgets for projects under the parameters of the Pride in Place programme for Spalding.
- Approves that the Council be the accountable body for the Pride in Place programme for Spalding and delegates authority to the Council's Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer to sign the Memorandum of Understanding for the Pride in Place Programme in Spalding, as attached at Appendix 2.
- Notes that it is the responsibility of the Spalding

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Neighbourhood Board to consider and recommend how the funding is allocated to individual projects. The Cabinet will be kept notified and updated with the Board's priorities, approved projects, allocations and spend profile and monitoring of risks and benefits on regular basis.

- Delegates authority to the Council's Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer to approve the Board's recommended expenditure, following due diligence and in consultation with the Director of Economic Development and Leader of the Council.
- Delegates authority to the Council's Director of Economic Development to enter into all associated delivery contracts and grant funding agreements on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Council's Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer and the Leader of the Council.

(Other options considered:

- *To not accept the Pride in Place funding for Spalding*
- *To work with the Spalding Neighbourhood Board to identify an alternative accountable body structure for the governance and management of the approved funding*

Reasons for decision:

- *To enable the Council to receive the annual funding allocations under the Pride in Place Programme and support the Spalding Neighbourhood Board to progress with the delivery of the subsequent investment periods.*
- *To ensure that all public funds associated with the programme delivery are used lawfully, effectively and in line with Government rules and relevant Council procedures.*
- *To ensure transparent, consistent and robust decision making and appropriate due diligence is undertaken on the recommended funding awards prior to formal contracting and expenditure.)*

(Cllr Carter declared an interest in this agenda item and left the room during its consideration)

123. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE LEADER DECIDES ARE URGENT.

There were no further items that the Leader decided were urgent.

(The meeting ended at 7.36 pm)

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(End of minutes)

Any RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL detailed above will be submitted for consideration to the meeting of the full Council on **13 May 2026**.