



Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	30 th June 2026
Subject:	Strategy / Policy Review and Development
Purpose:	To approve an approach to future strategy / policy review and development in the lead up to Local Government Reorganisation
Key Decision:	No
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Nick Worth, Leader of the Council
Report Of:	James Gilbert, Service Director – Corporate Services
Report Author:	Corey Gooch, Business Intelligence and Change Manager
Ward(s) Affected:	N/A
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

Given the anticipated timeline for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), this report proposes a refined and proportionate approach to the management of the Council's strategies and policies during the transition period to 2028.

The proposal only applies to policies outside the Policy Framework (reserved for Council), as identified at Appendix A.

It proposes that minor or non-material amendments, and consequential amendments where there has been a change in legislation requiring an amendment to these policies, are delegated to Service Directors, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Monitoring Officer.

This approach seeks to maintain strong governance while ensuring proportionality and freeing up capacity to focus on LGR.

Recommendations

- Recommendation 1 - Cabinet agrees to extend those policies/strategies listed at Appendix A to 31st March 2028 where their current expiry date is sooner;
- Recommendation 2 - Cabinet agrees a delegation to Service Directors, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Monitoring Officer, to update the policies at Appendix A as might be required to accommodate minor or non-material amendments, and consequential amendments where there has been a change in legislation requiring an amendment. This delegation is to be exercised only once Policy Development Panel members have been informally notified of the proposed amendment(s), providing the opportunity for Panel Members to request scrutiny in advance of implementation.

This delegation will cease to have effect if Local Government Reorganisation does not proceed.

Reasons for Recommendations

- Many of the policies are unlikely to require significant change between now and Local Government Re-organisation (assuming a 2028 timeline).
- Local Government Reorganisation will place a significant pressure on the Council's internal capacity and the approach set out in this report will alleviate some of that pressure to focus on Reorganisation.

Other Options Considered

- Not to approve the approach set out and to request the current strategy and policy review approach remain.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council currently operates a governance framework in which most strategy and policy reviews and amendments are brought through the formal democratic process. Usually, any proposed changes - even minor changes - to a strategy or policy are first considered through scrutiny before progressing to Cabinet or another decision-making body, as appropriate.
- 1.2 With Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon (outcome likely to be known mid-2026) and the Councils likely to be dissolved on 1 April 2028, this report brings forward proposed changes that seek to free up capacity of council officers to help the Council prepare for Local Government Reorganisation.

1.3 Should Reorganisation not take place, or be delayed, existing strategy and policy review/development arrangements would remain in place.

2. Report

2.1 The Council maintains a structured and transparent approach to strategy and policy management, in which strategy and policy reviews and amendments progress through scrutiny before being considered by Cabinet or another relevant committee.

2.2 Local Government Reorganisation has increased the demands on officer capacity, and this will continue to increase significantly if Reorganisation proceeds. Continuing to deliver the existing volume of routine strategy and policy reviews is questionable where existing strategies and policies are likely to remain fit for purpose for the Councils remaining time or only require minor, non-material or legislative changes.

2.3 For clarity, Policies within the Council's constitutional Policy Framework (not in scope of this report) will continue to be reviewed and approved by Full Council.

2.4 The Policies within the scope of this proposal are included within Appendix A. The policies, where necessary, would be extended to 31 March 2028 with minor or non-material amendments, and consequential amendments where there has been a change in legislation requiring an amendment, to these policies (in Appendix A) being delegated to the Service Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Monitoring Officer. At the request of Policy Development Panel (para 2.7), and with the agreement of the Leader, this delegation should only be enacted once members of the Panel have been informed of the amendment and given the opportunity to request the policy amendment formally come to Policy Development Panel for consideration.

2.5 If a full policy review and amendment were to take place, this would still come forward for consideration via Scrutiny and Cabinet.

2.6 The requirement to consult with the relevant Portfolio Holder and to informally inform Policy Development Panel members provides continued member visibility and oversight. Scrutiny will retain the ability to request the review of any policy where concerns arise, ensuring that democratic challenge and transparency remain in place. The requirement to consult with the Monitoring Officer provides assurance that decisions are taken in accordance with the delegation.

2.7 Prior to bringing this report forward, the Policy Development Panel has been consulted.

Panel Members acknowledged the rationale for adopting a more proportionate approach to policy management in the lead up to Local Government Reorganisation, particularly in the context of the current policy position, where significant work has been undertaken in recent years to ensure that strategies and policies are up to date and fit for purpose. However, Scrutiny Members expressed a desire to retain a role for Scrutiny in relation to policy oversight. Whilst noting that Scrutiny would continue to have the ability to request the review of any policy where concerns arise, the Panel were keen to ensure there was an opportunity for early visibility of proposed amendments. In response to this feedback, the delegation includes a requirement that Policy Development Panel Members are informally notified in advance of any

proposed amendments to be made under delegated authority. This provides an opportunity for Members to request that a policy is subject to formal scrutiny prior to implementation where they consider it appropriate. This amendment reflects the Panel's view that Scrutiny should continue to play an active and meaningful role in policy governance, whilst supporting a proportionate and efficient approach to managing minor or non-material policy updates during the transition period.

Conclusion

- 2.1. The proposed approach provides a balanced and proportionate framework for managing the Council's policies during the transition to Local Government Reorganisation. By retaining full member oversight for Policy Framework matters, while enabling minor, non-material and legislative amendments to non-framework policies (Appendix A) to be managed through delegated authority, the Council can free up capacity without compromising transparency or accountability.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

The proposed approach streamlines workload, maintains alignment, and frees up capacity so the Partnership can focus on preparing for LGR without unnecessary strategy and policy review activity.

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

The proposed approach will reduce pressure on officer capacity across the Partnership by limiting routine strategy and policy reviews during Local Government Re-organisation. By focusing only on the strategies and policies requiring substantial revision and enabling minor, non-material and legislative changes to be managed under delegated authority, services can redirect capacity toward Local Government Reorganisation work without compromising governance or compliance.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

There are no direct legal risks arising from the proposed approach. Substantial policy changes will still follow existing democratic and governance processes, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements. Delegated authority for routine updates maintains accuracy and legal validity without requiring full committee oversight.

Data Protection

None

Financial

No direct financial implications are anticipated.

1.1

19/03/2026

1.2

20/05/2026

Report Approval

Report author:

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Signed off by:

James Gilbert – Service Director – Corporate Services

Approved for publication:

Cllr Nick Worth – Leader of the Council