

Boston Borough Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held in the Committee Room - Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR on Thursday 2nd October 2025 at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Paul Gleeson, in the Chair.

Councillors Neil Drayton (Vice Chairman), Alison Austin, Richard Austin BEM, David Brown, Emma Cresswell, Anne Dorrian, Stuart Evans, Andy Izard, Patricia Marson, Barrie Pierpoint and Suzanne Welberry.

Officers:

Deputy Chief Executive (Programme Delivery) and Assistant Director - General Fund Assets and Democratic Services Officer.

31 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Ralph Pryke, David Scoot and Lina Savickiene.

32 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made

33 Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4th September 2025 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

34 Public Questions

No questions were received from the public.

35 Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership

The Committee received a detailed presentation from the Senior Manager of the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership (LRSP), who provided an overview of the Partnership's activities, performance data, and strategic priorities. The Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership Annual Report 2025 had been circulated with the agenda.

The presentation began with an acknowledgement of the emotive nature of road safety, emphasising that behind every statistic was a personal tragedy affecting families and communities. The LRSP was established in 2000 and had evolved into a multi-agency body comprising Lincolnshire Police, Lincolnshire County Council, National Highways, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, and East Midlands Ambulance Service.

Members were informed that in 2024, there were 52 fatalities and 379 serious injuries on Lincolnshire's roads. The majority of incidents occurred on rural roads, with male drivers disproportionately represented. High-risk groups included young drivers (aged 17–24), mature drivers (aged 60+) motorcyclists and pedal cyclists. A positive trend was reported

for 2025, with 22 fatalities recorded to date, compared to 38 at the same point in the previous year. Serious injuries had also declined by approximately 7% year-on-year.

The Committee was briefed on LRSP's operational activities, which included:

- Engineering interventions at high-risk junctions, with over 1,000 sites assessed annually and 78 road safety audits completed in 2024.
- Speed enforcement through 10 average speed camera systems, 37 static cameras and approximately 100 mobile enforcement sites.
- Operation Octane, targeting motorcycle safety through education and enforcement.
- Community Speed Watch, involving 298 participating parishes, 107 trained volunteer groups and over 45,000 warning letters issued since 2018.
- Operation Snap, enabling the submission of dashcam footage by the public, resulting in 995 processed offences in 2024.

Education and engagement activities included:

- Delivery of national driver offender retraining schemes, including speed awareness courses.
- School-based programmes reaching over 20,000 pupils in 2024, covering pedestrian safety, in-car behaviour, and young driver awareness.
- The 2Fast2Soon theatre production, aimed at sixth-form students, highlighting the consequences of risky driving behaviour.
- Campaigns such as "Receiving the Message" and "Ellen's Story", which used real-life experiences to promote road safety awareness.
- During consideration of the report, Members raised a number of queries and observations relating to road safety enforcement, education, and strategic planning.

Concerns were expressed regarding the detection of uninsured and untaxed vehicles. It was confirmed that current speed camera van technology did not support this function; however, the Partnership had agreed to explore the integration of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) capabilities and report back to the Committee.

The scale and impact of Community Speed Watch participation was discussed. Officers confirmed the initiative's effectiveness in raising awareness and reducing repeat offences, noting that third warning letters were delivered in person by police officers.

A request was made for a breakdown of fatality data involving drink and drug driving. Officers agreed to provide this information in writing. Further queries were raised about the role of vehicle safety improvements in reducing casualty figures. The Partnership referenced the Safe System approach, which promoted shared responsibility across road users, vehicle design, infrastructure and enforcement.

The reduction in Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) figures was welcomed, and the importance of active travel was highlighted. Reference was made to European models where legal responsibility in collisions often favoured vulnerable road users. Officers acknowledged recent changes to the Highway Code and confirmed the Partnership's commitment to promoting cyclist and pedestrian safety through education and engagement.

Additional discussion included:

- The estimated cost of a road fatality, reported at £2.4 million. Ongoing concerns regarding junction safety at Hubbard's Bridge, with a review currently underway.
- The development of a new Road Safety Strategy for Lincolnshire, based on the Safe System model, covering:
 - Safer behaviours and people
 - Safer speeds
 - Safer roads
 - Safer Vehicles
 - Post-collision learning and care

The Committee welcomed the report and expressed appreciation for the work of the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership. Members requested that further data and updates on enforcement and education initiatives be brought to future meetings to support ongoing scrutiny and inform future recommendations.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

36 Anglian Water Public Affairs Team

The Committee received a detailed presentation from representatives of Anglian Water, including The Regional Engagement Advisor, the Regional Engagement Manager, and the Network Manager for the Grantham area. The briefing covered strategic priorities, infrastructure challenges, operational updates, and community engagement initiatives.

Members were informed that Anglian Water served the largest geographical area of any UK water company, covering regions from the Humber to Essex and Norfolk. The organisation currently employed 6,000 staff directly and a further 3,000 through its supply chain, with plans to recruit an additional 7,000 employees by 2030 to support its next business plan (AMP8: 2025–2030).

The Committee was advised of several key challenges facing the company:

Climate Change: The East of England was particularly vulnerable, with nearly one-third of the region below sea level. The year 2023 was recorded as the wettest on record, placing strain on infrastructure.

Population Growth: The region was home to four of the UK's fastest-growing cities (Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Peterborough and Northampton with an expected increase of 700,000 residents over the next 20 years).

Planning Constraints: Anglian Water was not a statutory consultee in planning applications, despite having to accommodate developments with automatic rights to connect to its network.

The Committee received an overview of the legacy sewer systems and the challenges posed by combined rainwater and wastewater networks. Members were informed that all storm overflows were permitted by the Environment Agency and fitted with event duration monitors (EDMs). Data from 22,000 monitors was used to target investment and operational responses. In Boston Borough, 13 storm overflows were monitored, with lower discharge figures this year due to dry weather.

Anglian Water had committed to:

- Reducing storm overflow permits by 17% by 2030.
- Ensuring no overflow discharges more than 10 times per year by 2050.
- Investing £1 billion in monitoring and infrastructure improvements, including UV antibacterial treatment and nature-based solutions.

The Committee was informed that 80% of sewer blockages were caused by avoidable items such as wet wipes, sanitary products, and fats/oils. Anglian Water cleared approximately 35,000 blockages annually and had launched a public campaign promoting the “3Ps” (pee, poo, paper) to encourage responsible flushing.

Members were invited to support the campaign by sharing educational materials, and Anglian Water agreed to provide translated resources to reflect Boston’s diverse population.

The Regional Engagement Manager reported that Summer 2025 was one of the hottest in decades, resulting in increased demand and reduced water pressure in Boston. The area’s ageing infrastructure, including narrow mains and vulnerable pipework, had contributed to frequent burst mains and service disruptions.

Anglian Water was planning to:

- Replace 1,134km of mains over the next five years.
- Install a 4.5km reinforcement main to improve supply resilience.
- Prioritise replacement in areas identified through community feedback.

The Committee received an update on the proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir, located between Grantham and Boston. The reservoir was expected to serve 500,000 homes, reduce demand on sensitive water environments, and enter supply by 2039, subject to planning and consultation.

Anglian Water confirmed that further public consultation would take place in Spring 2026, with a statutory pre-application consultation scheduled for 2027.

The Committee was briefed on Anglian Water’s engagement with DEFRA and its efforts to promote water-smart communities, including non-potable toilet retrofits, developer incentive schemes, and integrated water management standards.

During the discussion, Members raised several queries and observations relating to Anglian Water’s operations and plans for the future.

Clarification was sought on the financial implications of the proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir. It was confirmed that the estimated cost of the project was between £3–4

billion, to be funded through a combination of long-term customer billing and shareholder investment.

Concerns were expressed regarding the impact of water supply constraints on local economic growth and the absence of statutory consultee status for Anglian Water in the planning process. The company acknowledged these concerns and confirmed ongoing lobbying efforts to secure formal recognition within planning frameworks. It was agreed that data would be provided on developments in Boston affected by supply limitations.

Further information was requested on coordination with National Grid and engagement with landowners in relation to infrastructure projects. Anglian Water confirmed that compensation processes were in place and that proactive communication was undertaken with affected parties.

Issues relating to sinkholes in the vicinity of Haven High School were raised, with a request for details on response times. It was confirmed that local technicians were deployed according to prioritisation protocols to ensure timely intervention.

Questions were also asked about water fluoridation and the company's financial stability. Anglian Water advised that fluoridation was a matter for local authorities (more information was available on the Anglian Water Website: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/drinking-water-advice/fluoride/>).

The Regional Engagement Manager reassured Members that Anglian Water had a stable financial position.

The company reiterated its commitment to providing follow-up data on developments impacted by water supply constraints and to continuing engagement with local authorities and stakeholders.

Resolved

- 1. That the update be noted;**
- 2. That Anglian Water provide further data on water supply constraints affecting development in Boston;**
- 3. That the Committee support the public education campaign and request translated materials; and**
- 4. That future engagement with Anglian Water be considered to monitor progress on infrastructure and planning matters.**

[The meeting was paused for a brief recess between 7.53pm and 7.56pm.]

[Councillors Emma Cresswell and Anne Dorian left the meeting at 7.54pm, following consideration of the above item.]

37 Crime and Disorder Report

The Committee received the statutory annual Crime and Disorder report from the Safer Communities Manager, supported by Inspector Ian Cotton of Lincolnshire Police and other officers from the Safer Communities Team. The report provided a comprehensive overview of strategic developments, operational enforcement, partnership working, and future priorities across Boston Borough during the 2024/25 financial year.

Members were informed that Boston Borough Council operated under the South and East Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership (SELCSP) and the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP). The report outlined the statutory duties discharged through both partnerships, including strategic assessments, public engagement, and domestic homicide reviews, as set out in Appendix 1 – South and East Lincolnshire Community Safety Strategy 2025–28 and Appendix 6 – Safer Lincolnshire Partnership Strategy 2025–28 within the report.

The Committee noted that Boston Borough Council continued to deliver key operational services, including CCTV monitoring, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) enforcement, Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) enforcement, and the Noxious Odours Procedure. These activities were aligned with the priorities and actions set out in Appendix 2 – Community Safety Strategy Action Plan 2024–25 within the report.

Details of enforcement activity were provided in Appendix 3 – Enforcement Action Taken by Boston Borough Council to Address Anti-Social Behaviour within the report.

The Committee was briefed on several initiatives delivered under Operation Plotting, including:

- Deployment of Community Rangers, who undertook over 965 actions addressing ASB, supporting police operations, and engaging with the public.
- Outreach work by the Community Engagement Officer, including engagement with ESOL students and diverse communities.
- Environmental improvements such as planting schemes and hanging baskets, delivered in partnership with local groups and North Sea Camp.
- Installation of interactive digital screens in Central Park and Market Place to promote safety messages.
- Upgrades to CCTV infrastructure, with a further £150,000 investment committed for additional coverage.

The Committee also noted the impact of Hot Spot Policing, which resulted in:

- 6,000 additional patrol hours
- 169 stop and searches
- 72 uses of ASB powers
- 116 arrests across Lincolnshire, with Boston Town Centre identified as a priority area

Annual campaigns supported by the partnership included:

- ASB Awareness Week
- Hate Crime Awareness Week

- Scam Awareness Week
- White Ribbon Day

The work of Domestic Abuse Officers was commended, with training delivered to staff and targeted awareness campaigns addressing coercive behaviour, male victims, and older victims.

The Committee reviewed enforcement data relating to the PSPO and Noxious Odours Procedure, noting a significant increase in PSPO enforcement attributed to the Community Rangers' presence.

The CCTV performance report was presented by the CCTV Manager, highlighting incident categories including violent and sexual offences, criminal damage, and traffic offences. Over 100 incidents were recorded under "violent and sexual" categories, and members requested further breakdowns in future reports. Reference was made to Appendix 4 – CCTV Service Annual Statistical Report 2024–25 and Appendix 5 – Boston Borough Council CCTV Policy within the report.

The Committee was advised of the SLP's revised strategic approach for 2025–2028, which now adopted a project-based model underpinned by regular data analysis. The SLP's Annual General Meeting held on 11th July 2025 was noted as a key engagement event.

Members raised several queries and observations relating to community safety and partnership working.

The formal adoption of the Noxious Odours Procedure was welcomed, and its effectiveness was queried. Officers advised that no cases had progressed to court, indicating that early intervention measures had been successful.

A request was made for a breakdown of CCTV incident categories and statistics relating to drink and drug driving. Officers confirmed that this data would be included in future reporting.

Clarification was sought on the division of responsibilities between the Council and Lincolnshire Police. Officers outlined the joint working arrangements in place and explained the incremental enforcement approach used to address issues.

The effectiveness of the Community Speed Watch initiative was queried. Officers confirmed its value and shared data on the number of warning letters issued and levels of volunteer engagement.

Positive feedback was given regarding increased police visibility and the reassurance this had provided to the local community.

Concerns were raised about the prevalence of uninsured vehicles and enforcement activity. Lincolnshire Police confirmed that proactive policing measures were in place and offered to provide relevant figures.

The Committee welcomed the report and acknowledged the breadth of work undertaken by the Safer Communities Team and Lincolnshire Police. Members expressed appreciation for the collaborative approach and requested further data to support future scrutiny.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted; and

2. That the following areas of focus be included in future reporting:

- **A breakdown of CCTV incident categories and outcomes.**
- **Data on drink and drug driving offences.**
- **Updates on the effectiveness of the Noxious Odours Procedure.**
- **Community Speed Watch activity and volunteer engagement.**
- **Enforcement figures relating to uninsured vehicles.**
- **Progress against the SLP's strategic priorities and project-based delivery model.**

38 South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Safeguarding Policy

The Committee received a report and presentation from the Wellbeing Service Manager & Deputy Strategic Safeguarding Officer, on the proposed joint Safeguarding Policy for the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (SELCP). The policy had been developed to standardise safeguarding practices across the three councils following the formation of a single workforce, and was supported by the documentation circulated with the agenda, including the draft policy and associated guidance (Appendix A – SELCP Safeguarding Policy and Appendix B – Safeguarding Reporting Flowcharts).

The Wellbeing Service Manager & Deputy Strategic Safeguarding Officer explained that the policy aligned with statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014 and supported a consistent approach to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The policy introduced clearer guidance on:

- Professional curiosity
- Reporting pathways
- Officer responsibilities

Training would be delivered and monitored via the First4Learning system, with tailored modules assigned based on role and face-to-face sessions provided where appropriate. Regular supervision and team meetings would be used to support staff and share good practice.

A single referral process had been established, including:

- A dedicated email address
- An electronic referral form
- Updated reporting flowcharts

The Committee was advised that the policy would be subject to annual light-touch reviews and a full governance review every three years.

The Chairman thanked Wellbeing Service Manager & Deputy Strategic Safeguarding Officer for the presentation and confirmed that the Committee was satisfied with the policy's scope and structure.

During consideration of the report, Members raised several queries and observations regarding safeguarding practices and inter-agency coordination.

Clarification was sought on the effectiveness of current safeguarding procedures and the escalation process for high-risk cases. Officers confirmed that robust protocols were in place and that multi-agency panels met regularly to review complex cases.

Questions were asked about the volume and nature of referrals received. Officers advised that referral numbers had increased, particularly in relation to mental health and domestic abuse, and that resources were being monitored to ensure continued responsiveness.

Concerns were expressed regarding safeguarding training for frontline staff and volunteers. Officers confirmed that training was mandatory and regularly updated, with additional modules available for specific risk areas.

Further information was requested on safeguarding in schools and the role of designated safeguarding leads. Officers outlined the support provided to educational settings and confirmed ongoing liaison with children's services.

The importance of community awareness and early intervention was highlighted, and officers agreed to explore further outreach opportunities and report back on engagement outcomes.

The Committee welcomed the report and acknowledged the critical importance of safeguarding work across all sectors. Members expressed appreciation for the proactive approach taken by officers and the strength of partnership arrangements in place.

Resolved:

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That further data on referral trends and training uptake be provided in future updates; and**
- 3. That opportunities for enhanced community engagement on safeguarding matters be explored.**

39 Budget Preparation 2026/27 - Approach & Process

The Committee received a presentation from the Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer), outlining a revised approach to preparing the Council's budget for the 2026/27 financial year, designed to address previous challenges and improve transparency, engagement, and scrutiny.

The Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer) explained that the new process had been developed in response to concerns raised by Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Members, and Senior Officers regarding the limited time available between the receipt of the Government's financial settlement in December and the statutory deadline for budget approval in February/March.

The revised approach aimed to:

- Enable earlier engagement with senior leadership and service teams.
- Provide a structured review of cost pressures and savings proposals.
- Improve consultation and stakeholder input.
- Clarify the respective roles of Audit & Governance (system assurance) and Scrutiny (review and challenge).

Key elements of the process included:

- Use of Star Chamber Panels to support and challenge budget assumptions.
- A detailed timetable covering assurance, consultation, Cabinet and Scrutiny engagement, and statutory deadlines.
- Identification of risks such as failure to deliver savings, unrealistic assumptions, and inability to set a lawful budget

The Committee was advised that the process had already commenced, with cost pressures reviewed in June, savings proposals developed in July, and Star Chamber sessions held in August. Work had continued through September to prepare options for Council consideration.

It was noted that the Government's Autumn Statement had been delayed to late November, with the financial settlement expected shortly before Christmas. This would leave limited time for final budget preparation, but the revised process was designed to mitigate this constraint.

A joint Budget Scrutiny session was proposed for January 2026, to allow Members to review the draft budget in detail. The Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer) recommended a five to six-hour session, potentially held in the evening, with all Scrutiny Members and Audit & Governance Members invited. Portfolio Holders would present their proposals, supported by relevant officers, and Members would have the opportunity to ask questions and make recommendations.

During consideration of the report, Members welcomed the structured approach to budget scrutiny and raised several queries and suggestions regarding the process and arrangements.

It was confirmed that informal briefings had taken place between Portfolio Holders and Assistant Directors, supported by Star Chamber sessions to review savings proposals.

A suggestion was made to split the joint scrutiny session over two days to allow for more focused discussion. Officers acknowledged the proposal but noted that previous experience had shown extended sessions to be exhausting and logistically challenging.

The Committee supported a proposal for collaboration between the Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny and Audit & Governance to coordinate the joint session.

Support was expressed for the open and transparent approach to budget scrutiny, and Members welcomed the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the process.

Resolved

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That arrangements for a joint Budget Scrutiny session in January 2026 be progressed in collaboration with the Audit & Governance Committee; and**
- 3. That Members be encouraged to prepare questions and feedback in advance of the session to support effective scrutiny.**

40 Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 - Consultation

The Committee received a report from the Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer) outlining the proposed options for the 2026/27 Local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for working-age claimants, as part of the statutory consultation process. The report was accompanied by supporting documentation, including the consultation survey (Appendix 1).

Members were advised that pension-age claimants remained protected under national regulations and were unaffected by the proposed changes. The current scheme provided up to 100% support for households with children and 75% support for other households. The estimated total CTS expenditure for 2025/26 was £4.9 million, with Boston Borough Council contributing approximately 13% (£656,000).

In light of financial pressures, Cabinet had agreed to consult on three options:

- Option 1: Retain current support levels (100% for households with children, 85% for others);
- Option 2: Reduce support to 90% for lone parents, 80% for couples with children, and 75% for others — saving £45,000; and
- Option 3: Reduce support to 90% for lone parents, 80% for couples with children, and 70% for others — saving £57,000.

The Committee noted that any reduction in support may increase non-payment and debt levels among low-income households, requiring additional bad debt provision.

The Chairman expressed surprise that the item had been brought to the Committee at this stage, noting that the consultation had already commenced and that the Committee's ability to influence the process was limited. He suggested that the item would be more appropriately considered once the consultation had concluded.

The Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer) explained the statutory timeline and confirmed that the consultation had been launched to meet legal requirements. He agreed that the Committee's input would be most valuable once the results were available and could inform the final scheme recommendation.

Members discussed the potential financial impact of the scheme on the Council's contribution and queried how much additional funding would be required under the worst-case scenario. The Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer) undertook to provide a written response on that point.

The Committee agreed that the item should return for further scrutiny once the consultation had closed and the results were available.

Resolved:

That the Committee receive a further report following the conclusion of the consultation to inform its recommendation to Cabinet.

41 Update on Plan for Neighbourhoods

The Committee received an update from the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Gilbert, supported by the Director for Economic Development, on the development of the Plan for Neighbourhoods submission to Government.

Members were advised that the Plan formed part of the national programme previously known as the Long-Term Plan for Towns and sets out a long-term investment strategy for Boston. The town had received approximately £56 million in Government grants over the past six years, with the Plan for Neighbourhoods providing a further £20 million over 10 years, equating to £2 million per year. The funding was overseen by the Plan for Neighbourhoods Board, which included representatives from the community, business, and cultural sectors.

The Committee was informed that the Plan had to be submitted to Government by 28th November 2025, with Cabinet scheduled to consider the final draft prior to submission. The plan was being developed through a series of workshops and consultations, with the following themes emerging from both national guidance and local engagement:

Government Themes:

- Thriving Places
- Stronger Communities
- Taking Back Control

Locally Identified Themes:

- Safety
- Town Centre Improvements
- 2030 Celebrations
- Pride in Place
- Community Infrastructure
- Health and Wellbeing
- Employment, Skills and Learning

Officers confirmed that consultation had been extensive, with over 1,000 responses received from residents, businesses, and community groups. Further workshops were planned to refine priorities and ensure the plan reflected local aspirations.

During consideration of the update, Members raised several queries and observations regarding the coordination and development of the Plan for Neighborhoods.

Concerns were expressed about potential duplication between the Plan for Neighborhoods Board and the Boston Business Forum. Officers confirmed that the Business Forum was supported by the Town Board and that both groups were aligned in their objectives. Clarification was sought on whether there remained an opportunity to influence the plan. Officers confirmed that further input could be submitted prior to the completion of the final draft.

The inclusion of the 2030 celebrations as a key theme was welcomed, with Members emphasising their importance to Boston's cultural and economic development.

The consultation process was praised, and the strong level of public engagement was noted. A request was made for a future report outlining proposed changes to legislation and any new powers associated with the Plan for Neighborhoods, particularly those aimed at enabling councils to address longstanding local challenges.

Resolved

- 1. That the update be noted;**
- 2. That Members be encouraged to submit further feedback prior to the finalisation of the Plan; and**
- 3. That a future report be brought to the Committee outlining any legislative changes or new powers associated with the Plan for Neighborhoods.**

42 Review of HR Policies - Pension & Pension Discretions Policy

The Committee received a report from the Group Manager – Organisational Development, supported by the Head of HR & OD, on the Council's Pension and Pension Discretions Policy, including the application of flexible retirement provisions. The report was supported by the draft policy which had been circulated with the agenda (Appendix A – Pension Discretions Policy).

Members were informed that the policy had been reviewed to ensure:

- Legal compliance
- Alignment across the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership
- Consistent workforce management

The policy set out how the Council applied employer discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), balancing flexibility for employees with financial prudence. It included provisions for:

- Flexible retirement
- Actuarial reductions
- Strain costs
- Case by case decision making

The Committee was advised that the policy had been reviewed and endorsed by the Readers Panel, comprising officers from across the partnership, Trade unions at both local and regional levels and the Senior Leadership Team.

It was confirmed that the policy applies to all employees, regardless of grade or role, and that decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account service needs and cost implications. The policy would be subject to ongoing review and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, case law, and organisational structure.

During consideration of the report, Members raised several queries and observations relating to the application and governance of the Pensions Discretion Policy.

Clarification was sought on whether the policy applied equally to all staff. Officers confirmed that it did, and that the decision-making process ensured fairness and consistency.

Assurance was requested regarding the record keeping and monitoring of discretionary decisions. Officers confirmed that robust systems were in place and that decisions would be documented and reviewed in accordance with governance requirements.

Members discussed the potential implications of future local government reorganisation and whether the policy would remain applicable. Officers confirmed that the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) would continue to apply and that any changes would be reflected in future policy updates.

The Committee welcomed the clarity and consistency of the policy and acknowledged its importance in supporting workforce planning and retirement transitions.

Resolved:

That the Committee note the policy and recommend its submission to Council for approval.

43 Work Programme and Forward Plan

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the Council's Forward Plan.

Members were invited to submit suggestions for future agenda items via email, particularly in light of the detailed discussions held earlier in the meeting. It was acknowledged that the Committee's programme was already substantial, with several key items scheduled for the coming months.

Members discussed potential additions to the work programme arising from earlier agenda items, including:

- Follow-up engagement with Anglian Water, particularly regarding infrastructure coordination, planning consultation, and water supply constraints affecting development.
- Review of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme following the conclusion of the statutory consultation.
- Monitoring of the Plan for Neighbourhoods submission and any associated legislative changes or new powers granted to local authorities.
- Scrutiny of the Budget Preparation process, including arrangements for a joint Budget Scrutiny session in January 2026.
- Further breakdowns and analysis of CCTV incident categories and enforcement data, as requested during the Crime and Disorder report.

The Committee agreed that these items should be considered for inclusion in the work programme, subject to capacity and scheduling.

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their contributions and confirmed that the Committee would continue to shape its priorities in response to emerging issues and feedback from previous meetings.

Resolved:

That the content of the current Work Programme and Council Forward Plan be noted.

The Meeting ended at 9.15 pm.