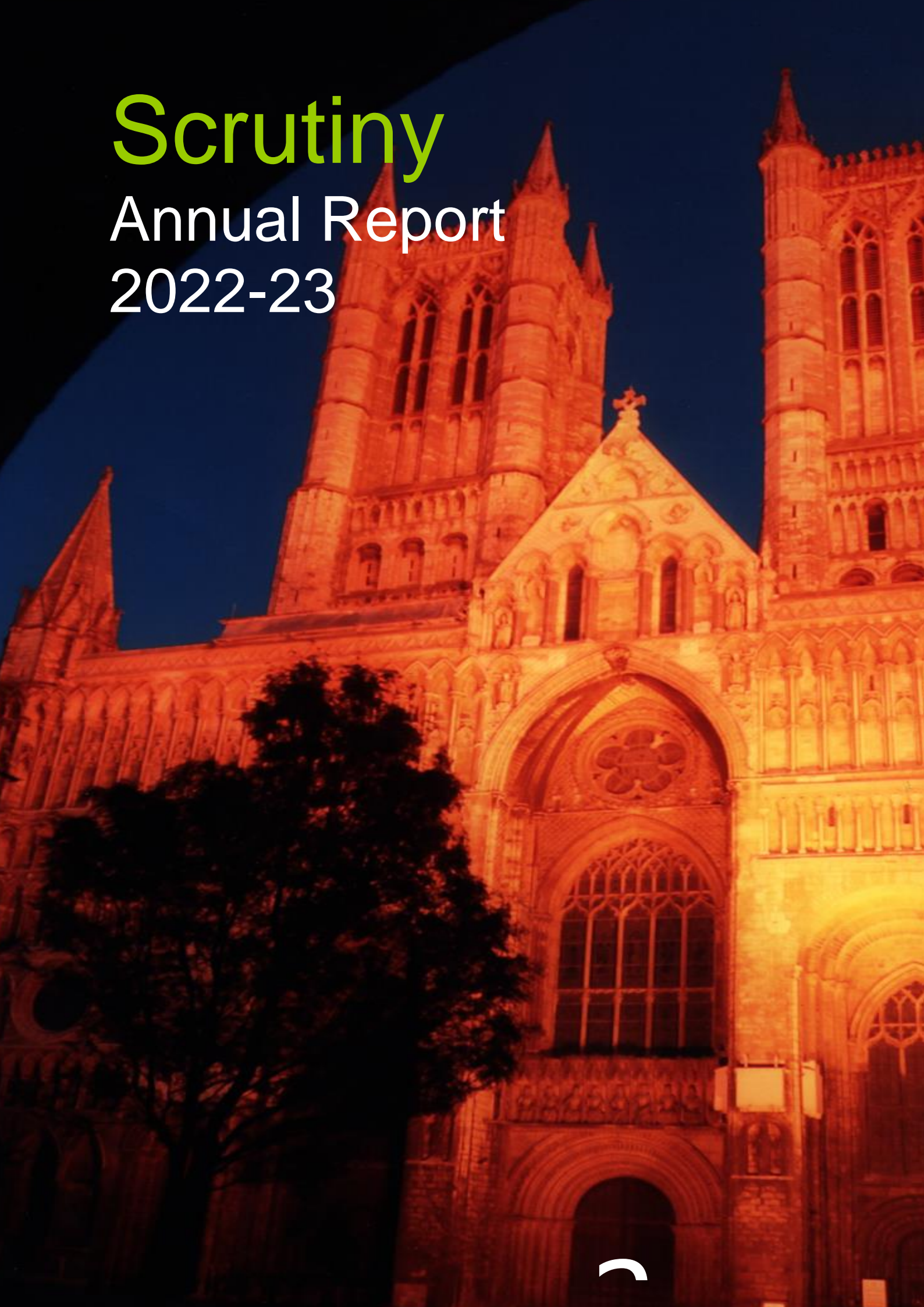


# Scrutiny

## Annual Report 2022-23



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## Introduction

During 2022-23, the City of Lincoln Council continued to operate executive arrangements with its Executive 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 2022 until March 2023.

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## 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
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## What Did We Achieve in 2022/23?

The Council appointed the following scrutiny Committees for 2022/23:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Chair
Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Calum Watt
Performance Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Gary Hewson
Policy Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Jane Loffhagen (no longer a Councillor)
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 in June 2022 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.

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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.

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## **Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee**

Between June 2022 and March 2023, the Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee met on six occasions and focused on the following topics:

- Cultural Consortium
- Poverty Truth Commission
- Cost Of Living Crisis
- Community Policing in Lincoln
- Suicide Rates in the City of Lincoln
- Assets of Community Value

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

- Charlotte Brooks, Local Motion - Director for Local Change
- Chief Superintendent Jon McAdam, Area Commander - West Area Local Policing
- Sarah Connery, CEO - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- Fiona Bone, Suicide Prevention and Self-Injury Reduction Lead - Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT)
- Lucy Gavens, Consultant in Public Health - Lincolnshire County Council
- Rachel Wright, CEO - Shine Lincolnshire
- Kerry Stocks, Operations Manager - Shine Lincolnshire
- Marianne Langley - Keep the Tap Running
- Aaron Joyce, Chair - Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)

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 development and empowerment of young people, the Cultural Consortium - a significant number of events had been held over the last six to eight months to drive culture within the City, the cost-of-living crisis and cost of living support including the Community Grocery, the Warm Spaces initiative and the Household Support Fund 2023/24.

The Committee also scrutinised community policing and noted the progress that had been made within two years in respect of suicide prevention in Lincoln.

A Member briefing would be arranged on Assets of Community Value.

Discussions also took place around poverty and the need for a collaborative and holistic approach to this issue.

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## 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 the provision of a template for reports which placed a focus upon providing performance information relating to the member's portfolio. By doing so, the Committee was able to focus on the performance of a portfolio with fewer diversions into detailed analysis of policy issues.

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 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 1<sup>st</sup> April.
- Revenues and Benefits performance updates providing members with an update on performance in the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service.

Members took part in the budget review process for the scrutiny of the proposed budget and Council Tax for the 2022/23 financial year and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-2027, 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 2022/23 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 2022/23 year in respect of:

#### Lincoln's GEO-Sense Footfall Data

A report was presented to members providing an insight into the Geo-sense footfall data available to City of Lincoln Council and partners.

Following City of Lincoln Council securing Reopening the High Street Safely funding in 2020, the council was able to procure a specialist company to install four footfall GEO-Sense footfall counters in Lincoln City Centre. The technology utilised by the GEO-Sense counters ensures individuals cannot be counted multiple times during their visit, providing significantly more reliable data.

#### Lincoln Christmas Market 2022

Members received a verbal update on preparations being made for the Lincoln Christmas Market 2022 and an outturn report on the performance of the 2022 Lincoln Christmas Market.

#### Vision 2025 Annual Economic Growth Report on Progress

Members received an update on Economic Growth across the City including contextual measures and the City Council's activities that influence Inclusive Growth within the City and surrounding areas.

The report included updates on Vision 2020 priorities and work such as Covid-19 business support grants administered, as well as updates on Vision 2025 projects and a forward look at priorities over the coming year.

The report also considered other contextual economic growth indicators and how these were recovering post Covid-19 Pandemic.

#### 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 strategic priority aspirations.

#### 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.

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## Policy Scrutiny Committee

During 2022/23, the Committee met six times, principally to scrutinise decisions due to be taken by the Executive or Council. The Committee provided its 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:

### Bulky Collections

The Committee was presented with a proposal to establish a trial for a charged bulky item collection service in the City, in partnership with West Lindsey District Council.

The committee discussed the contents of the report in detail and generally supported the proposal, to be referred to Executive for consideration.

### Sincil Bank Regeneration

The committee scrutinised work on regeneration in the Sincil Bank area of the city, covered the following main areas:

- Place shaping Strategy
- Early Successes – Improving the Street scene
- Our Six Priorities/ Physical Interventions
- Creating Open/ Green Spaces
- Archer Street Former Play Area
- Area Under Pelham Bridge
- Chelmsford Street
- Kesteven Street/ Tentercroft Street
- Redesign of Highways Infrastructure/ Urban Design
- Hermit Street Redevelopment
- Residents Parking
- Palmer Street Garage Site
- Cleaner Safer Streets
- Cleaner Safer Streets – CCTV
- Cleaner Safer Streets – Fly Tipping Week of Action
- Community Leadership
- Lessons Learnt

Members discussed the presentation in detail and praised the work that had been undertaken in the Sincil Bank area.

### County Homelessness Strategy

The Committee were asked to consider the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021 review document, to consider the consultation summary document and to seek comments on the new Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027.

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all Local Authorities carry out a review of

homelessness in their areas, formulate and publish a strategy based on the findings of this review, keep the strategy under review and consult with other local or public authorities and voluntary organisations before modifying or adopting a strategy.

To allow the Council to form a collective and robust approach to homelessness, our Rough Sleeper Strategy is incorporated into this document as opposed to having a separate policy.

The strategy informs of the current position and challenges for homelessness across the County, sets out the priorities and actions that together aims to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping across the County.

The strategy demonstrates that we are committed to the Government's vision that homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring.

Members discussed and supported the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027. It was agreed that a further update be provided to a future meeting of Policy Scrutiny Committee.

#### Events and Culture - Christmas in Lincoln 2023 and Beyond

Members were presented with a report detailing the objectives for a yet to be finalised new City Council led annual city centre/uphill events programme, which would replace the Lincoln Christmas Market. It also covered the proposed approach and timeline for a public consultation and engagement exercise prior to finalisation of that programme.

On 20th February Executive approved the transition to a new approach for 'Christmas in Lincoln', supplemented by an annual events programme throughout the rest of the year, to mitigate the economic impacts caused by the closure of the Christmas Market. This decision was 'called in' and considered by Select Scrutiny Committee on 14th March 2023, the outcome of which was that Committee resolved not to Call-In the decision.

The proposed new programme would be designed to spread visitor numbers to the city centre/uphill area throughout the year, rather than within the condensed four-day period of the Christmas market. A number of benefits arising from such an approach, were covered within the report.

Members recommended that:

- An alternative approach be sought regarding the public consultation.
- Comments be made on the aim and objectives for the proposed events programme.
- Comments be made on the approach and timeline for wider consultation on the events programme.
- Members noted that due to the constrained timescales, some event activity would be commissioned prior to the programme being finalised,
- Instruct officers bring back the final programme to Committee prior to sign off by the Executive.

#### Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleansing and Waste Collection Services

Committee received a report summarising the outcomes of the three 'all Member' workshops that considered what the focus and content of the ground's maintenance, street cleansing and waste collection services will be from September 2026 when the current arrangements end. This work was in advance of endorsement by Executive and the development of the new specifications.

Members thanked Officers for the very informative workshops and engagements that were carried out.

In addition to the key topics, the Committee also scrutinised the following items and forwarded its comments for consideration by the Executive:

- Updated Animal Policy (inc Welfare Statement)
- Updated Noise Policy
- Updated Internal Domestic Abuse Policy
- CCTV Code of Practice Update
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Committee also received regular updates from the Health Scrutiny Committee.

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## **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 the 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 2022/23 on the Events and Culture in the City - Christmas 2023 and Beyond, which was considered on 14 March 2023. 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 20 July 2022.

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## **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.

Over the last twelve 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 five times during 2022/23 and considered many reports which included the following topics:

- Housing Finance
- Scheduled Repairs Update
- Asset Management Strategy Workshops
- Allocations Updates
- Lincoln Tenant's Panel Review of Constitution
- Anti-Social Behaviour Update
- Planned Works 2022-23
- De Wint Court Update
- Tenant Involvement Strategy 2022-23
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023/28
- Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Update
- Draft Policy- Downsizing Incentive Scheme
- Tenancy Sustainment Update
- Kier Contract-Final Account Settlement
- Fire Safety Update
- Lincoln Tenants' Panel Annual Report
- Target Setting 2023/24
- Report by Councillor Donald Nannestad, Portfolio Holder for Quality Housing

The Committee also effectively scrutinised Housing performance on a quarterly basis and received regular updates on the progress of the Lincoln Tenants Panel.

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