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COUNCIL

POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 10 June 2025   **6.00 pm**   **Committee Rooms 1-2, City Hall**

Membership: Councillors Annie Currier (Chair), Calum Watt (Vice-Chair), Debbie Armiger, Chris Burke, Bob Bushell, Natasha Chapman and Rachel Storer

Substitute members: Councillors Dylan Stothard and Pat Vaughan

Officers attending: Steve Bird and Democratic Services

A G E N D A

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Policy Scrutiny Committee   **18 March 2025**

Present:	Councillor Callum Watt (*in the Chair*)
Councillors:	Debbie Armiger, Natasha Chapman, Callum Roper and Dylan Stothard
Also in Attendance:	None.
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor Liz Bushell and Councillor Rachel Storer

29. <u>Confirmation of Minutes - 14 January 2025</u>

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2025 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

30. <u>Declarations of Interest</u>

No declarations of interest were received.

31. <u>Paper and Card Recycling Options</u>

RESOLVED that consideration of the Paper and Card Recycling Options report be deferred to the Policy Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 10 June 2025.

32. <u>Health Scrutiny Update (Verbal Report)</u>

RESOLVED that the Health Scrutiny Update be deferred to the Policy Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 10 June 2025.

33. <u>Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-26 and Executive Work Programme Update</u>

The Democratic Services Officer:

a. presented the report entitled Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-26 and Executive Work Programme Update.

b. presented the Executive Work Programme March 2025 – February 2026.

c. invited members questions and comments.

Members made no further comments or suggestions regarding the Policy Scrutiny work programme.

RESOLVED that:

1. The work Policy Scrutiny work programme be noted.

2. The Executive work programme be noted.

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POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE   **10 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT:	**PAPER AND CARD RECYCLING OPTIONS**
DIRECTORATE:	**COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**STEVE BIRD, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES AND STREET SCENE**

1.   **Purpose of Report**

1.1   To make Members aware of both the request by Lincolnshire County Council for the City Council to adopt separate paper and card recycling, in full or part, and the recent government mandate under it's 'Simpler Recycling' initiative, to collect paper and card separately as a statutory requirement.

1.2   To set out the implications of change, in full or part.

1.3   To provide options for consideration.

1.4   To show the proposed officer recommendation to Executive, with rationale.

2.   **Executive Summary**

2.1   There is a corporate desire to minimise 'contamination', and maximise recycling, but a recognition that 'contamination' is largely defined by the Waste Disposal Authority, Lincolnshire County Council (WDA). As a result the WDA have significant control over a Waste Collection Authority's (WCA) published recycling rate, which in turn affects Lincolnshire's collective overall recycling rate.

2.2   In Lincolnshire paper and card broadly makes up around half of the recycling waste stream, and so the WDA have asked all WCAs to implement a separate paper and card collection, collected alternately to the mixed domestic recyclate, in a bid to see reduced reported 'contamination'.

2.3   The recent government announcement under 'Simpler Recycling' also mandates this, but recognising there are limitations, it also provides opportunity for authorities to be pragmatic and to be exempt from this if they can show there are Technical Economic Environmental or Practical reasons not to implement this change (TEEP).

2.4   There are a number of issues that have a bearing on how realistic bringing in a service change at this time would be, and which consequently have impact on our TEEP assessment. Examples are such as the impact of preparing for new contract implementation, the impending mandate for a new mandated food waste collection service, the advent of Extended Producer Responsibility costs on packaging producers, and known issues relating to bins left out on streets.

2.5	Factoring in all issues, the TEEP assessment for Lincoln suggests that, given the range of other pressures on this service area, and indeed residents, changes to introduce paper and card collections at this time would not be wise. This report therefore recommends deferring a decision on implementation until at least 2027.
2.6	Noting that such a delay would not help to improve 'contamination' or recycling rates, it further suggests that, provided the WDA does not re-define what constitutes acceptable recyclable material and supports increased general efforts to reduce contamination, then an education/enforcement programme, to change recycling habits and reduce contamination levels voluntarily should be tried, before an extra paper and card collection is considered again.
2.7	It is recognised that in order to drive change, alongside education, ultimately it might be necessary to use formal enforcement action where a household refuses to comply with recycling sortation requirements.

3. Background

3.1	The management of municipal household waste in Lincoln requires co-operation between the City Council as the 'Collection Authority' (WCA), and the County Council as the 'Disposal Authority' (WDA). These are designated legal terms.
3.2	As the respective names imply, the WCA has responsibilities for collecting waste/recycling, whereas the WDA has responsibilities for managing its disposal/processing.
3.3	Across Lincolnshire, authorities cooperate strategically on how waste flows are managed through the auspices of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP). This is a body with Member representation, and the Portfolio Holder for Remarkable Place is the City Council's representative.
3.4	The LWP monitors key performance data, including recycling and disposal rates, with the aim of developing practical proposals for change to deliver performance improvements.
3.5	A 'Waste Strategy for Lincolnshire' was adopted in 2019, to which the City Council is a signatory, and it sets out the LWP's vision as being "To seek the best environmental option to provide innovative, customer friendly waste management solutions that give value for money to Lincolnshire".
3.6	The LWP agreed 10 Objectives, several of which are directly relevant for consideration in the context of this proposal: Objective 1. Improve the quality and therefore commercial value of our recycling stream. Objective 5. Contribute to the UK recycling targets of 65% by 2035 Objective 10. To consider appropriate innovative solutions in the delivery of our waste management services

3.7 Progression of these aims is also within the context of a constantly changing operating environment, where not only technological changes take place, but also environmental, legal, and financial factors change, as well as market practices/opportunities.

3.8 A number of factors in the current operating environment are especially pertinent in considering this as a potential change to service. Not only is there a renewed emphasis amongst the public on recycling generally, but the County Council recycling / disposal contract has seen a cost increase for the disposal of 'contamination'. Despite best efforts through aligned education/promotion, Lincolnshire's 'contamination' rates have remained high, creeping into the area of 20 to 30% at times, so positive action has been, and still is, required. Lincoln's own rate exceeds 15% overall at times, with certain areas of the city showing nearer to 30%. Districts who have implemented separate paper and card collections are seen to have much lower rates.

3.9 In simplified terms 'contamination' is anything that, by the terms of the County Council's recycling / disposal contact, is not a 'target material'. That is to say, anything that is collected that is not on the list of designated recyclable materials that the County Council wishes to (or has to by law) recycle.

3.10 Most materials can be 'recycled' in some form, but as there are a wide range of materials in a mixed waste stream, some of which are composite, recycling everything would be a complicated task, and consequently expensive. There are many reasons why a material may be deemed to be 'contamination'.

3.11 The list of acceptable materials has changed in the past and will change in the future in response to legislative requirements and the commercial markets' ability to recycle economically, the desire to maximise what can be recycled, and the wish to keep authorities aligned in what they will take as recycling across the county and/or country.

3.12 It is important to note here that even where a material is identified as 'contamination' it may still be pelletised as a fuel source or go to the Energy From Waste plant to be turned into electricity. Landfill is only ever used as an absolute last resort by the WDA for any materials, which translated into a landfill figure of less than 1% last year.

3.13 In recognising both the increasing cost of disposing of 'contaminated' materials and the improving market for good quality recyclate, the County Council has been promoting a move to collecting paper and card in a separate bin to other recycling materials.

3.14 The effect of instigating a separate paper and card collection, if enacted, would be twofold:
- A focus on recycling materials, and keeping paper away from other materials, means less cross contamination.
- It moves the material from being a commodity that carries a cost to process, to one that can attract an income (saving/income to the County Council as owners of the materials once collected).

3.15 At the start of December the government announced that, accepting the broad benefits of separate paper and card collections, it was mandating the introduction of such collections from 1st April 2026, alongside the introduction of the new weekly food waste collections.

3.16 However, the recent government announcement under its 'Simpler Recycling' initiative provides opportunity for authorities to be pragmatic and to be exempt from this provided they can show there are Technical, Economic, Environmental, or Practical reasons not to implement this change (TEEP).

4. A word on recycling rates.

4.1 It is important to note that 'contamination' rates and recycling rates are not the same thing. As this proposal means asking residents to split the recycling materials that they are already collecting in one bin into two separate bins, in strict tonnage terms, it simply means handling the same materials that would already have been collected differently. Ergo, it is the same material, and so there should be no change to the recycle rate, just a change in quality as the paper and card would be cleaner.

4.2 The lower grade material collected in the existing mixed system (paper and card mixed with other materials) although still used in low grade recycling options is none the less still recycled, but it is still reported as 'contamination' to represent the lower grade of material as dirty card/paper is not a 'target material' for the WDA contract.

4.3 If separate paper and card collection were to be introduced city wide, reported recycling rates would not therefore necessarily be affected directly or significantly. Although it is possible there might be a little improvement by virtue of the publicity/focus on the issue. Reported average contamination levels would reduce though, dropping by an estimated 5 to 8 percentage points (from around 15% to about 7%).

5. Trials and roll-out

5.1 Recognising the above potential benefits, the County Council undertook a set of trials with some districts, whereby separated paper and card collections were trialled in selected areas of Boston (2969 households), NKDC (1781) and SHDC (2408). The SHDC trial was on a different collection system, using bags, and ultimately was stopped because the bags could not be split and separated effectively.

5.2 The trials in Boston and NKDC were in areas where they had alternate weekly 240L wheeled bin collections in place. (This means that Mixed Domestic Recyclate -MDR- material is collected one week, with household waste in another bin the next week). The trial alternated the MDR collections with paper and card collections, so that MDR was taken four weekly and paper and card was taken alternately with that. This is referred to nationally as a 'twin steam' collection system.

5.3 Since the trials concluded, the twin stream system has been rolled-out across Boston, NKDC, ELDC, WLDC and in 2024 , SKDC.

5.4	An analysis of Lincoln's waste suggests that paper and card make up about 50% of the recycling waste stream by volume, mirroring that of the other districts. As this is in the order of half of the capacity available, and as most bins are presented with the potential for a little spare capacity subject to good bin management (better packing/flattening etc.), it suggests that twin stream collections might be viable in Lincoln, at least in theory in terms of capacity. The findings of the trial have been used to indintify the effects, as set out in 4.3 above.

5.5	There are however other important issues that require consideration. These are set out in more detail in the main body of the report.

6. Assessing the request and developing a TEEP assessment.

6.1	LCC have previously requested, via LWP, that the City Council adopt the standard twin stream model used by those other districts in the county that have adopted paper and card collections so far. This is of course now compatible with the new government mandate. It is important and relevant to note that Lincoln's collections are rather different in some ways to the systems used in these other more rural areas. In Lincoln about two thirds of Lincoln's properties have 240L wheeled bins (30,250 properties), with about a fifth on 140L bins due to bin storage space restrictions for the bins (9,160 properties). A much smaller but still significant number are on bag collections (880) due to either storge or access restrictions, and some are asked to use communal bins (6,780) due to access issues.

6.2 The recent government announcement to mandate paper and card collections, unless a good case can be found not to do so, means that a TEEP assessment has been appropriate to assess viability. The TEEP assessment officers have completed has taken into consideration several key factors:
  a) That many properties in Lincoln would struggle to accommodate an extra bin/s.
  b) Food waste collections are now mandated to be in place for every residence in Lincoln from April 2026, so more bins will have to be provided and there is a need for extensive planning and preparations to be put in place.
  c) The Extended Producer Responsibility regulations (EPR) mean that the volumes of packaging in the waste stream are expected to reduce significantly as packaging producers will be taxed on their use.
  d) The Council's Community Services team have to mobilise some of the council's largest contracts (waste, cleansing and grounds maintenance services) under completely new contract terms and systems, on a strict timetable by September 2026

6.3 To ensure that the TEEP assessment is robust, it has taken into consideration the above in the context of three separate types of property/collection:
  a) Properties served by 140L wheeled bins or bags
  b) Properties served by 240l wheeled bins
  c) Properties served by communal collection systems.

6.4 A summary of the outcome of the assessment is that whilst some areas, particularly some of the areas served by 240L bins, could potentially accommodate a paper and card collection, there are good reasons not to do this at this time.

6.5 Additionally, not only can we not be certain what the packaging regulations impact will be on the volumes of packaging that will be in the domestic waste stream in the next few years, but also adding extra bins at a time when bins left out on streets is a significant enforcement issue, would risk enflaming a particular problem. Aside from that, the workload of planning the new contracts' implementation, whilst also adding a new food waste service would overstretch resources and add an unnecessary risk for the delivery of services. Services that currently enjoy a very high level of satisfaction.

6.6 Based on the TEEP assessment, there is a clear recommendation to delay consideration of implementation. This will therefore be the recommendation to Executive. Critically it should be noted that not having a separate bin does not stop paper and card being recycled. It is still recycled just as lower grade material.

6.7 However, delaying the decision, does not mean doing nothing in relation to the issue of 'contamination', and whilst this committee can of course comment on the recommendation, it is also invited specifically to make comment on a further proposal which will be recommended to the Executive; to engage with LCC and undertake a renewed concerted education and enforcement campaign.

6.8 The options that have been considered for context in developing the TEEP are:

1) Not to introduce paper and card collections at this time.
2) Introduce paper and card collections in 240L areas only.
3) Introduce paper and card collections in all areas (except areas without wheeled bins e.g. bags collections, those with communal bins).
4) To work with LCC on 'contamination' reduction, through increased education and enforcement.

6.9 **Option 1** Not to introduce paper and card collections at this time.

6.10 The Council's waste services are operating as they have for some years now. They are therefore stable in terms of service provision, and satisfaction with the reliability of recycling services is high (95.1% fairly or very satisfied as at Jan. 2025).

6.11 However, whilst the existing service offers reliability of collections (97% reliability satisfaction as of Jan. 2025), it is not achieving aspirations to reduce contamination rates or improve recycling rates, and so a change of some nature will be required at some point. A footnote to this is that the newly mandated food waste service may have an impact of its own on contamination levels by taking a 'dirty' substance out of the MDR. It shouldn't get into the recyclate as a contaminant, but the contamination rates suggest it does at times as some recyclers are not sufficiently diligent.

6.12   The existing City Council contract for waste /recycling services runs until Sept 2026. Although we now know that Biffa have been awarded the next contract, any changes in advance of that would have to be negotiated with Biffa. The extent of any financial impact from this is subject to them being able to demonstrate justifiable costs. It is noted that many aspects of twin stream collections do not impose extra costs (it is the same number of bin lifts overall), but as not all of Lincoln is on 240L bins, and collection rounds are mixed in a few cases, there are some additional costs that could not be avoided.

6.13   It is important to remember for context that the Environment Act has recently added another level of complexity to how the Council may plan service changes. The Council is also being mandated to introduce food waste collections for every residence by April 2026, which represents a significant challenge in itself, detracting from the staff resources available for this work.

6.14   All of the above means that whilst the 'Not to intriduce at this time' option might not be desirable in terms of aspirations for reducing contamination, it would reduce pressures on the services in a period when other changes are also being managed i.e. The transition to a new contract process, and planning for food waste collections to every residence in the city. There is a very real risk that satisfaction rates will be impacted by the changes anyway, but adding another change that is not mandated would add a further unnecessary pressure/risk to satisfaction.

6.15   **Option 2.** 240L areas only

6.16   This model is based on making changes at properties with 240L wheeled bins only, which is approximately two thirds of the city. At each property another 240L bin would be provided. The new bin would be designated the colour purple, as this is not a colour in use in any district to denote anything else, and is commercially available. The preference is for black bins with purple lids, as has been used at all other council's who have adopted separate collections in Lincolnshire. This bin would be explicitly for dry paper and card only.

6.17   Collections of separated paper and card would alternate with that of the mixed recyclate (MDR). So, based on the standard 240L wheeled bin model, a household would get one collection each week, on a rotation : Domestic waste / Mixed recyclate / Domestic waste / Separated paper and card – the sequence then repeats.

6.18   In this way mixed general domestic waste is still taken fortnightly, but the dry recyclate is split. No extra waste is generated, and the resident has no more or less capacity; they are just required to separate the paper and card into another bin and ensure it is presented on the right day.

6.19   It is recognised that although 240L bin residents were initially given this size of bin because they had more space. Evidence suggests however that some with 240L bins may still have problems storing yet another wheeled bin as the city already has a number of areas where 240L bins left out on the street all week is an issue. So all properties would have to be subject to individual assessment.

6.20   **Option 3** To do this in all areas (except areas without wheeled bins e.g. bag collections, those with communal bins).

6.21   Under this option the vast majority of the city (all those with 140L or 240L bins) would be included. All would be given a purple lidded bin (as above) but it would be equal to the size already given for other services (140L or 240L).

6.22   Historically about one fifth of the city have been given the smaller 140L bins in recognition of the restrictions on the storage space that they have.

6.23   The 140L areas operate with a different collection frequency to 240L areas, mindful that they have less capacity in each bin. The adjusted collection frequencies are intended to make the services more equitable, regardless of where a resident lives, be it in a 140L or 240l area.

6.24   In 140L areas the general waste (black bin) is taken weekly, with the recycling (brown bin) taken fortnightly.
The introduction of a purple lidded bin for cardboard would necessitate the service alternating the collection of MDR and paper and card, and still being weekly for general waste.

6.25   140L areas will, by virtue of them being put on this system in recognition of them having less storage space, have greater difficulty accommodating any extra bins. Again in a number of 140L areas there is a problem of bins left on streets all week.

6.26   **Option 4.** To work with LCC on 'contamination' reduction, through increased education and enforcement. This would be in advance of reconsideration of separate paper and card collections at a future date.

6.27   Noting that as significant parts of the city will have problems storing another wheeled bin, and that the intention of the twin stream system is principally to reduce 'contamination', this is an option that gives Members an alternative to no change.

6.28   Based on working with LCC colleagues, this option envisages an education and enforcement package being delivered, giving people more information first, but if they refuse to adjust habits to clean-up their waste, then increasing the strength of action by way of enforcing. This might be refusal to collect waste until correctly sorted, or ultimately, formal enforcement action if a household refuses to use their bins correctly.

7.   <u>The positive and negative impacts for each option.</u>

7.1   The following are general comments applicable to any area where a twin stream system is installed.

7.2   It should be noted that learning from the trial and roll-out at other councils has shown that whilst there is considerable support for the general principles of recycling, the introductions have not been without problems.

7.3 Problems have usually been about bin storage space, perceived loss of disposal capacity, or the enforcement/rejection of contaminated bins.

7.4 Extensive education/information is required in advance and at introduction, and strict enforcement is also required for the minority who simply refuse to cooperate. Both of these two aspects are extremely resource hungry and would need to be very well resourced for the set-up, and given adequate ongoing support beyond that period. It is vital that this is sustained, as early adopters of twin stream have shown that the benefits only remain if the education and enforcement is sustained.

7.5 None of the roll-outs have guaranteed to customers that the recycling rate will improve significantly as a consequence of introduction, so that might be an issue for the future as this becomes better understood, although falling residual waste rates may assist by masking this issue (recyclate will be a higher percentage of the overall if recycling continued at the same rate).

7.6

Option	Positive impacts	Negative impacts
1. Not to introduce paper and card collections at this time.	No disruption to services- public satisfaction not adversely impacted. No additional disturbance of services at a time when staff are under pressure planning for other service changes (food and new contracts). No extra bins on streets, so no additional pressure on enforcement functions for this aspect of work. No increased costs for CoLC No risks from introducing an inequitable service	Risk of claims that we would not be compliant with government mandate- but this would be offset by the TEEP assessment. No change in reported contamination rates. Not recycling paper and card separately, may negatively impact EPR payments in the future (these are new supplementary payments made to local government by central government as recompense for recycling costs- the funds coming from charges made on packaging producers. The scheme and/or any potential payments have not yet been defined).
2. 240L areas only	Some improvement in reported contamination levels in these areas.	Risk of claims that we would not be compliant with government mandate- but this would be offset by the TEEP assessment. Disruption, but limited to areas more able to take an extra bin. Expected general adverse impact on satisfaction.

		'Enforcement' in target areas will be required which will include rejection of bins, adding to discontent and impacting satisfaction by those affected.
	14	More bins left out on some streets, likely to require significant work, and impact satisfaction scores.
		Inequitable service.
		Not recycling paper and card separately, may negatively impact EPR payments in the future (these are new supplementary payments made to local government by central government as recompense for recycling costs- the funds coming from charges made on packaging producers. The scheme and/or any potential payments have not yet been defined).
		Other financial implications- see finance section below.
3. To do this in all areas (except areas without wheeled bins)	Compliance with the government mandate (except areas without wheeled bins) Improvement in reductions in reported contamination levels (greater than option 2)	Significant disruption to all areas of the city. Expected general adverse impact on satisfaction. Enforcement and bin rejections will be required, adding to discontent and impacting satisfaction by those affected. Bins left on many streets likely to require significant work, and impact satisfaction scores. Financial implications- see finance section below.

4. Increased education and enforcement.	No wholesale disruption to services- only individuals may be affected. General public satisfaction not impacted.	Risk of claims that we would not be compliant with government mandate- but this would be offset by the TEEP assessment.
	No wider/uncontrolled disturbance of wider services at a time when staff are under pressure planning for other service changes (food and new contracts).	Impact on 'contamination' will be slower that regime change.
	No extra bins on streets, so no additional pressure on PPASB relating to this specific function.	Does not deliver higher quality recyclate quickly.
	Education might deliver improved public understanding /cultural shift for longer term benefit.	
	Gives public opportunity to change and avoid the need for enforcement/extra bins if it works.	
	No increased costs for CoLC arising from changed collections	
	No risks from introducing an inequitable service,	

8. Strategic Priorities

8.1 **Let's reduce all kinds of inequality**

A key issue for this introduction would be the extent to which it could be deliverable. Partial delivery would leave some without access to the new format of service. In any event, there will be those on bags/communal bins who would not have access, even if the more comprehensive option 3 was considered palatable.

However, as the existing MDR system is not being withdrawn, strictly speaking, under the proposals no household is disadvantaged, as they would still retain the option to recycle paper and card, albeit through a mixed system.

8.2   **Let's address the challenge of climate change**

The paper and card initiative is focused on getting the correct materials in their designated bins, and thereby reducing rejected materials and low grade recyclate rates.

As the proposal would predominantly utilise existing collection rounds, whilst there would be a small impact on carbon emissions from extra vehicle movements, any increase in carbon footprint would be offset by the improved quality of the recyclate.

9.   **Organisational Impacts**

9.1   **Finance**

9.1.1   There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of the recommendations of this particular report. However, set out below are the estimated financial implications associated with the introduction of separate paper and card collections should that be the eventual outcome.

9.1.2   There are two main areas of costs
a) Set-up (new bins/publicity/ contract costs for returns/ staff time)
b) Operating (day to day when the changes have settled)

9.1.3   Set Up Costs
LCC originally stated that they would provide the bins free of charge at set up, and up to 3% of the value of the bins at start up for three years for replacement, as they have for other districts that have adopted twin stream collections. In light of the government mandate on this issue, that offer has now been withdrawn. The bin set up, given LCC's withdrawn offer, would now be significant. Subject to the areas to be covered,   potentially in excess of £1million.

9.1.4   LCC will however still offer to provide staff/education/enforcement/ support to drive home the change until settled (typically up to 6 months, but can be longer. This has not been quantified).

9.1.5   Operating Costs
The City would incur several new costs. These would not just be in staff time to prepare, support and embed the changes, but also there would be contract costs in the order of £20k p.a. for route changes, with an estimated annual revenue tail of £5k p.a. for new bins for housing growth in the city.

9.2   **Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

9.2.1   There is one key item of legislation relevant to this proposal. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (the statutory obligations to collect, which is placed on WCAs and the responsibility to dispose, which is placed on the WDAs).

9.2.2   The recently introduced Environment Act has mandated that food waste collections are made, and also that separate paper and card collections are made, unless a TEEP assessment exempts this.

9.2.3   The Environment Act 1990 sets out the relative statutory obligations of CoLC (as WCA) and LCC (as WDA). In simplified terms, S45 sets out the duty of a WCA to collect waste, and S46 identifies the requirements of a WCA to notify residents of its requirements so as to let it make the collections.

9.2.4   Any procurement will be undertaken in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the relevant legislation relating to the existing provision (Public Contract Regulations 2015 or Procurement Act 2023).

9.3   **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

9.3.1   The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

9.3.2   It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

9.3.3   This will be assessed carefully subject to the Executive expressing a clear view on a preferred option, whereby an EIA will be completed.

9.3.4   An EIA would take into account, amongst other things, accessibility and appropriate formats for any education campaign and the impact of additional bins on pavement access for individuals using wheelchairs or mobility aids or pushchairs.

9.4   **Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact**

9.4.1   Subject to the preferred option chosen, this change in waste/recycling policy has potential to impact communities / environment significantly.

9.5   **Corporate Health and Safety implications**

9.5.1   This will be assessed carefully subject to the Executive expressing a clear view on a preferred option.

10.   **Risk Implications**

10.1   **(i)   Options Explored**
As set out in 7.6

10.2   **(ii)   Key risks associated with the preferred approach**
It may not bring about the desired change in behaviour, leading to a requirement to revisit this issue in the future.

11.   Recommendation

11.1   Committee is invited to comment on the recommendation to delay consideration of installing separate paper and card collection in the city until 2027, but to engage with LCC to develop an education and enforcement campaign.

Is this a key decision?	Yes
Do the exempt information categories apply?	No
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	No
How many appendices does the report contain?	None
List of Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Steve Bird, Assistant Director Communities and Street Scene Email: steve.bird@lincoln.gov.uk

POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE   **10 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT:	**LINCOLN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**
DIRECTORATE:	**CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**LARA WELLS, BUSINESS MANAGER CORPORATE POLICY AND TRANSFORMATION**

1.   **Purpose of Report**

1.1   To present an updated Lincoln Performance Management Framework, which aims to:
- Reflect the council's current approach to performance management and the continuous improvements that have been made since the previous LPMF was adopted;
- Support successful implementation of the Vision 2030 strategic plan; and
- Address the final outstanding action arising from an internal audit on performance management in summer 2022

2   **Background**

2.1   The Council has a performance management framework, initially adopted in 2011 and last updated in 2016. Since that update the council's approach to performance management has changed substantially. The current framework was therefore not reflective of how the council manages performance. A copy of the current LPMF is attached as '**Appendix A**' to this report.

2.2   An internal audit of the council's performance management arrangements took place in summer 2022. This audit gave 'limited assurance' to the function, accompanied by a range of recommendations and actions. All actions were duly implemented at pace which a follow up audit recognised. The last outstanding action was to review and update the LPMF with the revised practices in place, formalising the changes made.

3.   **Updated LPMF**

3.1   This review has now been completed, and a new proposed LPMF is attached as '**Appendix B**' to this report. The key points to note in the proposed new LPMF are:

- It accurately reflects how the council manages performance in respect of target setting, quarterly reporting and assurance
- It covers the specific performance management practices that apply to the council's role as a social housing landlord
- It has been drafted to align with the LGA's Performance Management Guide for Officers (2022) and took into account government launches including 'best value duty', Oflog and the two Ombudsmans' Complaint Handling Codes. The references to Oflog have been removed since it's closure in

December 2024 noting that the local authority data explorer is now maintained and updated by MHCLG.

- It covers a range of topics reflected in national guidance, including all topics recommended in Housemark's guidance on 'performance reporting frameworks' including data quality, data culture, and roles and responsibilities
- It reinforces the continuous 'golden thread' between the council's Vision and Priorities, and individual teams
- It distinguishes between different forms of performance management, namely strategic, operational and front line which are described in the framework
- It draws a direct link between performance and the council's governance framework

3.2   The new proposed LPMF also incorporates the council's Data Quality Policy, which had not been updated for some time and was out of date. The previous Data Quality Policy duplicated information within the council's other governance and information governance documents; these duplications have been removed and an updated and streamlined version of this document is included as 'Appendix A' to the new LPMF.

3.3   The proposed new LPMF does not propose changes to the council's performance management arrangements; rather it consolidates and formalises the robust arrangements that have previously been established and articulates the role of performance management in the council's wider governance framework.

3.4   The new proposed LPMF has been developed with oversight from the Internal Audit Manager, and aligns with other corporate assurance/governance documents including the Code of Corporate Governance, Annual Governance Statement and Combined Assurance. It also aims to reinforce the council's ability to demonstrate adherence to the seven CIPFA core governance principles (*"Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016"*)

3.5   The document will, if approved, could a lifespan of five years to mirror the Vision 2030 strategic plan. Whilst it has been drafted so as to remove the need for significant changes during a five-year period, it is suggested that it should be reviewed annually as part of the annual corporate document review so minor factual changes can be made if required and also to reflect any changes in portfolios. It is also acknowledged that Local Government Reorganisation will see governance documentation updated sooner than five years.

4.   Strategic Priorities

4.1   The proposed new LPMF '**Appendix B**' seeks to formalise well-established performance management and governance arrangements. It aims to support effective delivery of the council's strategic plan, and its proposed five-year lifespan mirrors that of Vision 2030. The new LPMF will provide the essential framework needed to demonstrate effective monitoring of Vision 2030 throughout its implementation.

5.   **Organisational Impacts**

5.1   **Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)** – No known financial implications arising from this report.

5.2   **Legal Implications including Procurement Rules** – There are no known legal implications arising from this report

5.3   **Equality, Diversity & Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.
It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

There are no E&D implications arising from this report or the new proposed LPMF. The document at '**Appendix B**' formalises the council's well-established performance management arrangements, and does not propose any changes.

6.   **Risk Implications**

6.1   (i)   Options Explored – there are no alternative options available.

6.2   (ii)   Key risks associated with the preferred approach – not applicable to this report.

7.   **Recommendations**

7.1   That Policy Scrutiny Committee approve the 'Lincoln Performance Management Framework' attached as '**Appendix B**' to this report.

Is this a key decision?   No

Do the exempt information   No
categories apply?

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny   No
Procedure Rules (call-in and
urgency) apply?
How many appendices does   Two
the report contain?

List of Background Papers: None

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                                                            Transformation
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CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

LOCAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

2016-17 to 2019-20

Owner = Principal Policy Officer, Policy Unit

Initial Framework – May 2011
1st revision - March 2016

- Appraisals and regular one to one sessions
- Service planning
- Strategic Plan Implementation Team
- Performance reporting outside the Local Performance Management Framework
- Other useful information

Document control

Organisation	City of Lincoln Council
Title	Local Performance Management Framework
Author - name and title	Pat Jukes, Principal Policy Officer
Owner - name and title	Pat Jukes, Principal Policy Officer
Date	March 2016
Approvals	
Filename	
Version	V.1.2
Next review date	December 2021

Document Amendment history

Revision	Originator of change	Date of change	Change description
V1.0	Pat Jukes	March 2011	Initial version
V.1.1	Pat Jukes	March 2016	Updated to reflect current requirements
V 1.2	Pat Jukes	December 2021	Unable to make the strategic changes necessary due to the effects of covid – will review before the end of 2021

Introduction

This document provides simple and quick guidance on the Local Performance Management Framework for the City of Lincoln Council. The framework covers the collection and provision of key strategic data not just for use by Corporate Leadership Group and Members, all performance officers, budget holders and managers should also be aware of its content.

In 2011, central government removed the reporting burden on local authorities, and instead produced a 'single dataset' of information they require to inform their policy making. At the same time the onus was placed on local authorities to select appropriate performance indicators to drive their business and priorities forward and to be accountable to local communities, to ensure they are responding to local needs and that public money is spent wisely and is achieving good value for money. For this latter element, the requirement to be externally audited each year remains in place and re-affirms the necessity to have a performance framework covering all service areas to meet the 'Transparency Agenda'.

Following these changes a new framework was devised to ensure this accountability is facilitated. This second version of the framework takes the original premise ensuring that it meets the changing environment in which this council operates.

The framework has been developed to streamline strategic performance management and ensure appropriate measures are in place to monitor service performance in a proportionate and timely manner. It recognises the need for the council, in our community leadership role, to have an overview of the health of the city in economic, social and physical terms, as well as to know how we are progressing in meeting priorities set out in the strategic plan.

The information and data collected will help Members and the Corporate Leadership Group to identify and set priorities for the council; will assist Service Managers in planning service delivery to ensure it is fit for purpose and is fundamental to helping the council meet its aspiration to become 'High Performing'.

Tiered approach

The framework adopts a tiered approach, underpinned by the needs of neighbourhoods, and topped by the challenges faced by the city as shown pictorially below. Moving upwards through the four tiers, each level becomes more strategic, with the top tier providing the overview of the city as a whole. With appropriate monitoring of the bottom three levels the linked tiers provides a 'golden thread' running through the framework.

Lincoln City Profiles	Key quality of life data	City View
Strategic Plan and Annual Report	Strategic Project Updates	CoLC Strategic Reporting
Formal Quarterly Reports	Lean measures, local indicators, Financial info.	Operational (Including benchmarking)
Neighbourhood Action Plans	**Annual report:- Neighbourhood Plan**	**Neighbourhood reporting**
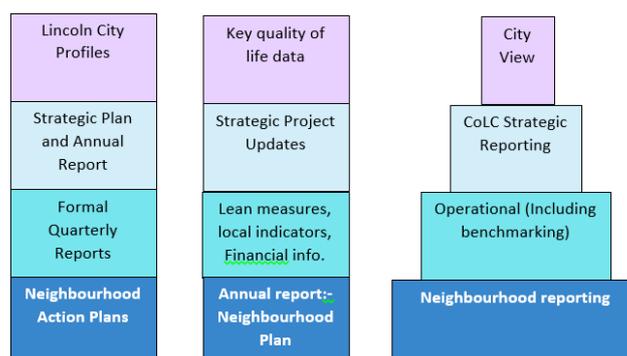
Tier 1 – The City

At this level data provided is city wide and quantifies impacts beyond the remit of the City of Lincoln Council, to give an indication of the health of the city as a whole, and what it is like to live in, work in, run a business in or visit the city.

Reporting at this level will not be performance reporting as such, but instead will be an annual report to the Performance Scrutiny Committee and to Full Council in the form of the **Lincoln City Profile**. This will include detailed profile information from a range of sources covering different agencies, with some analysis and insight on the changes seen over time as well as the likely impact on the city where it can be shown. Its purpose will be to aid prioritisation of resources (by the City Council and other partners) to areas of most need and as such will have no defined performance reporting. However Tier 1 remains key to the overall picture as it will determine which services (and thus which performance measures) are deemed the most important at any time.

It will sit alongside the Lincoln Annual Monitoring Report which is produced in response to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Regulation 34. This report covers Housing, the Economy and the Environment in Lincoln.

It will also sit alongside the Lincoln Poverty Profile which looks at specific issues of poverty across the city.

Reports will go to CMT, PSC and Exec for comments before publishing further.

Key documents:
Lincoln City Profile (available on the City of Lincoln Website),
Lincoln Poverty Profile (available on the City of Lincoln Website),
Lincoln Annual Monitoring Report (available on the City of Lincoln Website).

Frequency: Annual

Measures: Nationally available data from a range of sources such as the Census, ONS, LRO and Police data

Audience: Executive, Performance Scrutiny Committee (PSC), Corporate Management Team (CMT), Senior Managers, Partners, businesses, other stakeholders in the city, inspection bodies

Outcomes: A holistic view of the city across all agencies which identifies areas of concern and facilitates the prioritisation of resources across all such agencies, aiding future planning.

Tier 2 – The City of Lincoln Council

This level is the strategic reporting tier for the City Council. The key strategic priorities for the council are set out in the forward looking Strategic Plan, which includes a short term (2 to 3 year) action plan defining all the projects proposed to make progress on each Priority. It is the document that demonstrates our contribution to meeting the overall shared vision for the city.

Reporting against these projects is completed in two ways:
1. The council's Annual Report will cover the progress made each year on all key projects, reporting in a user friendly way designed to appeal to all readers. This also covers a summary of our performance against the strategic measures used by CMT and Executive to manage the council's strategic direction.

2. More formal reports will be taken to Performance Scrutiny Committee and then Executive reporting on progress with each of the individual projects as they start

Internal summary strategic reports are collated to ensure that all aspects of ongoing council work is monitored and reported to Corporate Leadership Group (only).

These include:
- Monthly Strategic Priorities report – an update of the key Strategic activities underway. These may not yet be formal projects, may be in the feasibility stages, or may be projects owned by other partners that we have an interest in

- Quarterly Fit for Purpose Dashboard – a high level strategic summary of all council performance, visually portrayed, including financial status, governance etc

Key documents:
The Strategic Plan and the Strategic Plan Delivery Plan (available on the CoLC website)
The City of Lincoln Council Annual Report (available on the CoLC website)

Reports to Performance Scrutiny (PSC), Community Leadership SC & Executive:
Strategic Plan Implementation Team (SPIT) quarterly report (all capital projects) to PSC
TFS Annual Report (All savings projects and additional income projects) to PSC
Lincoln Anti-Poverty Annual Report (All projects defined within this category) to CLSC
Annual Equality Objectives progress report (E&D Group)
6-monthly remaining projects report (a catch all report for any other SP projects) to PSC

Frequency: A mix of quarterly, 6-monthly and annually as defined above

Measures: At this strategic level we are looking at monitoring what progress is being made against the defined list of projects within the Strategic Plan Delivery Plan.

Audience: Executive, Full Council, CMT, Performance Scrutiny Committee (PSC), managers.

Outcomes: Improving the causal issues and challenges behind each of the Strategic Priorities identified in the Strategic Plan.

Tier 3 – Service delivery and comparison with other local authorities

Tier 3 provides a view of the council's financial and operational performance, measuring financial performance against budget, service performance against past performance trends and for defined key measures against agreed targets. Measures and targets will be agreed within service areas.

Within this tier there are different baskets of indicators used:

A) Formal measures:

All formally reported measures will be held in the on-line real-time IMPS system and updated on a quarterly basis. Data can be seen in total or at Exec Member, Director or Assistant Director level through a series of 'Dashboards'. Formal reporting will cover a defined set of 70 key measures which between them provide data on the key aspects of the most strategic services. Although the focus will be on continuous improvement, with changes in trends over time being the primary trigger for intervention, it has recently been agreed to provide targets for a subset of around 30 measures so that performance can be monitored both against target and against internal trends.

B) Service Specific:

Local service measures will cover the value for money equation which incorporates cost, performance and customer satisfaction. Within these categories, each service will have:
   i)   cost measures including performance against budget and unit costs where appropriate;
   ii)   performance measures which are likely to cover average time taken, outstanding workload and 'units' completed; and
   iii) customer satisfaction measures which may include internal customers for support services.

These will principally be measures derived from customer expectations for the service area, and provide meaningful data to help customers understand what they should expect. Some measures will be derived from lean systems reviews where they are in place. Performance will be discussed at regular team meetings, with measures reported to DMTs on a quarterly basis.

For both the above levels, formal reporting to CMT, Executive and Performance Scrutiny will be through quarterly reports.

Benchmarking will be used to assess how well the City of Lincoln Council is performing compared to other local authorities. This is an area that will continue to be developed through work with LGInform and other similar bodies. Benchmarking by local authorities is voluntary and therefore there is no guarantee that other similar authorities will be measuring what the City Council wants to measure. Therefore where services are already members of discrete benchmarking groups (such as CIPFA or other professional groups), data will be used.

Financial performance is monitored monthly at DMT's and through formal quarterly reporting to CMT, Performance Scrutiny and Executive. In addition there is a full Annual Financial Accounts Report published, a sub set of which is also published within the Council's Annual Report.

Key documents: Performance and Financial reports to CMT, Performance Scrutiny Committee and Executive (available on the City of Lincoln Council website). CoLC Data Quality Policy and Performance Measures Data Quality Policy
Portfolio benchmarking presentations to Performance Scrutiny

Frequency: Formal reporting is quarterly, PH presentations – each one annually (x6)

Measures: Lean measures, service standards, local measures, financials against budget allocations

Audience: Executive, CMT, Performance Scrutiny, Directorate Management Teams (DMTs), managers

Outcomes: Continuously improving performance against operational measures to confirm improvements in service delivery.

Tier 4 – Neighbourhoods

This is the final tier of the Local Performance Management Framework, but unlike the previous tiers, the purpose of this tier is to report to local neighbourhoods on issues specifically relevant to them. However, the resulting reports could include useful ward level performance data and could help both officers and Members in understanding the needs of local communities and ensure they are reflected in performance at other tiers.

There are currently eight Neighbourhood Areas:-
- North - St Giles, Ermine East and Ermine West
- Central – Abbey, Sincil Bank and Bracebridge
- South – Moorland and Birchwood

Each Neighbourhood has a Neighbourhood Action Plan, owned and monitored by the Neighbourhood Board for the area. Some Neighbourhoods receive pertinent performance information (as in Tier 3), as well as financial information on spend against the locally allocated funding for the Board. (Note this is not the full NW budget). They may request specific information – for example crime reports from the Police. They all receive the annual Neighbourhood report on progress against the programme as a whole.

A small number of relevant volumetric data measures and customer satisfaction measures will be collated and reported to the Boards; these will also be captured in the IMPS system to provide Members with an evidence base of the type and volume of working undertaken in Neighbourhoods and the satisfaction levels of Neighbourhood Boards.

Key documents: Locally agreed reports between service area and neighbourhood. Performance and financial reports to the Boards, plus quarterly monitoring of the Action Plan and a full annual report on the Neighbourhood Plans.

Frequency: As agreed with neighbourhoods

Measures: As agreed with neighbourhoods

Audience: Local residents, Neighbourhood Boards, Neighbourhood Working Teams

Outcomes: As agreed with neighbourhoods

Practical co-ordination

Performance information will be collected by appropriate service areas, with local measures reflecting what managers need to know to plan, develop and deliver the service.

Finances will report all financial information following consultation with Directorates. The Corporate Policy Unit will co-ordinate performance reporting to Members and CMT which will involve:

> (a) Collating all data provided by service areas,
> (b) Producing the Lincoln City Profile and the Lincoln Poverty Profile,
> (c) Publishing the Strategic Plan and Annual Report
> (d) Collating national strategic benchmarking
> (e) Producing quarterly operational reports to CMT, PSC and Executive

Service areas will provide all agreed information and will take the lead in explaining performance issues or achievements at DMT, CMT and to Members. The quality of such data is covered in the Data Quality Policy (for performance measures).

Directorates may themselves require additional information at a lower and more frequent level to meet the needs of running services. This will be collected in addition to this framework. It will be up to managers to ensure that all staff are aware of what performance data is collected for their area, how and by whom.

Corporate Management Team, Performance Scrutiny and Executive will all monitor how well the City Council is doing in different service areas, and in particular focusing attention and resources on areas of apparent under performance. This may require regular reports to CMT for defined periods whilst resolution is sought.

Other performance related links:

Appraisals

Staff appraisals are undertaken annually by line managers and are the key mechanism for ensuring all staff members know what is expected of them in relation to the Strategic Priorities, in managing their workload as well as reviewing their personal development.
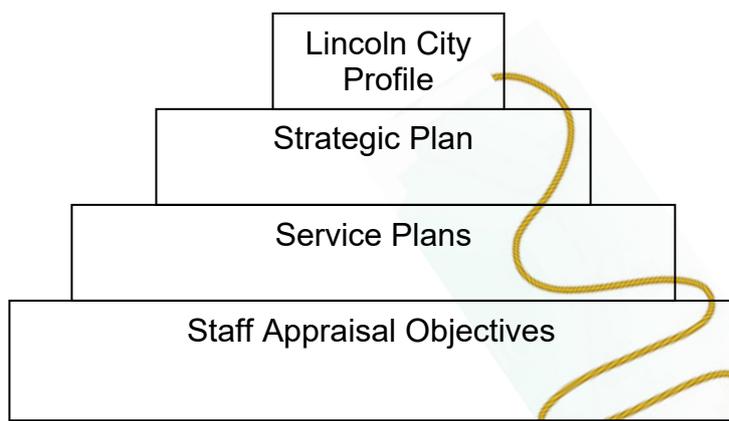
Service planning

Service Plans may be created at either Assistant Director level or at Service Manager level – sometimes at both.

The Assistant Director Plan prioritises key activities across the service areas which the AD will champion within their area over the coming year. The Service Managers Plan is a tool for service managers to use in the efficient running of their service areas, and assisting with staff appraisals.

The plans are closely linked to the strategic priorities of the council. CMT will take a view each year on whether the capacity or need exists for both tiers of plan to be produced.

Strategic Plan Implementation Team (SPIT)

SPIT is a sub-group of Corporate Management Team with responsibility for programme managing all strategic projects (those on the capital programme and/or supporting a strategic objective) being undertaken by the council. Chaired by the Chief Finance Officer, other members include selected Assistant Directors and project managers with key projects in the programme. The team report to Members and CMT on a quarterly basis, with a summary annual performance report at year end.

Other Performance reporting outside of this framework

There are several additional performance reports reporting on specific aspects of the council's performance which are not a part of the local performance management framework. These include reporting on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Treasury Management, Shared Service working, complaints, equality and diversity and risk.

Other useful information

Both Members and officers will need to consider all aspects of performance in the overall context of legislation and the council's adopted policies, ranging from corporate policies, for example on equality and diversity, to specific policies on the services we are committed and legally obliged to deliver, for example Planning. These policies can be found on City People or are available from the appropriate service.

Strategic performance will be captured in the Council's dedicated on-line performance management system – IMPS – accessible through City People for both Members and Officers. Directorates may also keep more detailed information on their own in-house systems.

The quality of performance measure data is covered under a separate Policy – the Corporate Data Quality Policy (June 2015).

Benchmarking data is not universally available, so each Portfolio is presented with a contextual view of data available in the 'market place' at the relevant Performance Scrutiny Committee. This sits alongside performance data from CoLC's own system enabling comparisons to be made.

CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

Lincoln Performance Management Framework

2025 - 2030

Contents

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We want to make Lincoln a desirable place to live, work and visit.
Our vision to deliver Lincoln's ambitious future is underpinned by five strategic priorities.

We also have a 'One Council' objective that aims to help us understand and meet the needs of our many customers; embrace digital technologies; deliver excellent and cost effective customer service through multiple channels; and redesign our services so they are efficient, effective and customer-focused.

Effective performance management is essential to the council delivering these priorities and forms a key part of its overall governance framework.

What this document is for
This document sets out how the council defines 'performance management', and how it oversees performance at a strategic, operational and frontline level. It also summarises how the council collects and uses performance data and business intelligence to continually improve and evolve its services, make evidence-based decisions, and influence its partnerships and the services overseen by other organisations in the city.

This Lincoln Performance Management Framework aims to clarify and simplify the systems and processes the council relies upon; to ensure we are delivering high quality services, responding to local needs, and ensuring public money is spent wisely. It builds on the systems and processes we already have and helps us ensure that, when we talk about 'performance', all officers and elected members mean the same thing.

What does good performance management look like?
Good performance management focuses on progress and change and is about more than the static process of monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) and 'hitting targets'. Solely target-driven approaches to performance management can produce unintended outcomes, focusing on numbers and outturns without understanding how these relate to the outcomes and lives of people in the city.

This new Framework builds on the significant changes the council has already made to managing performance, focusing on making sure we know what happens in our services

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and why, so we can make the right decisions to improve these services and deliver the best outcomes for the city.

4

What is performance management?

Performance management encompasses multiple elements including processes, techniques, and methods that help us to:

- identify our goals;
- define how we will achieve these goals; and
- decide what we will measure so we know we're making progress.

Performance management is important, and is recognised in legislation and national guidance:

- The Local Government Act (1999) requires council services to be 'responsive to the needs of citizens, high quality and cost effective, and fair and accessible to all who need them'

- Statutory guidance on 'best value duty' (2023) places councils under a general duty to secure continuous improvement in how their functions are exercised based on a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness

- The national Regulator of Social Housing introduced a new inspection regime in April 2024, which assesses stock holding local authorities and other social housing providers' compliance with regulatory requirements and reviews their performance.

- The Local Government Association published Performance Management Guides for both elected members and officers in 2022, setting a benchmark for what good performance management looks like in local government.

- On 1st April 2024 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and the Housing Ombudsman, released their Complaint Handling Codes. Both Codes are aligned and set out the processes that councils and social housing providers must follow to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. The Codes also require organisations to use complaints data and learnings to drive service improvement.

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Performance management happens at three key levels:

Strategic

We have a strategic plan that has a clearly defined Vision and priorities, and we monitor delivery

We have good corporate governance and financial management

We effectively scrutinise and challenge, and our decisions are evidence-based

Operational

We have a wide range of KPIs that, collectively, help us understand how our services are performing

We robustly plan, monitor and resource our services

We use business intelligence to inform service development

Front line

We use management information to monitor the day to day effectiveness of our services

We are adaptable to service pressures or change

We engage with our citizens to ensure our service are fit for purpose

The performance cycle

Effective performance management helps us to drive performance improvement, whilst simultaneously reporting performance data and other business intelligence. By doing this we can continually review how we are functioning as an organisation, and whether we are delivering on our Vision and priorities.

Data

Analysing

Reporting

Interpreting

Acting

6
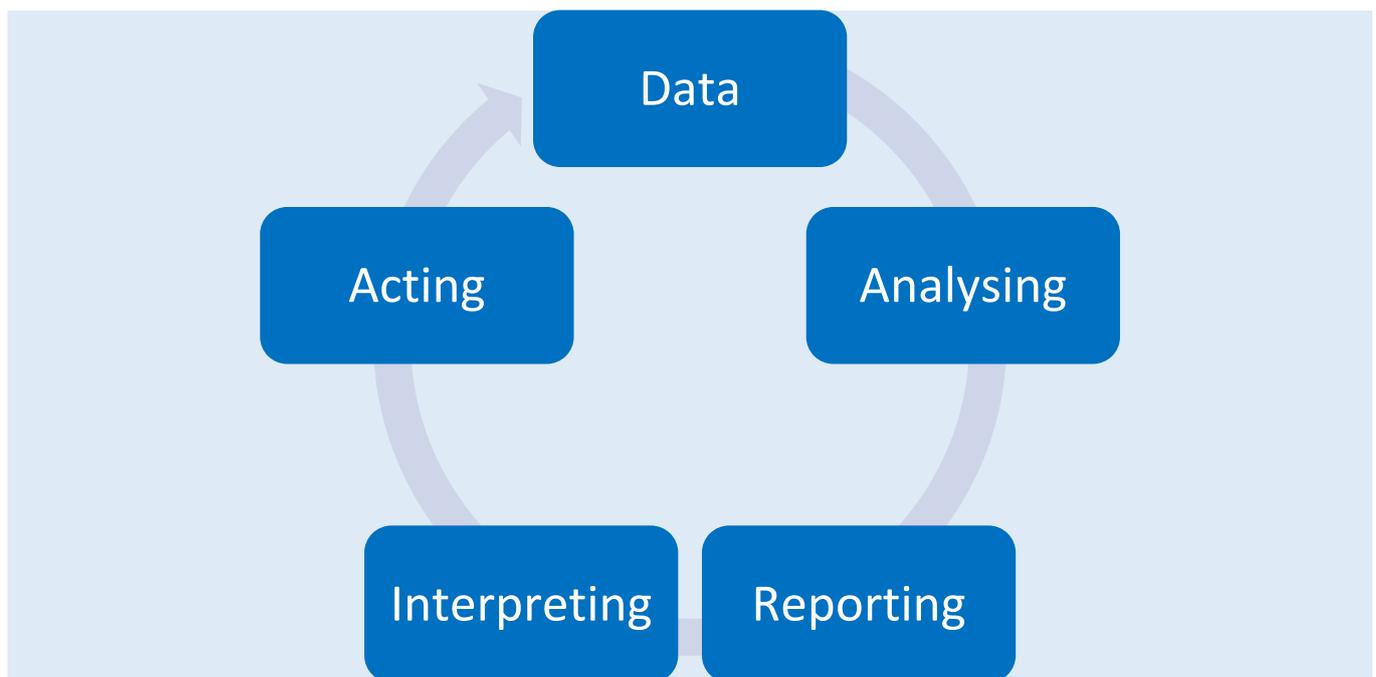
For this cycle to work effectively, our Performance Management Framework includes the following elements:

- Governance and Strategy
- Understanding our city
- What we measure and why
- Our key performance indicators
- Reporting and accountability
- Data quality and systems
- Data culture
- Continuous improvement

Governance and strategy	**Understanding our city**	**What we measure, and why**
Data quality and systems	**Data culture**	**Roles, responsibilities and accountability**
	Continuous improvement	

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Governance and Strategy

Vision and Priorities

To drive good performance, it's essential we know what our goals are and the actions we plan to take to achieve them. It is also important that we have good decision making structures in place across all council services. We do this by having a strategic plan, which is central to everything we do and is continually monitored to make sure we stay on track.

Our strategic plan sets out what we aim to achieve in the city, and is refreshed every five years. Our next strategic plan is Vision 2030 and has five strategic priorities that, together, aim to make the city a great place to live, work and visit. These are:

- Let's reduce all kinds of inequality
- Let's deliver quality housing
- Let's drive inclusive, sustainable economic growth
- Let's enhance our remarkable place
- Let's address the challenge of climate change

These priorities, and inward facing priorities, are overseen by the council's Executive members across the portfolios of;

- Climate and Corporate Strategy
- Quality Housing
- Inclusive Economic Growth
- Reducing Inequality
- Remarkable Place
- Customer Experience, Review and Resources

Our Executive members are ultimately responsible for the performance of services and activities within their Portfolio.

Governance

Delivering our priorities requires good governance. This means we put in place effective internal controls to ensure we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, and that we do this in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It means that we conduct ourselves in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that we safeguard public money by using it economically, efficiently and effectively.

Like all councils we are required to ensure our internal controls comply with CIPFA's "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016".   We do this by incorporating CIPFA's seven 'core principles' into our own 'Code of Corporate Governance' ("our Code") and by completing a robust annual self-assessment of how we have complied with our Code. This annual self-assessment is called an 'Annual Governance Statement' (AGS).

Both Core Principle F of CIPFA's framework, and Principle F of our own Code relate to:

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"Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management"

Our Code of Corporate Governance and Annual Governance Statement are published on our website.

Our 'golden thread'

Our approach to performance management is a two-way process.

By ensuring our vision and priorities are at the heart of everything we do, we create the conditions to deliver both value for money for our residents and businesses and the capacity to achieve the best outcomes for our city.

Our priorities and their associated programmes, projects and workstreams run throughout our services; from our directorates' annual service plans to our individual employees' objectives. As a large organisation that delivers a broad range of services, this 'golden thread' is vital to making sure our services are aligned; that all parts of the council contribute to delivering our strategic priorities; and we are all working towards the same vision.

It also enables us to make the best use of our data, by promoting the flow of performance information and business intelligence from our front-line services upwards, to support evidence-based decision making by our elected members and senior officers.

Collectively, this approach means we use all available information about the city and our services to ensure we decide, and deliver, the best combination of strategic priorities that will benefit those who live, work and visit here.

How we collect and interpret information about the city is explained in the next section.

Performance Scrutiny

Our Performance Scrutiny Committee plays an important role in challenging and scrutinising our performance and how this impacts our ability to deliver our Vision and Priorities. This committee regularly scrutinises our performance across a range of topics:

- Financial and treasury management
- Key performance indicators

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Performance data/business intelligence

Our Vision

↓

Our Priorities

↓

Our Service Plans

↓

Our Teams

↓

Our Staff
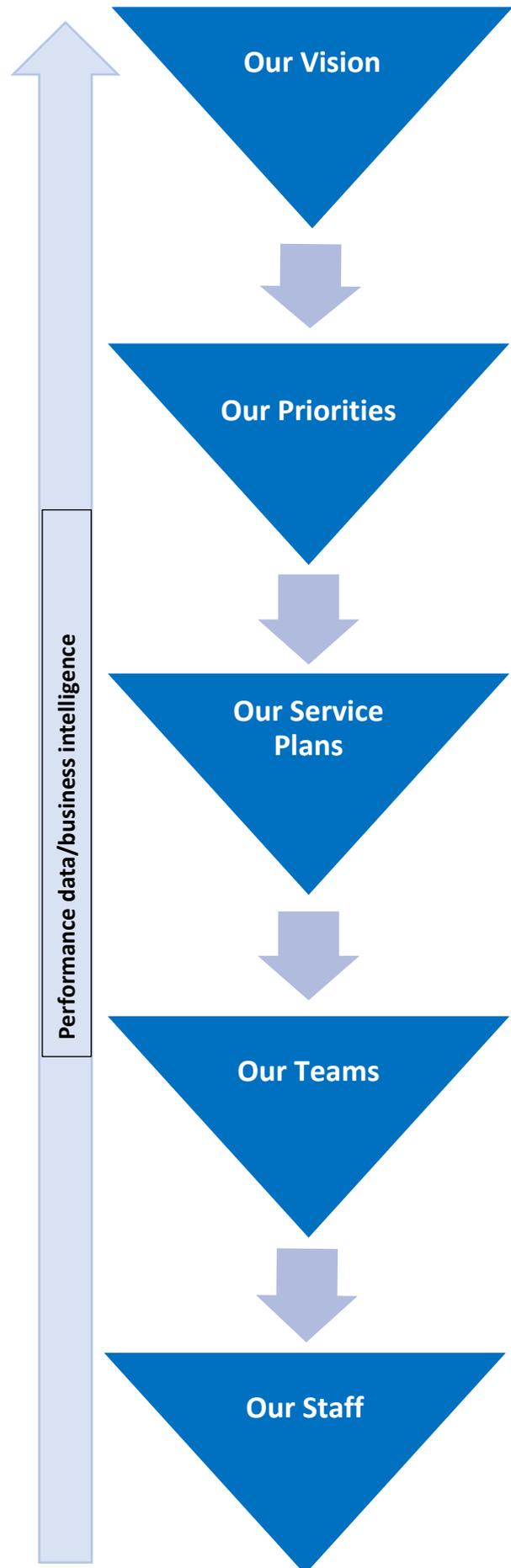
- Strategic risk register
- Portfolio holders' annual reports
- Customer complaints

We also have a Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee that scrutinises the performance of all aspects of our landlord services. Included in membership of this sub-committee are representatives from the Lincoln Tenants' Panel, who advocate for the best interests of our tenants and give them a voice on key issues that affect them.

Terms of reference for all our committees can be found in our Constitution.

For our performance management to be effective, and to ensure we are focused on the right outcomes, it is important we understand the context in which we are operating. This means we need to understand who lives and works in our city, what and how national and local issues affect the city, and the link between our services and the council's external environment. We do this in a number of ways:

Horizon Scanning

Our senior leadership team, supported by professional officers across our services, maintain up to date knowledge of national and local changes that affect their functions. Executive members are regularly briefed on developments in the services within their Portfolios, and members themselves maintain a keen interest in these areas. This helps to ensure our decisions are relevant and timely, and is reinforced by regular contact with our strategic and statutory partners, with peer organisations, and with the city's Member of Parliament.

Lincoln City Profile

We produce an annual 'Lincoln City Profile', which consolidates and presents a wide range of demographic information from both nationally published sources and the council's own data. More than 140 different datasets are collated every year, across a wide range of categories including:

Population	Economy	Welfare	Crime
Health	Education	Housing	Environment and climate
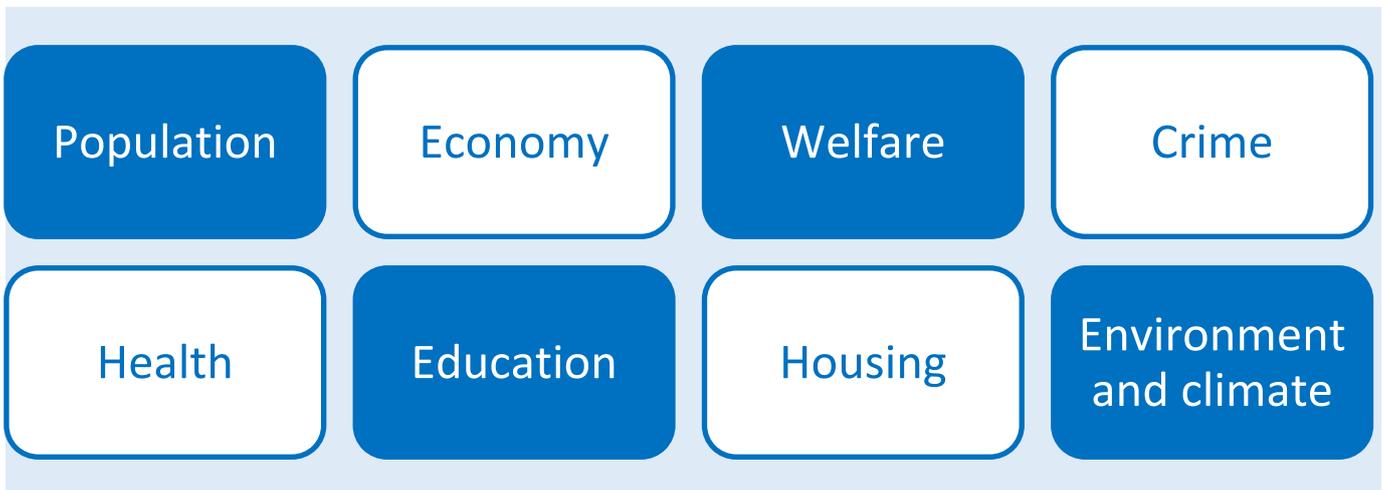
The datasets within the City Profile enable us to identify trends and predict future changes in the city and is the primary source of demographic data that we use to inform our strategic vision and priorities, as well as many of our service specific strategies and policies. The Profile is also used by our local statutory partners, higher education institutions, third/voluntary sector organisations and the business community to inform their operations.

Our Lincoln City Profile is available on our website.

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Community and customer engagement

It is also important that, whether defining our vision and priorities, or designing or adapting our services, we provide opportunities for our communities and customers to influence what we do. Formal and informal feedback mechanisms enable us to gather valuable information and insights that wouldn't otherwise be recorded but offer a window into how people perceive us, their experiences of the city and what they need from us when accessing our services.

Some of our feedback mechanisms include:

Lincoln Citizens' Panel	**Lincoln Tenants' Panel**
Neighbourhood/community working and stakeholder groups	**Engagement events**
Bespoke customer surveys	**Complaints and compliments**
Partnerships	**'Contact Us'** Website Social media platforms

Our community and customer engagement methods will continue to evolve over time, and we are committed to making it as simple and effective as possible for people to share their views with us.

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What we measure and why

We monitor a broad range of information and functions to make sure we are performing and delivering high quality services that represent value for money. Much of this is monitored through the internal and external audit/assurance process and reviewed annually via our Annual Governance Statement.

Strategic:

Examples of how we monitor performance at a strategic level include:

- How we set our annual budget and manage our finances
- How we procure services from external suppliers, and how effective our contract management arrangements are
- How we manage our programmes and projects
- How we manage our capital assets including our buildings, vehicles, ICT devices and equipment
- Whether our workforce, including support services, are resilient and have the capacity to carry out our functions

We have a network of member-led committees that scrutinise our performance, including our scrutiny committees and the Audit Committee. Details of these governance arrangements are set out in our Annual Governance Statement.

Operational:

Examples of what we measure at an operational level include:

Service plans

Each directorate bases its services around an annual service plan, derived from our Vision and Priorities. Our service plans are the primary means by which we ensure our Vision and Priorities are delivered, and each plan is 'owned' by an Assistant Director. Our Strategic Directors monitor implementation of our service plans and report performance to our Executive and portfolio holders.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

We monitor a suite of more than 100 corporate operational key performance indicators (KPIs), which provide a vital window into how our services are operating. These KPIs are agreed annually and reported quarterly. The process we use to set our KPIs is explained in the next section.

Frontline:

In addition to our KPIs, each service area also collects and reviews data derived from their day-to-day operations. This 'management information' data includes information such as service volumes, changing demands and customer feedback, and is shared between individuals, teams and service managers. This management information is regularly reported upwards to Assistant and Strategic Directors, and provides opportunities to highlight trends, extraordinary events and changing service demands so these can be considered during decision making.

Some of these performance indicators are also reported to our Corporate Management Team and committees, both to help us improve understanding of our performance, and as a means of ensuring we are complying with the law and proper standards.

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Our key performance indicators

Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are our primary way of monitoring our performance at an operational level.

The target setting process

Our corporate operational KPIs, and their targets, are agreed annually:

Directorates
- Work together to propose list KPIs and targets for coming year
- Targets based on management information and benchmarking data from other councils (if available)

CMT
- Reviews full measure set and gives approval for reveiw with Portfolio Holder

Portfolio Holders
- Reviews final measure set and gives approval for scrutiny

Performance Scrutiny Committee
- Reviews full measure set and considers if these are appropriate and if targets strike a balance between being challenging and realistic/achievable

Executive
- Provides final review, and approval for measures set

The target setting process for our landlord services KPIs is also undertaken annually, but is slightly different:

Housing Directorate
- Work together to propose list KPIs and targets for coming year
- Targets based on management information and benchmarking data from Housemark (where available)

CMT
- Reviews full measure set and gives approval for review with Portfolio Holder for Housing

Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing
- Reviews final measure set and gives approval for scrutiny

Lincoln Tenants' Panel
- Reviews full measure set, and considers if these are appropriate and repersentative of tenants' interests

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- Reviews full measure set and considers if these are appropriate and if targets strike a balance between being challenging and realistic/achievable
- With support of Lincoln Tenants' Panel, approving the measures set

The process for agreeing the measures set for the following year is completed during the third and fourth quarter of the current year.

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The annual target setting reports for the corporate operational KPIs, and for the landlord services KPIs, both contain performance trend information and commentary to explain the rationale for the years' proposed targets.

Presenting performance data
All of our KPIs are either 'targeted' (have a measurable target) or are 'volumetric' (no target).

Corporate operational KPIs
All targeted measures reported to our Performance Scrutiny Committee are given a 'low target' and a 'high target'. Measures performing above target are highlighted 'green'; those performing below target are highlighted 'red'; and those falling within the high/low target range are 'blue'.

To aid interpretation of the performance data, the following is also provided:

- direction-of-travel information so readers can easily understand how performance has changed between quarters
- Commentary for each measure to explain the performance outturns
- A colour coded key so readers can easily identify which portfolio each KPI relates to
- Recent trend data to enable year-on-year and year-to-date performance comparisons

Landlord services KPIs
Our landlord services performance data is presented in a similar format to our corporate operational KPI data, with some notable exceptions:

- All targeted measures have one target. For landlord services KPIs that overlap with corporate operational KPIs, the target used is the 'high target'.
- Measures performing close to target are highlighted 'amber'; those performing above target are 'green' and those below are 'red'
- Benchmarking data, derived from Housemark, is provided annually during the fourth quarter.
- All KPIs are derived from our 'Quality Housing' portfolio and therefore a colour coded key is not required
- As all KPIs relate to the same service, detailed commentary on performance is provided in the covering report and not in the performance data table.

Reporting our performance
Corporate operational KPIs
Our quarterly performance monitoring is subject to a well-established reporting process. The following process relates to our core operational KPI set:
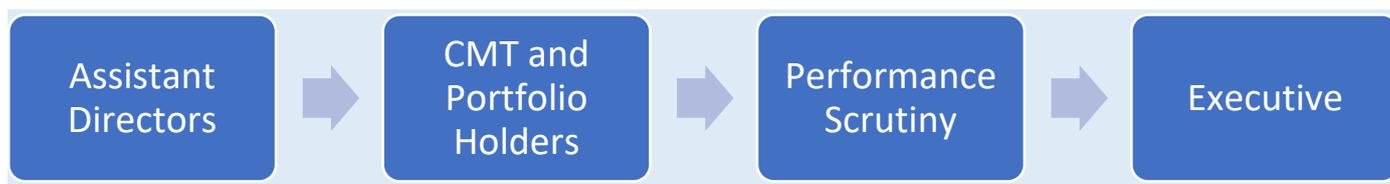
This process is open and transparent, and the same quarterly report is used at each stage. Our quarterly performance reports are publicly available via our website.

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Since Quarter 1 of 2024/25 we have presented our corporate operational performance information in the following format:

- Covering report – A brief summary of our performance overall
- Appendix A – A summary of our performance against our corporate operational KPIs, categorised by our five strategic priorities and two inward-looking portfolios. Appendix A also includes qualitative performance information in the form of case studies
- Appendix B – Detailed performance data tables covering all KPIs, including corporate services' and complaints performance data and a Communications update.

Landlord services KPIs

KPIs that relate solely to our landlord services are reported slightly differently to our corporate operational KPIs. This is due to the unique relationship we have with our tenants as their landlord, our separate scrutiny arrangements for these services, and the need for our performance to be presented in a way that is most engaging for our tenants' representatives the Lincoln Tenants Panel:

Housing Assistant Directors/Strategic Director (Housing & Investment) → Corporate Mangement Team → Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing → Lincoln Tenants' Panel → Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The format for our landlord services' performance report is:
- Covering report – A detailed overview of performance within the landlord service; and
- Appendix A – Detailed performance data tables for all agreed KPIs.

Quarterly performance reports for our landlord services are also publicly available, and in consultation with the city's tenants' representative group the Lincoln Tenants' Panel.

Benchmarking

We use benchmarking information to help us understand how our performance, and our city, compare to other local authorities and to assist us in setting appropriate targets for our KPIs.

As the primary urban centre in an otherwise rural county, we acknowledge that many of the city's characteristics, and our service challenges and pressures, differ considerably from our Lincolnshire neighbouring authorities. We therefore find the most useful comparative local authorities, being those who are more similar to us, are further afield.

We use our CIPFA 'nearest neighbour' group when compiling our annual Lincoln City Profile, and when comparing some aspects of our performance. We are also members of Housemark, a national provider of benchmarking information and best practice for social housing landlords, to help us understand how our landlord services compare to other social housing landlords with similar stock size and characteristics to us.

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Benchmarking data is also available from a range of other sources, such as through the many statistical returns we provide to Government and through informal benchmarking networks.

We intend to further develop our benchmarking activity in the future, to help us continue to improve our understanding of our performance and support our decision making.

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A robust performance management framework defines the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the process.

Our key roles and responsibilities are:

Responsibilities of committees and elected members

Portfolio Holders	Overall responsibility and political accountability for the running of services and functions within their portfolios, including performance.
Leadership and Executive	Responsibility for approving the council's operational KPI measures set, receiving quarterly operational performance information, and making decisions/undertaking functions in response to this performance information as set out in the Constitution.
Performance Scrutiny	Responsibility for holding the Executive to account, and reviewing and scrutinising all aspects of the council's performance including quarterly monitoring of operational KPIs.
Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee	Responsibility for holding the Executive to account, and reviewing and scrutinising all aspects of the council's landlord services including quarterly monitoring of landlord services KPIs and target setting.
Audit Committee	Responsibility for providing independent assurance to the council of the adequacy of its internal control environment, including governance, financial management and risk management. This includes assurance that its arrangements for performance management are robust and fit for purpose, and monitoring the performance of internal and external audit.

Officers' responsibilities

The following table presents a summary overview of the roles and responsibilities of officers. Additional detail is provided in the Data Quality Guide in Appendix A.

Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Strategic Directors	Responsibility for reviewing strategic and operational performance information, and accountability to elected members for performance within their directorates

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Assistant Directors	Responsibility for the effective operation of their services, and accountability for the accuracy and integrity of KPI data and commentaries
Service Managers and Team Leaders	First line responsibility delivering against their KPI's and checking the accuracy and integrity of KPI data and commentaries, and approving performance data control sheets
Individual staff	Responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the standard of performance set, producing accurate data control sheets, and collecting and inputting accurate KPI data and commentaries into the council's performance information management system (PIMS), in accordance with approved performance data control sheets
Corporate Policy and Improvement Team	Responsibility for implementing the council's performance management framework, and leading council's KPI reporting processes. The team is also responsible for maintaining and administering the performance information management system (PIMS), and providing performance advice and guidance across all directorates.

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Data quality and systems

Data quality is central to an effective performance management framework. Accurate, relevant and reliable data is vital to ensuring we:

- Make good decisions
- Have good governance and high assurance
- Deliver value for money by driving service improvement, eliminating waste and allocating resources effectively
- Demonstrate an evidence-based approach to everything we do
- Provide excellent and reliable customer service
- Are trusted by our city, our partners and our stakeholders
- Manage our finances wisely
- Understand how our performance compares to others
- Meet our statutory duties and withstand scrutiny and external audit and inspection
- Have credibility

Performance Information Management System (PIMS)

We use a custom-built Performance Information Management System (PIMS) to record and retain our KPI data. This system is administered by our Corporate Policy and Transformation Team, and ensures we have a robust and auditable record of all our KPIs including those that are no longer in use.

Data Quality

Our Data Quality Guide sets out how we ensure all data entered into PIMS is relevant, accurate, complete, valid, timely and reliable. This Data Quality Guide is attached as 'Appendix A' to this framework.

To maximise the quality of our data, all our KPIs are accompanied by a control sheet that sets out how outturns for the measure are calculated. These are prepared by individual staff responsible for data collection and entry into PIMS, and approved by service managers and team leaders. All control sheets are reviewed annually, and up to date versions stored in the council's corporate 'Netconsent' document control system.

Like all organisations we are reliant on ICT systems to run and monitor our services. Some of our current ICT systems are now quite old and there are barriers with some systems to integrating and automating our data. We are currently reviewing our ICT Strategy, and undergoing a large scale ICT replacement programme to ensure our infrastructure is fit for our current and future service needs. As we replace our current systems we intend to streamline how we collect, interpret and present our performance data by taking all available opportunities to automate. These capabilities will be given high importance as we procure these system replacements. Until this replacement programme is complete, and to ensure compliance with our Data Quality Guide, we will continue to use procedure notes to support staff with extracting data from older systems in a consistent way.

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Good performance management focuses on progress and change and is about more than the static process of monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) and 'hitting targets'. This framework aims to reinforce a culture of openness, where performance data and business intelligence are used in positive ways.

A positive performance culture

Target driven approaches are useful when assessing performance, however they are most effective when they are part of a wider, more holistic approach. Performance models can produce undesirable outcomes when based solely on achieving targets, which can mislead decision makers by making performance look better than it is. This could be by:

- setting targets too low, so they are easier to achieve
- falsifying or omitting data to make performance look more favourable
- selecting KPIs that are easier to achieve, yet do not provide a true window into how services are operating
- Narrowing focus by engaging in activities like 'gaming' and cherry-picking (the source of the phrase 'what gets measured gets done')

By fostering a culture of openness, curiosity and enquiry we view our performance as part of a wider system, enabling us to share ideas and experiences to help us improve how we work. Having a 'no blame' culture creates a learning environment where staff, elected members and stakeholders can better understand what our data is really telling us. We also encourage full disclosure of data across the council, improving the integrity and credibility of our performance information.

What our performance is (and isn't) telling us

Some performance measures tell us more than others, and our approach to quarterly reporting of our KPIs focuses on helping the reader understand what this means in practice.

Some performance data, for example, provides insight into how a service is 'performing', whereas others tell us more about a service's external environment. Demands for our services are ever increasing, and changes in customer demands and other service pressures can significantly impact our performance data.

Performance data is most powerful when combined with other forms of business intelligence, such as what we produce in our Lincoln City Profile. By taking care to communicate our performance to decision makers in this more holistic way, we aim to drive performance by encouraging a range of steps, including process re-engineering and reviewing our resources, to generate better outcomes for the city and people who live, work and visit here. The commentaries that accompany our KPIs encourage service areas to fully understand and explain reasons for underperformance, providing a starting point for assistant directors and service managers to tackle areas of underperformance within their services.

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Continuous improvement

This framework is the product of a period of enhancements to our performance management approach. However we acknowledge that there remain opportunities to further improve.

The following action plan summarises some of these improvement areas, and when we hope to deliver these:

Action	By who	By when
Engage with key stakeholder groups, such as the Lincoln Tenants' Panel, earlier in the annual target setting process so they have more opportunity to influence how we measure performance		
Enhance how we visualise and present performance information and business intelligence, by investing in digital solutions such as PowerBI that enable us to gain better insights from our data		
Invest in automating data inputs into our PIMS system, to further increase our capacity to tackle areas of underperformance		

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Introduction

Data quality is essential to effective performance management. This Data Quality Guide sets out the key principles that apply to collecting and recording performance data, including the key performance measures data held in the City of Lincoln Performance Information Management System (PIMS).

Objectives

The objectives of this guide are to achieve:

- **Good governance and leadership -** clear leadership on data quality from elected members and senior management drives understanding of the need for good data quality.

- **Fit for Purpose Data –** clear communication achieving good quality data is vital, resulting in efficient and well documented systems for collecting and reporting.

- **A workforce that understands and values the importance of accurate and meaningful data –** people who are supported with maintaining data quality will help us uphold these standards, ensuring they have the skills, information and resources they need and understand how they contribute.

- **Reporting and using data –** only performance data and business intelligence that is of good quality can be used to improve service performance, and it is essential that data we publish is credible and withstands scrutiny.

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Key data quality principles:

Relevance	•Suitable for use in decision making •Presented in a clear, understandable way •Presented at an appropriate geographical level
Accuracy	•COUNT principle ('Count Once and Use Numerous Times') •One agreed data source, captured as close as possible to source •Accuracy proportionate to cost and effort
Completeness	•Full range of data •Triangulated where relevant •Benchmarked/contextualised where possible
Validity	• Data clearly defined •Calculations and methodology defined •Recorded in compliance with any other requirements •Use of proxy data
Timeliness	•Appropriate time period covered •Presented without undue delay •reported at appropriate frequency
Reliability	•Consistency of data collection •Electronic as far as possible

Ensuring our data is accurate

Data collection and requirements should be designed with simplicity in mind, including minimising the need for manual data cleansing, matching and consolidation. Wherever possible, performance measure data should be automated. If automation is not possible, it should ideally be drawn from one source/system. These approaches help to ensure data is 'right first time', and is easier and quicker to collect, report and interpret. It also supports consistency of data collection, by reducing variances of approach between staff.

When procuring new ICT systems, automated data collection should be included in any procurement specification in support of these aims.

Verification

Where possible a verification procedure will exist close to the point of data input. Service managers will be responsible for making sure this verification occurs, and for 'sense checking' their service areas' data; if it doesn't look right, it probably isn't.

The type of verification used will be proportionate to the type of performance data being collected and the method of collection. Examples of verification include:
- Reviewing the data against service expectations

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- Checking data cleansing (such as removing duplicates) has been completed
- Repeating the running of system reports
- Auditing or 'dip testing' a sample of data to check its accuracy
- Auditing or 'dip testing' third party data, if the data is provided by a contractor

Data inaccuracies can be minimised by checking data throughout the collection process, and we recommend a multi-tiered approach:
- Team should check the data they collect twice before submitting it to their service manager
- Service managers verify the data prior to submission to Assistant and Strategic Directors (as set out above)
- Assistant Directors may request additional checks to satisfy themselves that processes are being followed
- The Corporate Policy and Transformation team will undertake basic checks on corporate operational KPIs when compiling the quarterly report, and will report any suspected anomalies to their respective service areas
- The Internal Audit team may check accuracy of any service area's data as part of the internal audit programme
- The council's performance information management system (PIMS) contains current and historic data on all operational performance measures, both current and retired, so there is a fully auditable log of performance over time.

Ensuring our data is fit for purpose

KPIs are vital to helping us understand how our services are operating, however they are only useful if they are well designed. Performance measures should:
- Be aligned to our strategic priorities and/or our statutory duties
- Be selected on the basis that they provide a true window into our services, rather than simply being easy to achieve
- Where relevant, be focused on the customer journey/outcomes
- Be simple and cost effective to collect and report
- Be clearly defined, with supporting information if necessary, so others understand exactly what is being measured.

What do our KPIs tell us?

Our operational KPIs usually tell us one of the following:
- How a service is performing; or
- The scale of demands/pressures on a service

It is important to understand what type of data is being collected. There are three main types of performance data:
- Inputs – this is the simplest type of data to collect and report. It is usually one-dimensional 'activity' data, that relates to the initial stage(s) of our internal business processes. Examples include the number of complaints/ service requests/ benefit claims received by a service. Input data therefore usually tells us most about the demands/ pressures on a service.

- Outputs – output data is more likely to tell us how a service is performing, and like input data is usually simple to collect and report provided that ICT systems are used consistently and in accordance with our business processes. Output data is best described as 'delivery'

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data, and examples include the number of complaints/ service requests/ benefit claims processed within target.

- Outcomes – Outcome data isn't as easily quantifiable and is therefore difficult to collect and report. It measures the 'change' or 'impact' of a culmination of inputs and outputs over time. Examples could include how the health of a population changes over a period of several years, or how implementation of a strategy has changed life in the city over its lifespan. It is recommended that KPIs do not seek to measure outcomes; these are better defined and monitored by our Vision and Priorities.

Ensuring our approach to data complies with good information governance

All data will be collected, processed and retained in accordance with our Information Governance and Data Protection Policies. A complete list of these policies, which are reviewed regularly, is contained in our Code of Corporate Governance.

More services are now delivered in partnership with other organisations, and some will involve the sharing of data. All partners are required to have sound governance arrangements in place, such as information sharing agreements or service level agreements. We undertake an annual assurance review of our partnerships to ensure we meet these requirements.

Ensuring roles and responsibilities are clear

Responsibility for data quality is apportioned within the council as follows:

Data Quality Champion – Chief Executive and Town Clerk • Overall strategic responsibility for data quality
Corporate Management Team – Portfolio Holder for Customer Experience, Review and Resources • Lead Member for data quality through Portfolio Holder role
Responsible Director – Assistant Director Transformation and Strategic Development: • Ultimate responsibility for any published reports.

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Assistant Directors – Data Owners
- The Responsible Officer
- Approving the information provided – especially the quality of the commentary
- Ensuring the data is verified on a regular basis
- Ensuring requirements of the Data Quality Guidance are adhered to
- Accountable for performance information in performance DMTs
- Presenting information to Members as part of Portfolio Holder sessions or at Performance Scrutiny Committee

Service Managers/Team Leaders – Data Collectors
- Ensuring the provision of data for their service area measures
- Checking the information prior to submission
- Provide good quality contextual information for each measure (commentary)
- First point of contact for specific, more detailed queries.
- Ensuring procedure notes are in place and staff appropriately trained to input correctly and make any necessary calculations
- Undertake role of responsible officer for data quality (see page 6 of policy)

Policy and Service Improvement
- Collating Directorate information for the performance DMT
- Make Service Areas aware of the deadlines for data entry
- Prepare and distribute Control Sheets for new measures
- Chase up any missing background/ supporting data/commentary
- Provide an additional check of the data provided
- Present and report data to Members and Corporate Management Team quarterly
- Liaise with Internal Audit and provide them with any information needed.
- Maintenance of the PIMS performance system

Internal Audit
- Review KPIs during audits to review their purpose and provide assurance on their accuracy.

Ensuring our workforce has the right skills and training

Data quality is everyone's responsibility, and this should be reflected in all job descriptions and included in objectives within the Staff Appraisal and one-to-one processes. The extent to which this is done will be based the responsibilities set out in the preceding section.

All staff receive appropriate induction training on handling data, and training will be provided by the Corporate Policy and Service Improvement Team to staff whose roles involve use of the PIMS system. This Data Quality Guide, and Lincoln Performance Management Framework, also provide a source of advice and practical support for officers involved in performance management.

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POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE   **10 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT:	STATUTORY FOOD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE – POLICY PROPOSAL
DIRECTORATE:	COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT
REPORT AUTHOR:	STEVEN BIRD, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES AND STREET SCENE

1.   Purpose of Report

1.1   To provide members with a copy of the draft operational policy for the new statutory food waste service.

2.   Executive Summary

2.1   This report sets out key details for the delivery of the new statutory weekly food waste collection service from 30th March 2026, and invites comments.

2.2   A new food Waste Policy document has been produced to make clear to the public how this service will be delivered, and is attached as an appendix to this report.

3.   Background

3.1   The requirement for Waste Collection Authorities to provide weekly food waste collections to all households has been mandated by its inclusion in the Environment Act 2021.

3.2   This statutory requirement to make a food waste collection service available must be implemented by 31 March 2026 for all households, and collections must be weekly.

3.3   This will be the largest change to waste collection services in Lincoln since the introduction of wheeled bins, and as it affects all councils, it is arguably the biggest single change in services the county, and indeed the country, has seen for some considerable time.

3.4   The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP), and its various supporting officer groups have therefore been monitoring developments and seeking to learn from both trial work, and other councils who have introduced food waste collection services already.

3.5   Having taken advice from the government's advisors, Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the partnership has identified all the key issues it needs to address, allowing officers to go back to their own Members to seek views on implementation, based on recommendations.

3.6   Whilst it is the hope/intention of the LWP that there will be uniformity of services across the county, it is accepted that each council is in a different place in terms of

resources, and so may not feel able to implement all the preferred approaches in full at this time. Therefore, although the basic services are fixed by mandate, there are some aspects of provision that may differ in the county, although these are expected to be relatively minor. It is the aim of LWP that there be as much consistency as possible.

3.7   As this is such a large change to services across the country, there has already been an escalating demand for capital purchase items, such as vehicles and caddies. It is thought possible that some councils will not now meet the 31st March 2026 deadline simply by virtue of not being able to source the required vehicles and bins in time. As Lincoln took clear decisions at the end of last year based on specialist advice, officers were able to order caddies and bins, and reassure the contractor who will provide the service (Biffa) that they could order vehicles. Capital expenditure risks associated with meeting the statutory requirements have therefore been mitigated as far as is possible, and confidence of being able to deliver to timetable is currently high.

3.8   This report therefore sets out the outstanding issue of agreeing the final operational policy, which will of course ultimately influence the final operational costs report to Executive.

4.   Key Issues

4.1   A report to the Executive at the end of 2024 set out the key areas for work in order to deliver the service. These remain pertinent as a structure for updating on delivery progress and consideration of the outstanding issues.

4.2   They are:

- provision of staffing for the service
- provision of vehicles for the service
- provision of caddies and communal bins
- other service demands/difficult to access premises

4.3   **Provision of Staffing for the Service**

4.4   The Council has recently let a new contract for waste and recycling services operable from September 2026. The new contract includes clauses in relation to the provision of this new service in so far as it could, based on what was known of the requirements at the time of drafting. This was drafted so as to ensure that the services could be provided from its start date in September, even if we could not meet the statutory requirements of an April start for contractual reasons. Defra were kept informed. As the current incumbent contractor has been successful in winning the new contract, this has opened-up easier opportunity for introducing the change in line with the statutory date. As such staffing can be considered to have been dealt with either under the existing contract, or under the provisions of the new contract.

4.5   **Provision of Vehicles for the Service**

4.6   The early decision by the Council to make financial provision (funded through Defra New Burdens capital grant) has enabled Biffa to order the required vehicles.

4.7   Their supplier has confirmed that the vehicles will be provided in February/March 2026, in time for the service commencement.

4.8   **Provision of Bins/Caddies**

Working with the government advisory body WRAP, the LWP-wide agreement has been for a two size caddy system for most households, with a smaller caddy of 5 litre in silver/grey for use indoors, to be decanted into a larger 23litre caddy of black with an orange lid, which is to be presented kerbside each week.

 5Ltr

 23Ltr

4.9   For those who make use of a communal bin for waste, then the same 5Ltr silver caddy will be provided for indoors, but a larger 140Ltr wheeled bin (black with orange lid) will be provided in the communal bin store areas for decanting.

4.10   As the Council took an early decision on the financing (through Defra New Burdens capital grant) and purchase of these caddies/bins, it was possible to join a county-wide group purchasing framework so that maximum value could be gained from a group purchase.

4.11   The caddies/bins have all been ordered, and delivery dates have been confirmed with the manufacturer.

4.12   **Other Service Decisions**

4.13   Where food waste collections are already in place it has been found that, just like in the mainstream service provision, different councils have chosen to provide slightly adjusted services. This may be based on local need, the priority given to the service for resources, or simply the resources available.

4.14   A good example is that of the use of liners for the kitchen caddies. Some councils provide liners, some 'accept' liners will be used (so are not counted as contamination), and some don't provide and don't encourage the use of liners (they don't want non-food waste materials in the waste stream).

4.15   In Lincolnshire the LWP, having operated trials and having taken advice from industry bodies, is convinced that there is reasonable evidence to support the use of liners. This is because it makes the service easier and cleaner to use, and so encourages engagement with the service. Therefore use of a liner is considered acceptable, and the collection and disposal route has been designed/developed to accommodate this material.

4.16   In support of this the LWP is suggesting districts in Lincolnshire should provide liners on an initial trial basis and then to assess demand, take-up and environmental impact after that.

4.17   The use of thin plastic liners brings an environmental question, which has caused debate, discussion and contemplation. Alternatives to plastic have been considered, but have been dismissed based on the basis that they are not effective (they get wet and collapse) and are very high cost.

4.18   The preferred LWP recommendation is therefore for all districts to provide 52 recycled plastic liners (one for each week of the first year), and to review their effectiveness and environmental variability towards the mid point of the year, to permit time to consider if further liners will be supplied after this.

4.19   Other anomalies that the Council's collection policy need to take into account include such as assisted collections and properties with more than 6 people in them.

4.20   All of these are addressed in the attached draft policy document, which is included here as an appendix for consideration.

4.21   As this is a new service it is accepted that there may be issues that have not been anticipated, and if this proves to be the case, then further adjustment of the policy may be required after a period of settlement.

5.   Strategic Priorities

5.1   **Let's reduce all kinds of inequality**

All of the Council's waste/recycling services are managed so as to meet or exceed our statutory obligations. Every effort is made to make sure that all residents have access to the services equitably.

5.2   **Let's address the challenge of climate change**

The Council strives to contribute positively to addressing the climate change agenda, and has declared a Climate and Environmental Emergency. Whilst this change will not contribute to the Council's own carbon neutral agenda, it is expected to assist in meeting national recycling targets.

6.   Organisational Impacts

6.1   **Finance**

6.1.1   The introduction of food waste collections will require significant resources to implement, of both a capital and revenue nature. Under the New Burdens doctrine, the Government have stated that they will provide local authorities with funding to meet agreed reasonable new burdens arising from these new statutory requirements.

6.1.2   While capital funding has already been provided to the Council, and used to purchase capital items as set out in the report, to date there has been no further details announced on the level of revenue funding Councils are likely to receive.

6.1.3   There is a high risk that the New Burdens funding provided will not cover the revenue costs associated with implementing this new statutory service. Confirmation of the revenue funding, once received, will be set out in the final operational costs report to Executive.

7.   Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

7.1   The requirement to provide a food waste collection service to every household will come into effect from 31st March 2026, as required under s45A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, introduced by the Environment Act 2021.The Council intends to launch its new service on 30th March 2026.

7.2   All procurement has been undertaken in line with Council's Contract Procedure Rules, and ultimately the relevant Procurement Act (PA23 or PCR2015).

8.   Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

8.1   The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

8.2   It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

   - Eliminate discrimination
   - Advance equality of opportunity
   - Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

8.3   An impact assessment taking note of the above is attached.

9.   Human Resources

9.1   The implementation of this new service has not been taken in isolation by senior managers. Significant additional project development and planning has been required for the management of the letting of the street scene contracts as a whole, as well as the other changes being mandated within waste/recycling services. Mindful of audit requirements, and the need to resource project management adequately, this has necessitated staffing structure adjustments to accommodate

the additional work. This will be required to be maintained until the new contacts are bedded-in, given the significant new administrative legal and contractual requirements**.**

Assessment is also being made as to the additional impact of extra waste receptacles on streets, and if an additional resource will be required to address an anticipated level of issues/enquiries/complaints.

10. Land, Property and Accommodation

N/A.

11. Significant Community Impact &/or Environmental Impact

11.1 This is a wholesale change to introduce a new service. As such it will have a significant impact on households and communities, not least because they will have to store and present more waste receptacles.

11.2 The change is being introduced by law as it is projected to have a positive impact on the recycling waste stream. Food waste is a serious contaminant of recycling that is collected, despite rejection of cases where contamination is obvious. In addition, having a focus on the amount of food waste presented by each household should bring this to their attention and reduce the overall amount of food waste that is thrown away. There is evidence that the tonnages collected by new food waste services dip in the first few months of introducing a new service as people become aware of how much they are wasting. The government assess that there is an environmental benefit overall, offsetting the extra vehicles and vehicle movements required to deliver the service.

11.3 The output from processing food waste through an anaerobic digester (LCCs preferred option for Lincoln's food waste) is electricity, (as gases from the composting process are used to drive turbines), and compost, which is used as a soil conditioner and fertiliser in farming. These outputs bring an income, helping to keep down the overall cost of food processing for the WDA.

12. Corporate Health and Safety Implications

12.1 Although the introduction of an extra waste service does not, in itself, add any new risks, by the nature of having more vehicle movements and more waste receptacles in circulation there are some inherent additional risks that need to be noted, such as vehicle accidents and trip hazards/obstructions associated with extra receptacles being left on streets.

13. Risk Implications

13.1 **(i) Options Explored**

This is a statutory requirement, so there is no option but to provide the service. The options for different methods of delivery have been explored and the proposed system is that recommended by LWP and WRAP, taking into consideration all risks.

13.2 **(ii)   Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach**

a) Purchasing. This change requires new assets such as vehicles and caddies. If any of these could not be procured in time (mindful that the entire country is under the same obligation) then the service would not be able to operate. This report flags the mitigation actions that have been taken to ensure supply and delivery, but until they have been delivered and actually entered service, the risks are not fully mitigated.

b) Contractor Staffing. New vehicles will require staff and drivers. The contractor considers this to be manageable and low risk.

c) While funding has been provided to cover capital and revenue transitional costs, the ongoing revenue allocations for providing the service have yet to be announced. There could be further shortfalls identified with this funding, creating an ongoing revenue budget pressure.

14.   Recommendations:

14.1   That members consider the draft policy document and provide comments.

Is this a key decision?	Yes
Do the exempt information categories apply?	Yes
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	No
How many appendices does the report contain?	Two
List of Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Steve Bird, Assistant Director, Communities and Street Scene Email address: steve.bird@lincoln.gov.uk

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Policy for Food Waste Collections

1. The Food Waste Service - Summary

1.1 This is a weekly collection service, commencing 30th March 2026, which is offered to every household in the city.

1.2 Each household is provided with a silver / grey kitchen caddy into which they can dispose of food waste.

1.3 For households which have their own set of bins (or bags) for waste collection, their silver / grey (smaller) kitchen caddy contents should be emptied into the kerbside (larger) caddy (black with orange lid), which they then present at the kerbside for a weekly collection, on the same day as their residual waste / recycling collections, by 6.30am.

1.4 For households which are served by communal waste bins (e.g. flats), their kitchen caddy contents should be emptied into a communal food waste wheeled bin (black with orange lid) which is in their bin store / area. Food waste communal bins are emptied weekly, or more frequently if required. Collection days will be designed to maximise operational efficiency and may not be the same as refuse / recycling communal bins.

1.5 Food waste is collected using specialist, dedicated food waste vehicles.

1.6 Food waste should be placed only in the Food Waste caddy / communal bin, to avoid contaminating other waste bins / bags.

2. What is Food Waste?

2.1 The service collects any form of food waste that arises from human food preparation, or is left over. This may be cooked or uncooked.

3. Caddies

3.1 The Council provides the kitchen caddies and kerbside caddies.

    Kitchen caddies – 5 litres – silver / grey

    Kerbside caddies – 23 litres – black with orange lid

3.2 At the initial rollout of caddies, kerbside caddies must be marked, by the resident, with their house name or number. Following that, for new and replacement caddies, kerbside caddies are marked with the house name or number prior to delivery. Residents can add further markings relating to their address if they wish.

3.3 Residents can request a replacement caddy (of either type) if their caddy is lost or damaged beyond reasonable use. Residents are asked to take their kerbside caddy back in as soon as possible after collection, and if they store their kerbside caddy outside, to store it somewhere that it is sheltered and safe.

3.4 If the collection crew notice that a kerbside caddy is damaged beyond reasonable use during the emptying process, they will report it so that a replacement can be arranged.

3.5 Residents can request one additional caddy (of either or both types) if there are six or more people living in their household. Such households are asked to use the service for at least a month before requesting an additional caddy / caddies.

3.6 If someone moves into Lincoln and there are no caddies at their new address, they can request caddies, and liners if liners are being provided (see Liners below).

3.7 When additional, new or replacement caddies are requested, they will be delivered within one week.

3.8 The Council reserves the right to refuse to supply, or to charge for the supply and delivery, of a replacement caddy, if a household is deemed to not be taking reasonable care of the caddies supplied (this will usually apply if a property has requested an unusual / unreasonable number of replacements).

3.9 If a resident refuses to accept delivery of their caddies at the start of the service, no further attempts will be made, and their refusal will be recorded. The resident can opt back in to the service later on.

3.10 If a resident chooses to opt out of the service after receiving their caddies they may be asked to store them. Future residents of their address may wish to use the service. In exceptional circumstances the Council will collect the caddies. In such cases the resident can opt back in to the service later on.

3.11 Individual kerbside caddies will not be provided to residents who are served by communal bins.

4. Communal Bins

4.1 The Council provides 140 litre communal bins – black with an orange lid.

4.2 Communal bins are provided to communal bin areas following an assessment which takes into account:

- The number of properties served
- Expected yield based on guidance
- Expected yield based on other research

- Expected yield based on experience
- Space available (in some cases, collections may be more often than weekly when there isn't space for sufficient bins for a weekly collection)

5. Liners

5.1 A supply of 52 liners will be supplied at the launch of the service, and when any new property joins the service during its first 12 months. The liners will be made from recycled material.

5.2 The Council may or may not continue to provide liners after the initial delivery of 52 at its discretion. This will be the subject of routine review, so the situation on supply may change at any time.

5.3 If residents prefer, they can provide their own liners. They may buy bags made for this purpose cheaply, or reuse other bags for example reusing bread or vegetable bags.

5.4 Residents are encouraged to use liners of some form, to keep their caddies clean and smell-free, and to make the collection process more efficient.

6. Assisted Collections

6.1 Residents can receive assisted collections if they have difficulty presenting their kerbside caddy at the kerbside for emptying. The qualifying criteria to get an assisted collection is the same as for other waste collection services, but it is acknowledged that some people who can safely move a wheeled bin won't be able to safely carry a kerbside caddy, and vice versa.

6.2 Residents who would like to check if they can qualify for this service should contact the Council.

7. Side Waste

7.1 'Side waste' (waste presented outside of a caddy) will not be collected. All food waste must be contained within the kerbside caddy.

8. Contamination

8.1 Residents must remove any packaging before placing food waste in their caddy. Waste other than food waste (and associated liner) cannot be collected, and putting anything other than food waste (and associated liner) in the caddy risks it not being collected.

8.2 If a caddy or communal bin is repeatedly misused it will be investigated, and support and advice will be provided. In extreme circumstances where persistent

contamination risks the integrity of the load being collected, it may be necessary to withdraw the service, including the removal of a communal kitchen waste bin.

9. Missed collections

9.1 It is acknowledged that there is an increased risk of food waste kerbside caddies being missed by collection crews, compared with wheeled bins and purple sacks.

9.2 Both the small size of the caddies, and the lower rates of presentation compared with other waste streams (meaning the crew can't assume there will be one outside almost every property) increase the risk of them being missed.

9.3 Collection crews will do their best to find and empty every caddy presented.

9.4 Residents must present their caddy by 6.30am for collection, and give consideration to making it visible to the collection crew (whilst not causing an obstruction or hazard in the public footpath). For people on the Assisted Collection list, access to their caddy must be available from 6.30am.

9.5 If a caddy is missed by the collection crew, the resident is asked to take it back in and present it again the following week. If this means that they have more food waste than they can fit in their kerbside caddy, the additional food waste can be placed in the black bin / purple sacks until their caddy is emptied the following week.

9.6 If a caddy is missed by the collection crew on two consecutive presentations, the resident is invited to report this to the Council so it can be investigated.

10. Changes to Collections

10.1 In the event of a temporary change to collection days (for example if the collection would normally fall on Christmas Day), this will be advertised along with changes to refuse / recycling collections, for example on stickers / tags placed on the refuse / recycling bin and in local media where possible (including the Council's web site).

11. Washing Service

11.1 Residents are responsible for keeping the 5 litre (kitchen) and 23 litres (kerbside) caddies clean.

11.2 The Council provides a regular washing service for communal food waste bins.

ENDS

Equality Impact Assessment -Food Waste Collections

Directorate	Section	Person Responsible for Assessment:	Date Assessment Commenced:
DHCS	Community Services	Steven Bird	16.5.25

Name of Policy to be assessed:	Food Waste Collections.
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy	• Statutory requirement to provide a weekly food waste collection to each household in the district.
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy, please explain	• Reduce food contamination in the main mixed domestic recycling, so that not only is the food waste recycled, but the other materials are cleaner, and so of better quality for recycling.
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy and in what way	Support national targets of recycling 65% by 2035 .

4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy?	• A weekly food waste collection to each household in the district. • Reduce contamination in the main mixed domestic recycling.		
5. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	• Every household is different, and so storage, presentation and access are barriers to success. • Householders may choose not to use the service.		
6. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy	Householders	7. Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy?	It is a statutory requirement, implementation is by Waste Collection Authorities, supported by Waste Disposal Authorities.
8. Are there concerns that the policy _could_ have a differential impact on racial groups?	Y	N	No.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	The Council runs all existing domestic waste and recycling services, and from this historic work has identified no special requirements for racial groups. The Council makes efforts to ensure that language barriers are considered and messages kept simple, with pictorial images used where possible.		
9. Are there concerns that the policy _could_ have a differential impact due to gender	Y	N	No.

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	The Council runs all existing domestic waste and recycling services, and from this historic work has identified no special requirements for gender groups.		
10. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due disability	Yes	N	Yes. Having to present food waste kerbside in another bin could be difficult for anyone with a mobility problem, particularly where there are obstacles (such as steps/kerb edges).
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Existing waste services take account of this for the other waste services the Council provides, so these will be included in those options. This includes such as assisted collections for those with disabilities.		
11. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation	Yes	N	No.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	The Council runs all existing domestic waste and recycling services, and from this historic work has identified no special requirements for groups with different sexual orientation.		
12. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to their age	Yes	N	Yes- but only if it affects their strength and mobility. See item 10 above.

What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	See item 10 above.		
13. Are there concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to their religious belief	Yes	No	No
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	The Council runs all existing domestic waste and recycling services, and from this historic work has identified no special requirements for people with different religious beliefs.		
14. Could the differential impact identified in 8-13 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy	Yes	N	Yes- due to added difficulty of presenting another bin at the kerbside, that could be quite heavy.
15. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason	Yes	N	No. This is an issue already addressed by Council waste/recycling policies for similar waste steams by the provision of an assisted backdoor collection service, free on request to all who qualify.

16. Any further comments relating to the Impact Assessment?			The Council has undertaken waste/recycling services for many years, and included actions to ensure access to services for those suffering with disabilities. It has had no complaints about the level/type of service provided, but will remain vigilant and review policies periodically. This change to service does not add a new type of problem, just more of the same types of problems previously encountered.	
17. Should the policy proceed to a partial/ full impact assessment	~~Yes~~	**No**	Date on which Partial/ Full Assessment to be started:	Date on which Partial/ Full Assessment to be completed:

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POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE   **10 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT:	**SCRUTINY SELF EVALUATION REVIEW**
DIRECTORATE:	**CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**CHERYL EVANS, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND ELECTIONS MANAGER**

1.   Purpose of Report

1.1   To provide the Committee with an opportunity to self-evaluate and review its scrutiny effectiveness.

2.   Background

2.1   An Internal Audit was carried out on Governance Health Check in July 2024. The audit had given substantial assurance, as there are good governance arrangements in place at the City of Lincoln Council, with only a few improvements identified. One of the recommendations was to carry out a review of the Council's scrutiny effectiveness which this report aims to address.

2.2   The audit recognised that scrutiny is an important part of the Governance structure, and it was therefore essential that the Council's scrutiny committees are effective, and that this is demonstrated. To evidence this good practice, a self-assessment should be used with the results feeding into the Scrutiny Annual Report.

3.   Scrutiny Evaluation Process

3.1   The Centre for Public Scrutiny has produced a guidance document (attached at Appendix A) which provides advice on self-assessment as well as recommendations on good practice.

3.2   A review of scrutiny effectiveness should be led by scrutiny councillors, and the outcomes of those reviews be driven by what scrutiny members have concluded for their individual committee.

3.3   The first stage in the process will be to hold an informal roundtable discussion with a working group of up to five Scrutiny Committee members. The group should consist of the Chair of the Committee, and preferably at least one member from a non-controlling group. For Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee, one member from the Lincoln Tenants Panel can be appointed.

3.4   At this meeting, the group will discuss, consider and complete a self-assessment matrix (attached at Appendix B) with support from Democratic Services which will consider the current scrutiny process, and highlight strengths and weaknesses.

3.5   The second stage is for the working group to share and discuss the findings with the full scrutiny committee, inviting members to comment and reflect on the results and any recommendations identified during the process.

3.6   Any recommendations highlighted which affect the wider scrutiny function will be considered separately once all committees have completed their own self-assessment.

4.   Strategic Priorities

Ensuring that the Council has effective scrutiny arrangements in place to support decision making is a key part of the Council's overall governance framework.

5.   Organisational Impacts

5.1   **Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report.

5.2   **Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

The review of effectiveness ensures best practice is met.

5.3   **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Due to the nature of this report there are no direct equality, diversity or human rights implications.

6.   Recommendation

6.1   That the Committee select a group of up to five councillors to attend a roundtable discussion (date to be confirmed) to complete the document for presentation at the 12 August 2025 meeting of Policy Scrutiny Committee. The group should contain the Chair of the Committee and preferably at least one member from a non-controlling group.

Is this a key decision?   No

Do the exempt information categories apply?   No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure   No
Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

How many appendices does the report   Two
contain?

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Cheryl Evans, Democratic Services and
                                            Elections Manager
                                  Email: cheryl.evans@lincoln.gov.uk

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The scrutiny evaluation framework

A mechanism for reviewing, evaluating and improving local government scrutiny and governance arrangements

processes devolution **design principles**
evaluation framework **review**
transparency governance **research**

The scrutiny evaluation framework
A mechanism for reviewing, evaluating and improving local government scrutiny and governance arrangements

focus responsibilities arrangements
ucture agreement commitment **maximi**

INTRODUCTION

Local government is changing. Major changes to the way that services are planned and delivered (including devolution), the financial challenge and increased demand on issues like social care mean that elected councillors are making increasingly important decisions which will have a profound impact on local people's lives for many years. Effective decision-making demands good governance. Good governance demands good scrutiny.

How can scrutiny arrangements be reviewed and improved to meet these challenges? In short, how can scrutiny be engineered to add value, make a difference to local people's lives and central to streamlined and responsive local decision-making?

This framework provides a mechanism for local authorities to address and answer these questions.

Our thanks are due to the scrutiny practitioners who provided comments on a draft of this document.

Background: where does this come from?

This framework is based on a number of earlier documents:

- Our "Accountability Works for You" framework (2011) and our scrutiny self-evaluation framework (2006), both earlier iterations of this new model;

- The fifteen "characteristics of effective scrutiny" developed following comprehensive research alongside the Wales Audit Office;

- Measures and principles relating to the impact and influence of Parliamentary select committees, based on research carried out by the Constitution Unit and the Institute for Government;

- Recent CfPS publications, in particular:

  Tipping the scales (2012)

  Our "Practice Guide" series (2014 / 2016)

  The change game (2015)

  Social return on investment (2016)

- Other models chosen and designed by local authorities for the evaluation of scrutiny.

In recent years, the amount of resource available for carrying out scrutiny in local government has lessened. Posts have been made redundant, and responsibility moved to officers, and parts of councils, who may not have had a background in working with members to support them in such a unique council function. While our early framework was designed with the "professional scrutiny officer" in mind, this framework has deliberately been drafted for officers and members who may not have a detailed understanding of scrutiny theory and practice. As such, it is more directive in its approach than previous versions. Despite this, it remains the case that councils must reflect and review their scrutiny arrangements on their own terms.

Setting up a group to take responsibility for this work

Reviews of scrutiny must be led by scrutiny councillors, and the outcomes of those reviews must also be driven by what scrutiny members have concluded. Cabinet and senior officers are important stakeholders, but the process and its conclusions are not theirs to define. For a meaningful, scrutiny member-led process to work, members need to agree principles within which they are prepared to work, and need to commit to recommending pragmatic solutions to problems which might even challenge the accepted wisdom in the authority about what scrutiny does, and what it is for.

A project group, chaired by a scrutiny councillor, may carry out the bulk of the research and analysis we describe below, but this is likely to put a substantial onus on councillors.

In practice we think it more likely that officers – or a single officer - will provide support to the group, reporting back periodically. If this is the case, we would recommend that this officer maintains regular, informal contact with members, to ensure that their expectations are being met. Additionally, we have suggested "checkpoints" at the end of every stage – points at which we think information and evidence would be considered in detail by the project group, and possibly shared with the wider member corps and other interested parties.

Importantly, this works to ensure buy-in to the eventual recommendations. In our experience, reviews which are conducted largely in private, and which then report back their findings to a wider member group which has not been part of that review process, can find it very difficult to secure buy-in and agreement to those recommendations from that wider group of members – especially if those recommendations are contentious.

Agreeing some basic design principles

For some time we have suggested that areas conducting reviews like this agree a set of "design principles" to help them to build consensus about what their governance systems will look like.

Design principles are important. They keep you focused on the way you will work under new arrangements, and help you to avoid fixating exclusively on governance structures (like the number and terms of reference of committees).

We think that local areas embarking on this work are likely to be able to come up with their own design principles, but we present some below to provide some ideas.

Principle	Some prompts
Members leading and owning	1. How should members direct the work programme? 2. Which members should be involved in leading the scrutiny process, and how? 3. What should the relationship between members and their support officers look like? What about the relationship between members and officers in service departments? 4. How does the member role influence how scrutiny and its work is presented to the wider authority, and to the area?
Flexibility	1. How will the work programme be flexible to account for unexpected issues emerging during the year? 2. What resource exists to support scrutiny's work, and how can it be best used? 3. How effective do members need to be in working together, and working with others, to achieve their objectives?
A focus on adding value, outcomes and prioritisation	1. How should members build an understanding of the impact of their work? 2. What are the most significant priorities affecting the local area, and how should this affect scrutiny's work? 3. How does scrutiny evaluate, review and improve the way it works?

Step 1: taking stock

How do we do things now?

They are two aspects to this. The first is to look in - at scrutiny's current processes and systems. The second is to look out - at the context for the council, the area, and the area's inhabitants.

Looking in

This part focuses on key characteristics of effective scrutiny, and invites you to reflect on how you measure up. This isn't a tickbox exercise – it's an invitation to think about your current ways of working, to make it easier for you to consider improvements at later stages. As such, the characteristics and prompts we have listed below should be seen as the framework for a conversation and a way to make sure you don't miss anything, rather than a list, requiring answers to every issue and question.

This stage is important for two reasons – firstly, it helps you to build up an accurate picture of how scrutiny works at the moment, and secondly it ensures that you have a common understanding of those characteristics, and why they are important.

You might wish to consider these characteristics in some of the following ways – depending on the resource you have at your disposal.

- A quick desktop exercise carried out by members and/or officers;

- A single meeting of scrutiny councillors (say, an evening session to work through the characteristics and the prompts);

- A more wide-ranging, but informal, set of discussions – for example, informal meetings with cabinet members, senior officers, partners and other key stakeholders;

- Conversations with members of the public who have engaged with scrutiny (as well as those who haven't);

- More formal evidence taken at committee meetings.

This should be a challenging and reflective process. It may identify shortcomings with scrutiny; it may lead to despondency that those shortcomings are significant and cannot be overcome. It could also be seen as organisationally risky for scrutiny to take a look at its strengths and weaknesses in this way. However, it is the only way that improvement can happen.

The characteristics themselves

See Good scrutiny? Good question! (WAO, 2014) - https://www.wao.gov.uk/publication/good-scrutiny-good-question-auditor-general-wales-improvement-study-scrutiny-local

Accountability works! (2010) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/accountability-works/

Characteristic
Overview and scrutiny has a clearly defined and valued role in the council's improvement and governance arrangements.
Overview and scrutiny has the dedicated officer support it needs from officers who are able to undertake independent research effectively, and provide councillors with high-quality analysis, advice and training.
Overview and scrutiny inquiries are non-political, methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives.
Overview and scrutiny provides viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems.
Overview and scrutiny councillors have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively.
The process receives effective support from the council's corporate management team who ensures that information provided to overview and scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner.
Overview and scrutiny is councillor-led, takes into account the views of the public, partners and other stakeholders, and balances the prioritisation of community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance.
Overview and scrutiny meetings and activities are well-planned, chaired effectively and make best use of the resources available to it.
Decision-makers give public account for themselves at overview and scrutiny committees for their portfolio responsibilities.
Overview and scrutiny is recognised by the executive and corporate management team as an important council mechanism for community engagement, and facilitates greater citizen involvement in governance.
Overview and scrutiny is characterised by effective communication to raise awareness of, and encourage participation in democratic accountability.
Overview and scrutiny operates non-politically and deals effectively with sensitive political issues, tension and conflict.
Overview and scrutiny builds trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders.
Overview and scrutiny enables the "voice" of local people and communities across the area to be heard as part of decision and policy-making processes.

We think that scrutiny can be evaluated against these characteristics by posing a number of questions. Below, we provide a list of possible questions, and an indication of where the answers you give to each question may be evidence of good practice, or a cause for concern.

How are scrutiny councillors involved in influencing major decisions, and in considering and evaluating performance, finance and risk information?

Good practice: *Evidence of decisions being altered consensually as a result of scrutiny's involvement.*

Average practice: *Evidence of scrutiny making recommendations on major decisions, but with limited impact, and sometimes not at the right time.*

Poor practice: *Evidence of scrutiny not looking at these issues at all, or doing so in a way that adds little value / duplicates the work of others.*

Do different people with a role in holding decision-makers to account (like scrutiny, the Police and Crime Panel, a combined authority scrutiny committee, local Healthwatch) work together?

Good practice: *Evidence of tangible impact resulting from this sort of joint working, such as aligned work programmes and an elimination of duplication, and improvements in substantive joint working between the council and its partners, directly facilitated by scrutiny.*

Average practice: *Some limited joint working – usually reactive, in response to an external pressure like a substantive variation in service delivery in the NHS. Some duplication and overlap in work and little awareness of mutual responsibilities. An awareness that some issues are falling between the gaps.*

Poor practice: *No joint working, even when clear opportunities present themselves. "Council scrutiny" is siloed, and internally focused. Significant opportunities for local scrutiny are missed without anyone realising that those opportunities existed in the first place.*

How does scrutiny gather evidence?

Good practice: *Evidence gathering is tied to the objectives of the work, with the result that scrutiny's time is used more effectively. Information will probably be shared with members informally on a continual basis, to actively assist them in refining the work programme in-year. In respect of task and finish groups, evidence will be gathered from a wide range of sources, and members will have the confidence to analyse and evaluate that evidence themselves (usually with the assistance of officers).*

Average practice: *Evidence on key council performance and other issues will usually be shared with members on a quarterly basis, often when the data is quite out of date. Task and finish groups will benefit from evidence from a range of sources but analysis will be quite officer-led. Members will lack confidence in understanding what information is available within and outside the council and how to access and use it.*

Poor practice: *Committee meetings will be used as the primary mechanism for information sharing, with a large number of reports on agendas "to note", with almost all evidence and information coming in the form of officer reports.*

How does scrutiny weigh the evidence that it has collected?

Good practice: *Councillors understand the respective value of different kinds of evidence, and use their political and personal judgment to consider which should be relied on to support scrutiny's work. Councillors are confident in developing their own lines of questioning to test the robustness of evidence they receive. Detailed evaluation of evidence is carried out offline, in preparation for the use of that evaluation to conduct more probing and forensic questions in committee, or in other meetings. Successful weighing of evidence could be proven to have led to more robust findings, and better recommendations.*

Average practice: *Analysis of evidence is carried out by officers, with most evaluation of evidence happening in committee, often supported by officer-drafted questioning plans. Members know that certain evidence is more likely to be accurate and reliable than others, but sometimes this can result in pejorative judgments being made, particularly about "anecdotal" evidence from local people.*

Poor practice: *There is no support available from officers to help members to weigh and evaluate evidence, and the need to evaluate and triangulate information from different sources is largely alien to members and the scrutiny function. Members deal with shortcomings in evidence and information by simply asking for "more information" from officers.*

How is performance, finance and risk information considered as a part of the evidence-gathering process?

Good practice: *Information is considered informally as it is created, alongside other evidence created and used by the council and others. Performance, finance and risks information is triangulated with this wider evidence base. Members are able to reach a judgment about escalating issues to committee "by exception".*

Average practice: *Information is available to members as it is produced but may not be presented consistently (so, performance information may be regularly shared but risk information may not be). Triangulation may be ad hoc, because the council does not have systems for ensuring that members gain access to information in a timely manner.*

Poor practice: *Committees consider information quarterly in committee meetings, usually many weeks after the data itself has been finalised. Information is presented in the form of scorecards. Members ask questions about why performance under certain targets is "red" but have no way of following up on those questions or the answers received. There is little consideration of financial information and little to no consideration of risk information.*

What is the tangible impact that scrutiny activity has on the ground?

Good practice: *Members and officers have a shared understanding of scrutiny's impact. This impact is significant and sustained, and can be expressed in terms of outcomes for local people. This understanding includes a recognition that scrutiny's impact is difficult to quantify and that judgments on impact can be subjective.*

Average practice: *Members and officers have an understanding of scrutiny's impact which may not be shared or universally agreed. Where impact is assessed it may be focused on improving outputs (eg improving an internal council business process) rather than anything else.*

Poor practice: *There is no evidence that scrutiny has any impact and no systems exist to measure it.*

What happens when decision-makers disagree with scrutiny?

Good practice: *Rules of engagement between scrutiny and the executive have been discussed and agreed by councillors.*

Average practice: *There is a scrutiny / executive protocol in the Constitution, although it is quite process-based. Disagreements, when they occur, are usually resolved through negotiation between politicians, pragmatically.*

Poor practice: *Decision-makers' decisions always trump scrutiny's views. There is no scrutiny / executive protocol in the Constitution or any other formal/informal mechanism for resolving disagreements.*

When scrutiny makes formal recommendations, how are they responded to?

Good practice: *Recommendations are always SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and timed) and are limited in number. Usually, information about likely recommendations will be shared and discussed with the executive prior to being made. The executive will always submit a substantive response to recommendations, with reasons being given if recommendations are rejected.*

Average practice: *Recommendations are usually at least partially SMART. A lot of recommendations might be made, making it difficult to monitor them all. Some recommendations may not be addressed to the right people. The executive's response to recommendations is variable – sometimes recommendations are ignored or "noted" rather than being formally responded to.*

Poor practice: *Scrutiny makes few formal recommendations, and when it does they are usually just "noted" by the executive. Recommendations will often be vague and poorly drafted.*

Good practice: *Safety valves (such as informal meetings for discussion, and lines of communication between political groups) exist within the scrutiny process to eliminate risks before they present themselves. The political and organisational culture of the council is such that potential difficulties, flashpoints and mistakes are highlighted and dealt with frankly and candidly. When problems do present themselves, people work together on all sides to resolve them without recourse to rules and procedures.*

Average practice: *There are regular, somewhat formal, meetings between the executive and scrutiny to allow issues of concern to be raised, but no real mechanisms to pre-empt problems. When problems do occur, the focus can be on what rules and procedures say about the issue, rather than identifying an equitable solution.*

Poor practice: *Problems and shortcomings in scrutiny's impact are either ignored or seen as evidence of scrutiny's ineffectiveness. Blame is a common feature. Problems are seen as an opportunity for political posturing, rather than as an issue requiring collective resolution. The need for executive-side commitment to making things work is poorly understood. Scrutiny is a "process" to be "managed".*

Looking out

Scrutiny has to be relevant. It must do work which has an impact on local people. It has to engage with decision-makers' priorities and the priorities of other partners – the NHS, the combined authority (if there is one), and so on.

Here are some of the key "external" issues which are likely to impact on how scrutiny is carried out, and how governance is likely to need to change in the area. Part of the evaluation process is about considering these changes, and reflecting on what they mean for the future of scrutiny.

- Financial challenges for local government. The nature of funding for local authorities will change significantly between now and 2020. The amount of money available for the transaction of core business will continue to dwindle;

- Demographic changes will result in pressure and demand in some areas – for example, adult social care;

- Both of the above are likely to result in a pressure for local authorities to "transform", as we set out in our 2015 publication "The change game". Transformation might see the creation of some, or all of the following – which raises questions for scrutiny and local accountability:

  - Strategic commissioning arrangements, with councils moving away from traditional contracting-out;

  - The establishment of novel structures for service delivery, like open-book partnerships and Teckal companies;

  - Confederations and council "clustering", which is an ancillary element of some devolution deals;

- Major transformation programmes being carried out by other public agencies – for example, the agreement and implementation of Sustainability and Transformation Plans/Partnerships (STPs) in the NHS – are likely to have a big impact;

- Devolution deals, and the establishment of combined authorities, raise substantial questions about democracy and local scrutiny;

- The potential for local government reorganisation or reviews by the Boundary Commission;

- The development of digital technology means that the public expect a different relationship with elected representatives and those making decisions on their behalf.

What is scrutiny's response to these challenges?

Is scrutiny in a position to make such a response and how does it need to change in order to do so? This should be a difficult question to answer. Tackling it will involve an acceptance from those involved in the scrutiny process and the way they work may need to change, and change significantly, in order for scrutiny to remain relevant. If you sail through this part of the exercise quickly and easily, it may be that those involved have not fully engaged in this challenge, and its implications.

CHECKPOINT: Share products of the "taking stock" exercise with wider membership. Invite members to reflect on its conclusions and decide whether they agree. Have initial discussions between members and officers about scrutiny's role – see below.

Step 2: identifying what scrutiny's role is

At this point you will have the following evidence:

- A sense of scrutiny's current areas of strength and weakness (identified through the "looking in" exercise);

- A sense of where opportunities exist to make improvements, in the context of what's going on in the wider area (identified through the "looking out" exercise);

- A sense of the principles that you will use to underpin those improvements (in the form of your design principles).

This will help you to look at the accountability and governance roles carried out by others in the local area, and decide what scrutiny's own role should be in that context,.

Step 2.1 Understand the roles of others

See Practice Guides 9, 11 and 13 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=practice+guide

Accountability works! (2010) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/accountability-works/

Scrutiny does not happen in a vacuum. Within the local area, there will be individuals, groups, agencies and other organisations who will have some role in holding to account and/or overseeing the kinds of important local issues in which the scrutiny function has a stake.

You need to understand who these people are. You also need to understand what their roles are. The better you understand those roles the better the chance that scrutiny's function can be clearly demarcated, with members and others having the confidence that scrutiny is doing something unique and valuable.

One of the most valuable roles that scrutiny can perform is to look at the internal systems and processes that comprise much council governance (some of the kinds of things that we introduce below) and open them out to public input, insight and scrutiny. The public are likely to have a profoundly different perspective on local services to those held by the council. Scrutiny should consider that perspective when looking at the role of these other organisations.

This exercise will make it easier to identify where the local "gaps" in good governance are. This will then help to define how scrutiny might design its role to fit into that gap.

Some of the people involved are – and their roles in governance – include:

Person	Role
In-house council managers	Holding to account their own staff for the delivery of council services, and other business. This will usually be carried out through usual line management methods, through performance management and budget and risk control.
Executive councillors	Executive councillors / cabinet members holding senior managers to account for their delivery of the council's political priorities, using similar techniques to those described above.
Clientside council managers	Council officers who manage contracts, or handle the commissioning of services from other organisations, use management information to hold the delivery of those services to account. This is usually done by reference to a contract, and robust systems will usually be in place to assure value for money. Particular areas of concern will be "escalated" to senior managers and elected members.
Partner organisations	While the council holds its partners to account, its partners also hold it to account. For example, the integration of health and social care require that councils work together closely with NHS bodies. Those NHS bodies will have expectations of the contribution that the council will make to such arrangements. Partners may also be commissioned providers, or new bodies (such as Teckal companies) in which the council has a stake, which are responsible for the planning and delivery of local services along with other agencies. The accountability relationships between these bodies are important to understand.
Regulators	In England, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are the key external regulators, whose work focuses on the care services provided by councils to children and adults.

The public	The public are the primary source of accountability for elected politicians; they hold politicians, and officers, to account through elections and also through community activism between elections. This activism can take many forms. Sometimes it will be traditional, and manifested through mechanisms such as formally-constituted residents' associations and community groups. On other occasions, it can be more disruptive.
Others involved in local scrutiny and accountability	Organisations such as Local Healthwatch have an important scrutiny role, alongside the Police and Crime Panel, the local fire authority and other bodies. The scrutiny functions of neighbouring authorities will also need to develop close working relationships. Increasingly, the creation and development of combined authorities will make those bodies' own overview and scrutiny committees important partners.

Step 2.2 Sketch out a role and focus areas

See The Change Game (2015) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/the-change-game/

Cards on the table (2016) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/cards-on-the-table-devolution/

Tipping the scales (2012) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/tipping-the-scales/

Increasingly, it's becoming clear that traditional, broad-brush scrutiny work – the kind that takes a general view of a topic in the round – is an imperfect way to conduct scrutiny. There are two ways to design work differently:

- Focusing in on a narrow area of policy – for example, a review into social housing could focus on the time taken to carry out regular maintenance and repairs or council communication on the "right to buy" post the passage of the Housing and Planning Act;

- Use a "focus" through which to look at a topic. So, again in relation to social housing, you could look at corporate risks associated with social housing (capacity and demand, for example) or at tenants' expectations about the way that the council should communicate with them.

In "The change game" we introduced this idea of focus as a way of channelling scrutiny's input into large and complex issues. There are a number of possible areas of focus that we mentioned:

- Focus on value. CfPS's publications on social return on investment will help to understand this role more effectively;

- Focus on risk. CfPS has recently publish a paper on risk and resilience, which explains how risk can be used by scrutineers to weigh up complex policy options;

- Focus on residents' experiences. CfPS's paper "Hiding in plain sight" emphasises the importance of engaging with the concerns of local people – focusing on this as the driver of scrutiny work is a powerful way to bring a different perspective to bear on local policymaking;

- Focus on the system, and on organisational development. Councils are going through substantial transformations which will require big cultural changes – scrutiny can lead on understanding these changes, making sure they are informed by wider community need, and championing these moves within the organisation;

- Focus on performance and quality. Adopting a "by exception" report to performance monitoring, with scrutiny playing a defined and well-understood role in intervening when service quality falls and other improvement mechanisms fail.

The selection of a clear and unambiguous focus for scrutiny is a critical part of improving its impact. The resource, and organisational commitment, simply no longer exist for us to talk about scrutiny as a function which "holds the executive to account" in the broadest sense of the term, without a sense of a need to prioritise its work. Discussion and agreement on scrutiny's role will be difficult, and will cause contention.

CHECKPOINT: Share with members and officers in the council – and with other stakeholders – first thoughts about scrutiny's future role, and how it differs from what is in place now. Take the opportunity to reflect on how that new role might significantly change expectations about scrutiny in the future, and how scrutiny needs to be supported and resourced. Use this opportunity to further discuss, and subsequently agree, what scrutiny's overall role will be.

Step 3: ways of working and accessing information

Now comes the time to agree how scrutiny will work – how it will use its agreed role to embed the design principles we mentioned above.

There are a number of different methods for conducting scrutiny work. Below, we set out some of them, explain what they are, and suggest the kinds of issues you might address.

It's important to remember that you need to review and evaluate these ways of working against the role you have agreed, and against the work you did at the start, when you reviewed the context in which you are working. The lessons you learned from those exercises will help you to understand which of these methods will work best.

These ways of working will need to be informed by the more general approach you take to the way that scrutiny carries out its work, such as:

- Work programming. How will this process work? Who will be involved in it?

- Practically, how will scrutiny seek to engage with the executive, with the council's partners and with the public?

- Overall, how will scrutiny seek to evaluate and improve its performance on an ongoing basis?

The answers to these questions will relate closely to scrutiny's agreed role. Once discussed and agreed, it will be easier to think about scrutiny's practical ways of working inside and outside meetings.

Critically, all activities must be designed in such a way that they maximise the positive outcome from scrutiny's work. Activity must, in this way, be relentlessly and continually tied to a sense of scrutiny's value – what it brings to the council and to the wider community.

Possible ways of working

See Practice Guides 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=practice+guide

Activity	Description
In committee	Limiting the number of substantive items on each agenda to one or two.
	Thinking about "themed agendas" where a few connected subjects are discussed.
	Briefing officers on scrutiny's objectives in looking at particular items to ensure that their reports are targeted and focused, rather than generic.
	Requiring as a matter of course that cabinet members attend to answer questions on key items, rather than chief officers alone.
	Not always permitting officers or cabinet councillors to make presentations before questioning begins, relying on scrutiny members reading their papers and requiring that relevant information be shared in paper form rather than making the assumption that oral presentations will always be necessary.
	Planning meetings/evidence-gathering in such a way that the chair is empowered to make substantive recommendations on an item then and there.
In a task and finish group meeting	Recognising where task and finish working is really necessary, and where it is just an extension of committee work by another means.
	Ensuring that the scope of reviews translates into each meeting having a clear and defined objective, with meetings taking a project-focused approach.
	Thinking about which background papers, and from whom, are prepared and circulated in advance (something on which we expand in the section below on information).
	Thinking about the interplay between witnesses, and how witnesses will be managed before, during and after the meeting.

In a meeting designed for public input	Thinking about the circumstances in which such public meetings might be appropriate.
	Thinking about how such meetings might be planned, designed and communicated – who is involved and when, and how are the public involved in that process? For example, it might make sense to talk to the council's communications team about the basic principles that underpin public scrutiny meetings and how they can be planned and organised to integrate with the council's wider approach to engagement.
	Ensuring that opportunities for public input are significant are meaningful – in the way that the meeting is planned and organised.
	Ensuring that the role of councillors in such meetings is clear.
	Putting in place measures to keep those who attend (and those who don't, in the wider community) informed about the meeting and its outcomes.
In the community	Planning ways to ensure that information from councillors' ward work is fed into the scrutiny process.
	Thinking of innovative and interesting ways that scrutiny can take its work out in the community.
Informally with officers	Regular information sharing meetings between chairs, councillors and senior officers.
	Regular informal briefing sessions for larger groups of councillors, replacing "for information" items at committee meetings and organised by the department involved.

Less productive ways of working

There are ways of working, common in scrutiny, which are broadly unproductive. This process provides a useful opportunity to review those approaches and to consider how they might be improved.

Activity	Why it tends not to be productive, and what can be done about it
Meetings with multiple (more than two) substantive items on the agenda	Does not allow enough opportunity for members to dig into and reflect on an issue. Encourages "glossing" of information and an overreliance on officer reports.
	Work programmes can be made sharper. Members can challenge themselves, and each other, to justify the placing of certain items on the committee agenda. The use of selection criteria for agenda items or similar systems to prioritise work.
Items submitted to committee "to note" or to provide an update	Uses up time at committee meetings without a clear sense of an outcome, or scrutiny adding any value.
	Work, whether at committee or in a different forum, should be carried out with a defined outcome in mind – usually, the making of recommendations. Papers circulated to members for information should be provided to them in their postbag, online and/or by means of member briefings organised by service departments.
Provision, at committee, of full scorecards / full technical reports as a separate substantive item	Members can often get bogged down in the minutiae of technical data. This can lead to ineffective scrutiny. Such data will often be out of date by the time members come to see it, and won't be presented in a way that enables members to add much value to the way it is used and analysed.
	Such data should be used as part of the research base for an approach which sees particular performance issues brought to committee by exception. This would allow specific performance challenges to be highlighted, reflected upon and actioned by members.

Establishment of open-ended "standing panels" or other working groups which do not have the status of formal committees	It is common for scrutiny activity to be delegated to "standing panels" with open terms of reference. This raises resource challenges, and means that such scrutiny work risks not being especially task-oriented.
	Better prioritisation of work to ensure that there is always a defined scope with an end point / outcome.
Work that adopts a council-focused perspective of the local community	For example a "review of the council's youth service" is different from, and inferior to, a "review of the needs of local young people". Framing issues in a different way will make it easier to break out of council silos and address things from the point of view of local people. This links to the points made above about scrutiny's overall focus.

Accessing information

See "Your right to know" (2012) - http://www.cfps.org.uk/your-right-to-know-the-future-for-transparency-in-england/

"Pulling it together, 3rd edition" (2017) - forthcoming

Once different ways of working have been explored and agreed, members will need to consider the range of information they will requireto work properly.

In brief, there are a number of steps through which councillors need to go in order to assure themselves that they are accessing the right information in the right way at the right time, and using it to maximise the effect of their scrutiny work.

- Learning the basics of how to find and use information. This will involve talking to officers about scrutiny's role, their expectations and what information might be required;

- Understanding how to analyse and reflect on research evidence. Members will need to discuss how much they need to develop these skills themselves, and the extent to which they will need officer assistance;

- Developing scrutiny's approach to gathering and using evidence so that findings and recommendations are clearly evidence-informed, and that the evidence used tracks back to scrutiny's overall role.

It is worth remembering that councillors sitting on scrutiny committees have enhanced information access rights under legislation. It is also important to remember that this does not mean that councillors should be looking at everything available, all the time. Part of the benefit of taking a more forensic and targeted approach to evidence is about understanding where to stop. Members need to decide themselves how information will be presented to them and how much they need.

One way that some councils have sought to manage the weight of information that members could look at is to divide the task up. Individual councillors on a committee could be given the responsibility to lead on oversight of a particular element of that committee's terms of reference. This is particularly useful for councils with only one, or two committees, and where councillors might be worried that they cannot otherwise keep track of a wide range of strategic issues.

CHECKPOINT: This checkpoint involves members agreeing to sign off what has been discussed and agreed – this is the most important part of the work so far.

Some useful principles to bear in mind are:

■ These new ways of working should be presented as being temporary in nature, pending final evaluation (see step 5). Making wholesale changes to ways of working – and particularly to structures – can seem risky, particularly when those changes are seen as permanent. By providing a year for new arrangements to "bed in", space is provided to evaluate the new approach with a view either to changing it, reverting back to previous arrangements or keeping with what you have;

■ These ways of working will involve cultural change – changes to the mindset, attitudes and values of both members and officers. Structural change does not need to be discussed at this stage, and is indeed likely to distract from the need to sign off what has been agreed so far;

■ As well as member agreement, a wider range of stakeholders also need to be consulted and informed about scrutiny's new direction, role, focus and ways of working. This checkpoint will therefore require that members think about how this will be communicated to a wider audience.

Step 4: agreeing a new structural model

The final stage in the process is the agreement of a new structural model for the scrutiny function. Essentially, this is the number of committees you will have, what their terms of reference will be, who will sit on them and who will chair.

It is important not to skip ahead to this stage, or to focus too much time and energy on structures. The way that scrutiny is structurally carried out will closely derive from its role. If its role is not clear, not widely understood and not agreed, the greater the chance that disagreements will occur. It is a waste of time and energy to spend meetings arguing about whether there should be three committees, or four, or five, based purely on a sense of a need to "fit" existing work, or more work, into a new structure.

The number of committees and their size

See Practice Guide 6 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=practice+guide

There is no optimum number of scrutiny committees. CfPS research shows no real connection between the size and number of scrutiny committees and their effectiveness, although some research we have carried out suggests a loose correlation between more effective scrutiny and fewer committees. On balance, for logistical reasons, we would suggest that a good size for a committee lies somewhere between 7 and 10.

But every council is different, and each scrutiny function is different, with a different role. Little is therefore likely to be learned by looking at the committee structure of neighbouring, or similar, authorities as part of an evaluation of scrutiny.

The most common committee structures are set out below.

■ Single committee – a single committee that undertakes all work (without any task and finish groups);

■ Single committee with task and finish – a single committee which commissions further work from task and finish groups;

- Two committees –

  - "Internal" and "external" – some councils set up one committee to look at matters for which the council is responsible, and one looking at issues which are the responsibility of partners. This is, in our view, not an effective way to divide up work, because it is increasingly difficult to identify obvious divisions between these different strands of work;

  - "People" and "places", or similar – dividing issues into those which involve services being delivered directly to individuals (such as social care) and those provided to communities more generally (parks, libraries);

  - "Overview" and "scrutiny" – dividing policy development from performance management and call-in.

- Three or more committees – where terms of reference may be divided in a variety of ways, reflecting the nature of the council. Setting terms of reference to reflect the council's corporate priorities is a popular approach, but this assumes that the council's corporate priorities are sufficiently robust.

The terms of reference

Concern is often expressed by members or officers at the prospect of committee terms of reference being too broad. This is often seen as a justification for expanding the number of committees.

This links back to the issue we raised earlier about prioritisation. Effective prioritisation makes it possible to have effective scrutiny with fewer meetings and fewer committees. Ineffective scrutiny can flourish where plenty of time and space is available for more activity to be carried out. The fear may exist that resource-stretched scrutiny will suffer as things will "fall between the cracks". This risk is most likely to be realised when councillors expect to receive frequent updates on a very wide range of issues, and drown under the weight of paper. Prioritisation – which will derive directly from scrutiny's agreed role – is the only way to prevent this risk from being a significant one.

The chairing arrangements

See Practice Guide 6 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=practice+guide

Skills Briefing 2 - http://www.cfps.org.uk/?s=skills+briefing

Full Council will usually vote on the chairship of overview and scrutiny committees. The committee will then formally elect a chair at the beginning of meetings. Usually this means that chairs will be of the same political party as the executive.

Although there is no conclusive evidence to demonstrate that scrutiny is more effective when chaired by members of the opposition, in our view to do so makes it easier for scrutiny to demonstrate its independence from the leadership. It also brings a wider range of differing perspectives to bear on the scrutiny process.

Step 5: ongoing review and evaluation

An important part of evaluating scrutiny is the need to keep that evaluation going. It should be a continuous process – not necessarily in a formal sense, but in the sense of how you think about work as you are doing it.

This toolkit is something which can be returned to, and used to formulate quicker and more targeted evaluation processes. Future evaluations, for example, may involve only step 1 – "taking stock" – with subsequent steps being undertaken only where it is felt that there is a clear business need to do so.

More information

A range of resources exists on the CfPS website which will help practitioners to understand and improve their scrutiny function.

CfPS also provides a helpdesk function to local authorities, funded by the LGA, to assist on matters relating to scrutiny, as well as corporate governance more generally. To access this support please call 020 3866 5100.

CfPS is the leading provider of training and consultancy to local government overview and scrutiny. If you think you need help to review the effectiveness of your scrutiny and governance arrangements or additional training for members or officers please get in touch to discuss further.

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Self-assessment of Overview and Scrutiny Good Practice – 2025

Rate each question on current performance at CoLC on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 1: Scrutiny Purpose and Governance

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Does a facility exist for Scrutiny to regularly report to full Council regarding its work?										
2	Do the terms of reference for the Council's Scrutiny Committees clearly set out the purpose of the committees?										
3	Is the role and purpose of scrutiny understood and accepted across the authority?										
4	Does scrutiny provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?										
5	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance satisfactory?										
6	Does a protocol for the relationship between Scrutiny Members and the Executive exist?										
7	If "Yes", is it understood?										
8	Does Scrutiny at the Council act as a "Critical Friend" in scrutinising Council functions?										

Section 1: Summary & Recommendations

Rate each question on current performance at CoLC on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 2: The work of Scrutiny Committees

9	Is Scrutiny a member led process?										
10	Do members lead in the identification of topics for the committee work programmes? Are members proactive in the identification of topics?										
11	Are the Chairs of the Council Scrutiny Committees involved in the identification of items for work programmes?										
12	Are members involved in how information is presented to Committees?										
13	Are Scrutiny work programmes flexible documents? Are they able to react to challenges that may arise?										
14	Is the process for selecting items for the work programme satisfactory?										
15	Is there a process for prioritising topics included on the work programmes?										
16	Do Scrutiny work programmes satisfactorily cover all service areas within committee remits?										
17	Is the Council's Policy Framework used to identify items for Scrutiny?										

Section 2: Summary & Recommendations

Rate each question on current performance at CoLC on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 3: Membership and Support

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
18	Has an effective committee structure and composition of the committees been selected to effectively scrutinise the Council and its functions? This should include: - Number of Committees - Separation from the Executive - An appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership - A size of committee that is not unwieldly - Where independent members are used, that they have been appointed using an appropriate process.										
19	Are Scrutiny Committee meetings held regularly enough?										
20	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?										
21	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?										
22	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found it to be satisfactory?										

23	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including the Executive and Corporate Management Team?										
24	Are Officer and Cabinet Members proactive in highlighting issues and topic for additional scrutiny?										
25	Do Scrutiny Committees identify key lines of enquiry and questioning in advance of their meetings?										
26	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?										

Section 3: Summary & Recommendations

Rate each question on current performance at CoLC on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Section 4: Effectiveness of the Committee

27	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?										
28	Are Committee meetings well chaired and led?										
29	Are Committee Members sufficiently knowledgeable to undertake?										
30	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?										

31	Does the Scrutiny function effectively communicate its work to the rest of the Council and the wider public?										
32	Does Scrutiny Committee activity contribute to the decision making process and the development of new policy?										
33	Are examples of best practice captured and used by Scrutiny Committees?										
34	Is the "Voice" of the local community heard? Does Scrutiny have process for the involvement of the public?										

Section 4: Summary & Recommendations

Additional Comments

As a member of a Scrutiny Committee what training would you benefit from? What do you think the key strengths of Scrutiny are? What improvements could be made to further develop Scrutiny at the Council?	

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Scrutiny
Annual Report
2024-25

Introduction

During 2024-25, the City of Lincoln Council continued to operate executive arrangements with its Executive appointed in May 2024 comprising of the Leader of the Council and five other councillors as Portfolio Holders. Most of the Council's decisions are made by the Executive. To improve the quality of the Executive's decisions, Scrutiny Committees remained in place which provided the opportunity for the remaining 27 non-executive councillors to challenge decisions made by the Executive, as well as to help the Executive in reviewing and developing new policies.

This report covers the council year from May 2024 until March 2025.

Background to Scrutiny

The scrutiny committee structure is: -

- Performance Scrutiny Committee
- Policy Scrutiny Committee
- Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee
- Select Scrutiny Committee
- Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

What Did We Achieve in 2024/25?

The Council appointed the following scrutiny Committees for 2024/25:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Chair
Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee	**Councillor Calum Watt**
Performance Scrutiny Committee	**Councillor Gary Hewson**
Policy Scrutiny Committee	**Councillor Chris Burke**
Select Scrutiny Committee	**Councillor Calum Watt**
Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee*	**Councillor Gary Hewson**

*The Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee is a sub-committee of the Performance Scrutiny Committee and reports to this Committee on a quarterly basis.

With the exception of the Select Scrutiny Committee, the work programmes for these scrutiny committees were formally approved by the respective Committees at their first meeting of the 2024/25 Municipal Year and regularly updated throughout the Council year after this time.

The Select Scrutiny Committee meets once each year as the statutory Crime and Disorder Committee, as well as considering any call-in requests made throughout the year.

This report identifies some of the key achievements made by the committees.

Current work programmes for scrutiny committees can be found on the Council's website.

Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee

Between June 2024 and March 2025, the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions and focused on the following topics:

- Sheltering our Citizens
- Youth Engagement Update
- Consultation to close Sixth Form Provision at Lincoln Castle Academy
- Introduction to Anti-Poverty Strategy Proposals
- Education and the Cost of Living
- Poverty and Health Inequalities – Mental Health and Physical Health
- Lincoln Against Poverty Assembly Update

In addition to the Council's Executive and its senior and front-line officers, external contributors included:

- Lynsey Collinson, Chief Executive – DevelopmentPlus
- Caylie Jago, Project Manager – DevelopmentPlus
- Toby Ealden, Artistic Director and CEO – Zest Theatre
- Adam Perkins, Participation Co-Ordinator – Zest Theatre
- Richard Hanson, Principle – Lincoln Castle Academy
- Matthew Clayton, Head of Education Support, Children's Services – Lincolnshire County Council
- Sian Wade, Active Faith Lead – Transform Lincoln
- Amy Colley, Relationships Manager – Acts Trust
- Dr Lucy Gavens, Consultant in Public Health – Lincolnshire County Council
- Charlotte Brooks, Director – Local Motion
- Simon Hawking, Chief Executive – Acts Trust

The Committee recorded its thanks to all its contributors and Council staff who stayed for long and sometimes late meetings during the year, and whose contributions were so helpful and enlightening.

The Committee's recommendations concerned a variety of topics such as the consideration of the causes of poverty and the focus on mental health and wellbeing through support projects, the opening of 'The Zone' in June 2024; a facility which encouraged young people outside of their own communities, the development of 'Lincoln Against Poverty'; a refresh of the Anti-Poverty strategy proposals, linked in to Vision 2030 priorities and the Consultation to close Sixth Form Provision at Lincoln Castle Academy.

The Committee scrutinised Poverty and Health Inequalities and noted the progress that had been through the Lincoln Against Poverty Assembly.

Discussions also took place around the links between financial inclusion and mental health and noted the co-ordinated programme of activity through the Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership (LFIP).

Performance Scrutiny Committee

As part of the Performance Scrutiny Committee's remit, it held regular 'Portfolio under Scrutiny' sessions, where Portfolio Holders were invited to report on service achievements under their portfolio. Members were then able to ask questions about the performance of these service areas. The consideration of portfolio reports included a list of each Portfolio Holders responsibilities to allow members to focus on the relevant performance information relating to the appropriate member's portfolio.

Performance Scrutiny Committee received the minutes of it's Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meetings for information.

In addition to the regular scrutiny of portfolio holders, the Committee received reports in the following areas:

- Quarterly financial monitoring to provide members with a summary of actual income and expenditure compared to the revised budget and appropriate allocation of any surpluses to reserves.
- Quarterly performance update reports to ensure regular monitoring of the Council's operational performance as a key component of the Local Performance Management Framework.
- A quarterly review of the Strategic Risk Register - what improvements or issues have been identified.
- A quarterly report on Treasury Management and Actual Prudential Indicators as a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures under regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.
- An annual report detailing progress made by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee.
- An update report on Section 106 contributions.
- Income and arrears monitoring reports providing updates to members on the position with regard to amounts of monies owed to the City Council as of 1st April 2024.
- Revenues and Benefits performance updates providing members with an update on performance in the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service.
- Strategic Performance Measures and Targets 2025/26 - for review prior to being presented to Executive for consideration.

Members took part in the budget review process for the scrutiny of the proposed budget and Council Tax for the 2025/26 financial year and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-2030, undertaken in two separate stages; firstly all members were invited to a briefing session to afford all members the opportunity to gain a greater understanding and awareness of the Council's financial position, thus aiding further scrutiny of the budget and in the case of the opposition party if desired

the preparation of an alternative budget. This was followed by a more traditional scrutiny process undertaken to review in more detail the MTFS and the robustness of the proposed budget options and Council Tax for the 2025/26 financial year. This was undertaken in a committee format as the Budget Review Group with the appropriate governance arrangements in place.

The Committee held scrutiny reviews during the 2024/25 year in respect of:

Addressing the Challenge of Climate Change Vision 2025 Progress Report

A report was presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee on the strategic priority contained in Vision 2025 called 'addressing the challenge of climate change'.

This report provided an update on the progress of the group in addressing climate change and its live projects for this strategic priority, also looking towards Lincoln 2030 with new projects either in the pipeline or currently being set up.

Vision 2025 - Remarkable Place Progress Report

This report focused on progress made on the Let's enhance our remarkable place strategic priority, and covered those projects delivered/ being progressed as part of the delivery plan. It represented a high-level summary, designed to give Members a quick overview of the entire programme, together with an updated status on projects remaining within the programme as Vision 2025 drew to a close in March 2025.

Protecting Vulnerable People

Performance Scrutiny Committee were provided with a summary of the key issues, trends and statistical data associated with Protecting Vulnerable People in the city. This summary included an overview of the types of cases being reported or occurring within Lincoln, and performance information which demonstrated the Council's continued compliance with statutory safeguarding requirements.

Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement 2023/24

Members received an annual complaints report including details from the Annual Review of Local Authority Complaints issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the decisions of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS).

The report provided an update on the overall number of complaints received by the Council on a Directorate basis for the full year 2023-2024, including performance against target response times and the percentage of complaints which were upheld.

Fire Safety

A report was presented to members on the current position regarding Fire Safety to the housing stock including high rise tower blocks, supported housing schemes and low risk flats.

The report focused on Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) that had been carried out on high-rise and low-rise tower blocks and their review frequencies. All three tower

blocks were registered with the building safety regulator prior to the deadline date for registering existing occupied higher-risk buildings which was 30 September 2023. The work to produce the building safety case report is in progress with the report for Trent View in the final stages, and the reports for the other two high rise blocks planned to be completed by the end of the year.

Policy Scrutiny Committee

During 2024/25, the Committee met five times and provided insights and recommendations on a variety of topics which were suitably reflected in the eventual decision-making process.

The Committee scrutinised the following topics in particular detail:

City of Lincoln Homelessness Strategy

A report introducing the Strategy was presented along with the supporting action plan for consideration prior to being referred to Executive for approval.

The Committee discussed the impact of homelessness on children's education and mental health and were assured that, as landlord, the Council took the highest care to support families in temporary accommodation in conjunction with Lincolnshire County Council.

Funding provision for homelessness services was considered by the Committee. Grants were provided on a three-year cycle which were predominantly used to pay for staffing.

The Strategy was flexible which would allow the Council to adapt and respond to challenges, however changes were needed to national policy to address increased homelessness due to the early release of prisoners.

Parking Strategy Review

The Committee reviewed the Parking Strategy and delivery plan which followed an all-member workshop on the subject. The Strategy was recommended to Executive for approval.

The delivery plan set out the parking service priorities and policies to be delivered by the Council over the following five years. The Strategy focussed on off-street parking provided in Council car parks and covered the City Council's role with on-street resident parking, some of which was delegated from Lincolnshire County Council.

Questions from the Committee established that there were several aspirations over the next five years for car parking in Lincoln which would consider number plate recognition at Council car parks, and the ability to pre-book spaces. Also to be considered was the installation of electric vehicle charging points in disabled bays.

<u>Procurement Act 2023 and Contract Procedure Rules</u>

A report summarising the new Procurement Act 2023 was considered (which came into effect on 24 February 2025) alongside revision to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

A change brought in by the legislation was the introduction of a central government portal which would improve transparency within local government procurement and centralise the publication of statutory notices by authorities.

The Committee was assured that staff involved in procurement would be well informed of the changes, and the requirements of the Act would remain high on departmental teams' agendas.

The Council would identify social value within the procurement process through a monitoring matrix which was in development, and the opportunity for community legacy would be considered at all stages to continue reducing inequality.

Comments from the Committee were referred to Executive for its consideration.

<u>Renewal of Public Spaces Protection Order Allowing for the Gating of St Peter's Passage</u>

Approval was being sought for renewal of the existing Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for the gating of St Peter's Passage in the upper High Street area of Lincoln city centre. The Committee considered the proposal before recommending the renewal to Executive.

The upper High Street was a hotspot within the city's night-time economy, and the alleyway had previously attracted anti-social behaviour.

A public consultation asking if the PSPO should be renewed had received 180 responses, 87.8% of which were in favour of continuing with restricted public access.

The Committee heard that due to certain streams of the Safer Streets funding coming to an end at the close of the financial year, it was important to continue the gating of the passage to help keep the city centre safe.

Select Scrutiny Committee

The principal functions of the Select Scrutiny Committee are to meet once per year as the Crime and Disorder Committee; and to consider any requests for the call-in of Executive decisions, which allows scrutiny members to challenge a decision made by the Executive or any of its individual portfolio holders, prior to implementation. This gives the Select Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to examine a decision where particular concerns have been raised and respond accordingly.

There was one call-in request during 2024/25 on the Western Growth Corridor Scheme Delivery - Phase 1A & Phase 1B, which was considered on 28 August

2024. After consideration of all the evidence and submissions made, the Committee decided to refuse the call-in request.

The Committee sat as the Crime and Disorder Committee on 17July 2024.

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

The Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of Performance Scrutiny Committee. It was established in 2008 to increase engagement between backbench Members and Tenant Advisory Panel representatives. The Sub-Committee has continued to meet and tenants on the Committee consider that it has helped them have their say when scrutinising housing matters.

The Chair of Lincoln Tenants Panel provided a regular written report on the Panel's continued work on a variety of projects with officers in the Housing Service.

Over the last thirteen years the Council had been working with Lincoln Tenants Panel to improve external scrutiny and to meet standards implemented by the Tenant Services Authority.

From April 2010 all social landlords were required to have local offers in place alongside the national standards as set out in the new Regulatory Framework for Social Housing, which was amended with effect from April 2012 although the principles remained the same.

The Committee met six times during 2024/25 and considered many reports which included the following topics:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Income Management and Arrears Policy
- Pet Policy (Housing Tenants)
- Neighbourhood Management Policy (Housing Tenants and Land)
- Income Management and Arrears Policy (Housing Tenants)
- Tenancy Services Structure Update
- Directorate of Housing and Investment Building Compliance
- Voids Recharges
- Housing Management Structure Update
- Downsizing Policy Review/Updates
- Right to Buy and Section 106 Funds
- Reasons for performance downturn and targets being missed", "action plans and activity to redress- Customer Services Calls
- Anti-Social Behaviour Update
- Unacceptable Customer Actions Policy
- Remedies Policy
- Estate Inspections
- Estate Regeneration Investment Programme

- Acquisition, Disposal and Land Use Strategy Update
- Asset Disposal Policy Update
- Discretionary Housing Payments Update
- Tenancy Agreement Update
- Wider Estate Inspection Review
- Rent Increase Update
- Building Compliance 6 monthly update (3 of 6 Key Areas)
- Targets Setting 2025/26
- Report by Councillor Donald Cllr Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

The Committee also effectively scrutinised Housing performance (including Anti-Social Behaviour) and finance on a quarterly basis and received regular updates on the progress of the Lincoln Tenants Panel.

Contact Us

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POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE   **10 JUNE 2025**

SUBJECT: **POLICY SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26 AND EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**

LEAD OFFICER: **CATHERINE WILMAN, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER**

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1.   Purpose of Report

1.1   To present the Policy Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2025-26 and receive comments and considerations from members of potential further items for discussion in the municipal year 2025-26.

1.2   To advise Members of the items that are on the current edition of the Executive Work Programme.

2.   Background

2.1   The work programme is attached at **Appendix A**.

2.2   The Constitution provides for the publication of the Executive Work Programme on a monthly basis detailing key decisions/exempt paragraph (Section B) items to be taken by the Executive, a committee of the Executive or a Member of the Executive during the period covered by the programme. This is attached at **Appendix B** and has been provided to assist members in identifying items for inclusion within the work programme.

3.   Recommendation

3.1   That Members give consideration to the Policy Scrutiny Work Programme for 2025-26 and update where appropriate to include items which they wish to consider from the Executive Work Programme as required.

Is this a key decision?	No
Do the exempt information categories apply?	No
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	No
How many appendices does the report contain?	Two
List of Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Catherine Wilman, Democratic Services Officer Email: catherine.wilman@lincoln.gov.uk

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Policy Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – Timetable for 2025/26

10 June 2025

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Paper and Card Recycling Options	Steve Bird	Deferred from March meeting
~~Corporate Document Review~~	~~Emily Holmes~~	Requested at meeting held on 19 November 2024 – moved to August meeting
~~Review of Equality and Diversity Corporate Document Suite~~	~~Emily Holmes~~	Deferred to August meeting
Lincoln Project Management Framework	Lara Wells	
Statutory Food Waste Collection Service	Steve Bird	Policy Proposal
Health Scrutiny Update	Cllr C Burke	Regular Report
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025 -2026	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25	Catherine Wilman	Annual Report

12 August 2025

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Corporate Document Review	Emily Holmes	Requested at meeting held on 19 November 2024.
Review of Equality and Diversity Corporate Document Suite	Emily Holmes	Deferred from June meeting.
Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Review	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Update
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-2026	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

7 October 2025

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025 -2026	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

18 November 2025

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-2026 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

January 2026

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-2026 Update	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report

March 2026

Item(s)	Responsible Person(s)	Comments
Policy Scrutiny Work Programme 2025-2026	Democratic Services	Regular Report
Health Scrutiny Update	Chair of Policy Scrutiny	Regular Report
Safeguarding Policy	Emily Holmes	Annual Report

Currently no unscheduled Items.

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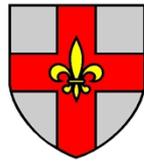
EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME

June 2025 - May 2026

NOTES

1. The Leader in consultation with the Chief Executive and Town Clerk prepares an Executive Work Programme to cover a period of twelve months.

2. The Executive Work Programme contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be the subject of a key decision during the period covered by the Plan or Executive decisions which are likely to be taken in private.

3. A Key Decision is one which is likely:

    a) to result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure which is , or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Local Authority's budget for the service or function to which it relates; or

    b) to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising 2 or more wards in the area of the local authority.

4. Whilst the majority of the Executive's business at the meetings listed in the Executive Work Programme will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or person information.

    This document serves as formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that certain items in the Executive Work Programme will be considered in private because the item contains exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. If an item is to be considered in private this will indicated on the individual decision notice.

    If you have any queries, please telephone 01522 873372 or email democratic.services@lincoln.gov.uk.

EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Date of Decision	Decision	Decision: Summary	Decision Taken By	Key Decision	Exempt Information
02 June 2025	Technology to Monitor Alarms and Sensors	To obtain approval to undertake a 2-year pilot scheme to install technology to monitor alarms and sensors	Executive	Yes	Private
02 June 2025	Write Outs of Irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rates, Sundry Debtors and Council Tax	That Executive approves the write outs as set out in Appendices A, B, and C to the report.	Executive	Yes	Private
02 June 2025	Residents Parking Extension	To request extension of existing scheme.	Executive	No	Public
02 June 2025	Committee Report Tenancy Fraud Policy	To approve the Policy	Executive	Yes	Public
02 June 2025	Operational Performance Report Quarter 4	To present to Members a summary of the operational performance position for the final quarter of the financial year 2024/25.	Executive	No	Public
02 June 2025	Financial Performance Outturn 2024/25	To present to Executive the fourth quarter's financial performance 2024/25.	Executive	No	Public
02 June 2025	Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review- Quarter 4	To provide the Executive with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the fourth quarter 2024/25.	Executive	No	Partly Private

Date	Title	Description	Decision Maker	Key Decision	Public/Private
02 June 2025	Future of Neighbourhood Working	1 - To propose a managed withdrawal of the council's neighbourhood working service from Sincil Bank; and 2 - To agree proposals for the next phase of neighbourhood working in the city	Executive	Yes	Public
02 June 2025	Housing Asset Management Strategy	Adopt a proposed Asset Management Strategy for Council house stock	Executive	Yes	Public
02 June 2025	Treasury Management Stewardship and Actual Prudential Indicators 2024/25 Outturn	Executive to note the Prudential and Local Indicators against actual performance for Final Quarter 4.	Executive	No	Public
02 June 2025	Sobraon Barracks- Change of Lease	To seek approval to accept the surrender of the existing lease of Sobraon Barracks Cricket field and pavilion with Lincoln University and agree terms for a new 25-year Lease and management agreement with Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd.	Executive	Yes	
17 June 2025	Warm Homes Social Housing Fund	To seek approval for funding	Executive	Yes	
17 June 2025	Disposal of Housing Land Adjoining 2 Brattleby Crescent	To propose that this parcel of land is disposed of, by way of sale.	Executive	No	Private
17 June 2025	Paper and card recycling options	To decide if to implement, in part or in full, a separate paper and card	Executive	Yes	Public

		collection scheme. Also, if so, when to do this.			
22 July 2025	Telematics Policy	To provide a policy for how we intend to use telematics within the council's fleet of vehicles	Executive	Yes	Public
22 July 2025	Tenancy Agreement	Approve the revised Tenancy Agreement to apply for all new tenants and retrospectively to all existing tenants from 1st April 2025	Executive	Yes	Public
19 August 2025	Operational Performance Report Quarter 1	To present to Members a summary of the operational performance position for the first quarter of the financial year 2025/26.	Executive	No	Public
19 August 2025	Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review - Quarter 1	To provide the Executive with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the first quarter 2025/26.	Executive	No	Partly Private
19 August 2025	Treasury Management and Prudential Code Update - Quarter 1	Executive to note the Prudential and Local Indicators against actual performance for Quarter 1.	Executive	No	Public
18 August 2025	Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring- Quarter 1	To present to Executive the first quarter's financial performance 2025/26	Executive	No	Public
16 September 2025	Housing Pipeline Approach	Decision on the approach to developing a housing pipeline on City Council owned land	Executive	Yes	Public
16 September 2025	Cornhill Market - Operational Plan	Update on progress to set context for decisions covering: - permanent staff - operational budget - operational business plan	Executive	Yes	Partly Private

18 November 2025	Financial Performance Quarterly Monitoring -Quarter 2	To present to Executive the second quarter's financial performance 2025/26	Executive	No	Public
18 November 2025	City Centre Masterplan - Review	Agreement to proceed with the City Centre Masterplan Review including the specific detailed pieces of work on Town Fund projects on Tentercroft Street and Wigford Way	Executive	Yes	Public
18 November 2025	Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review-Quarter 2	To provide the Executive with a status report of the revised Strategic Risk Register as at the end of the second quarter 2025/26.	Executive	No	Partly Private
18 November 2025	Operational Performance Report Quarter 2	To present to Members a summary of the operational performance position for the second quarter of the financial year 2025/26.	Executive	No	Public
18 November 2025	Treasury Management and Prudential Code- Mid Year Report	Executive to note the Prudential and Local Indicators against actual performance for Quarter 2.	Executive	No	Public

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