

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel held on
Wednesday, 25th February, 2026 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town
Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillors B Long (Chair), A Beales, S Bearshaw, J Bhondi,
R Blunt, B Jones, J Osborne, A Ryves, D Sayers and Mrs V Spikings

PRESENT UNDER STANDING ORDER 34 ON TEAMS:

Councillor S Bearshaw and D Sayers

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Councillor Beales – Leader of the Council

OFFICERS:

Kate Blakemore – Chief Executive

Emma Hodds – Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director, Regeneration, Housing and Place

Carl Holland – Assistant Director, Finance

Honor Howell – Assistant Director, Transformation and Change

Mark Whitmore – Assistant Director, Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection

Siobhan Cleeve – Assistant Director, Leisure and Culture

Stuart Ashworth – Assistant Director, Environment and Planning

Debbie Ess – Senior Corporate Governance Office

Jason Birch – Assistant Director for Property

Nikki Patton – Housing Services Manager

Charlotte Marriott – Interim Corporate Governance Manager

CP92 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kirk and Dickinson.

CP93 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The minutes from the previous meeting held on the 7th January and 9th February 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CP94 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of Interest.

CP95 **URGENT BUSINESS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7**

There was none.

CP96 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There was none.

CP97 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was none.

CP98 **CALL INS (IF ANY)**

There were no call-ins to consider.

CP99 **CABINET REPORT - QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Senior Corporate Governance Officer presented the report and provided information on progress against the Council's Corporate Strategy and Key Performance Indicators and outlined those indicators which had not met target.

The Chair thanked the Senior Corporate Governance Officer for the report and invited questions and comments from the Panel. The relevant Assistant Directors were present at the meeting to provide information on targets as required.

Councillor Jones queried the reduction in outreach activities.

The Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture explained that budget constraints and seasonal attendance dips, particularly over the Christmas period, led to streamlined sessions. She noted plans to adjust profiling of outreach activities in future quarters to better reflect seasonal trends and maximise resource use.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture clarified that the cost recovery KPI aims for 100% cost neutrality, with current figures impacted by high utility costs and ageing buildings. The energy usage target was set with expectations from the REFIT programme, but the anticipated benefits have not fully materialised, prompting ongoing work with property services to optimise equipment and improve outcomes.

The Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer updated the Panel on efforts to improve purchase order compliance,

outlining the introduction of stricter enforcement from April and the establishment of a finance task group. Internal communications are underway to ensure spending departments understand and comply with the new requirements. He emphasised that the changes are not intended to harm supplier relationships or delay payments, particularly for local organisations, and that prompt payment remains a priority.

In response to questions from Councillor Ryves, the Assistant Director for Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer explained that while the target was to minimise non-compliance, certain exceptions such as utility bills and professional subscriptions are unavoidable. The task group would clarify and communicate these exceptions, aiming for a realistic target that accounts for legitimate cases.

Councillor Spikings requested an update on the progress of the building condition surveys. The Assistant Director for Property explained the delays in the building condition survey due to software issues, with a new solution pending IT approval. The technical team and inspection programme are ready, and surveys would commence once the software was operational.

In response to a further question from Councillor Spikings, the Assistant Director for Property confirmed there are 81 unregistered land interests, which have caused delays in property transactions. He has proposed hiring a paralegal to address the backlog, particularly in preparation for Local Government Reorganisation.

The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning highlighted that major planning applications with extensions of time have improved from red to green status, though results may fluctuate due to low application volumes. The team was focusing on further speeding up both major and non-major applications.

The Chair, Councillor Long asked for clarification regarding planning fees being returned. The Assistant Director for Environment and Planning explained that if applications exceed statutory timeframes without agreed extensions, fees must be returned, which has financial implications. The team now monitors applications weekly to avoid missing deadlines and incurring penalties.

The Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place reported that the Hunstanton and Kings Lynn Masterplans are scheduled for cabinet consideration in June and July, respectively, though election-related uncertainties may affect these dates.

The Housing Services Manager confirmed that all major agreements for the West Winch project, including the master plan, infrastructure delivery plan, section 106, and collaboration agreement, are now complete. The final business case was being prepared for submission to the Department for Transport, targeting a 2027 start for road works.

The Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing and Public Protection updated the Panel on Corporate Health and Safety and explained that delays in contractor availability had temporarily affected the status of corporate health and safety governance, but all work was now complete and recommendations are being actioned.

The Assistant Director for Transformation and Change provided an update to the Panel on the transformation programme, which has been integrated with LGR readiness efforts, with ongoing work and coordination with Norfolk Leaders and Chief Executives. She confirmed future reports would provide more detailed update.

The Chair and Panel requested an update in six months on the unregistered properties. The Monitoring Officer and Chief of Staff agreed to prioritise registrations, especially for properties likely to be sold or developed, and to provide an assurance update to the committee in six months, acknowledging that full registration would take longer due to Land Registry processing times.

In response to a question from Councillor Ryves, it was clarified that the 81 unregistered interests represent a significant portion of the land portfolio by area, even though the total number of land assets was much higher, as many are small items like lamp posts.

RESOLVED: The Panel supported the onward recommendation of the Performance Management Report to Cabinet.

Cabinet Recommendation: To review the Performance Management Report and comment on the delivery against the Corporate Strategy.

CP100

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS, FOI AND DATA PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Interim Corporate Governance Manager gave a presentation detailing historic FOI compliance rates, actions taken to improve performance, and forthcoming changes to complaints and data protection processes. A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Beales highlighted some of the FOI requests included data which was available to the public via the website and commented on the importance of directing customer to the Council's website.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Councillor Jones questioned if the use of AI had been considered and commented on educating the users to find the information being requested.

The Interim Corporate Governance Manager commented the use of AI would be explored and highlighted a FOI library to include frequently asked questions was being developed to provide further information to the public.

In response to Councillor Spikings, the Interim Corporate Governance Manager explained some FOI requests are received following a Complaint and Officers had a duty to respond unless an exemption can be applied depending on specific circumstances.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Sayers thanked the Interim Corporate Governance Manager for the report, presentation and for responding to additional questions he had asked prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the contents of the report.

CP101

REPORT FROM THE CONSTITUTION INFORMAL WORKING GROUP - UPDATE TO SCRUTINY INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Democratic Services Officer presented the report which included updated documents including protocols, guides, work programming advice, and role profiles, aiming to clarify expectations and improve scrutiny effectiveness, especially for new councillors. Scrutiny training sessions are scheduled to support the rollout of the new guidance and Members attendance was encouraged.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the Panel.

Councillor Beales as Portfolio Holder commented these documents encouraged scrutiny and highlighted the reference to the scrutiny and executive protocol on page 65 of the agenda to be removed to avoid confusion before publication.

Councillor Bhondi commented these documents were useful for all Members, current and new.

RESOLVED: The Panel commented on and endorsed the following documents;

- Scrutiny and Executive Protocol
- Scrutiny Guide
- How to Select Scrutiny Work Topics and Work Programming
- Terms of Reference for Sifting Meetings
- Role Profile
- Scrutiny Chair
- Summary of Call-in procedure.

CP102 **PANEL WORK PROGRAMME**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Chair asked for an update on the recent Motion from Council on Lynnsport. The Assistant Director for Transformation and Change explained the notice of motion referred from Council is targeted for the April or June meeting, depending on preparation time.

RESOLVED: The Panel Work Programme was noted.

CP103 **CABINET FORWARD DECISIONS LIST**

RESOLVED: The Cabinet Forward Decisions List was noted.

CP104 **SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED: The Shareholder Committee Work Programme was noted.

CP105 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Corporate Performance Panel was scheduled to take place on 15th April 2026 at 4:30pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place.

The meeting closed at 5.41 pm

CPP – February 2026

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Minute Item CP100

Charlotte Marriott

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk



Additional Information Requested by Cllr Sayers

Departmental compliance breakdown for Planning, Revenues and Benefits, Housing Needs, HR and Licensing:

Department	Number of FOIs	Compliance rate (%)
Planning	94	72.6
Revenues & Benefits	65	55.4
Housing Needs	51	33.4
HR	45	77.8
Licensing	40	90

Average overdue period for late responses:

Working days response was overdue	No. of responses /FOIs
< 5 days	25
5 - 10 days	12
10 - 15 days	7
15 - 20 days	2
20 - 40 days	11
40 - 60 days	1
>60 days	249



Additional Information Requested by Cllr Sayers

ICO contact regarding FOI compliance rate

- No formal correspondence from the ICO regarding this matter.
- It is worth noting that the ICO would not ordinarily be aware of our compliance rates as this data is internal.

6 Information Governance Officer vacancy

- This point was included in the 'introduction' section to set the scene on how we are moving forward and addressing the compliance issues highlighted within the report for 2024-25.

The main body of the report relates to the 2024–25 financial year, during this period the former postholder and the previous service structure were still operating.



FOI compliance rates

Historic	
2023-24	71%
2024-25	61%

Where we are now		
10 2025-26 Q1 (1 April 2025) - Q3 (1 Jan 2026)	594	<u>89.2%</u>

Department	Number of FOIs solely to that department	Compliance rate (%)
Planning	55	80
Revenues & Benefits	57	96.5
Housing Needs	48	66.7
HR	22	91
Licensing	36	100



Looking forward: Embedding a Data Protection culture

Increase
Awareness and
Understanding

- Imminent, mandatory data protection training for
⇒ all staff
- Comms – assets – simplified guide to data protection and process flowcharts – to compliment the launch of training



Looking forward: Embedding a Data Protection culture

Information Governance Leads

Responsibility for:

- Managing information through its lifecycle
- Maintaining privacy notices, retention schedules and ensuring compliance
- overseeing data protection approaches in assigned area, including DPIAs and providing general advice and guidance to their teams
- Supporting data breach, FOI, EIR and SAR processes
- Article 30 registers - RoPA

Ownership,
Oversight and
Accountability

Empowerment



Looking forward: Embedding a Data Protection culture

Ownership,
Oversight and
Accountability

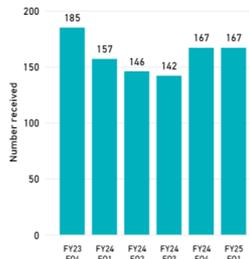
- Ownership at Executive level
- 13 • Designing a clear escalation route
- Corporate Management System - Governance dashboards – regular agenda item for ELT



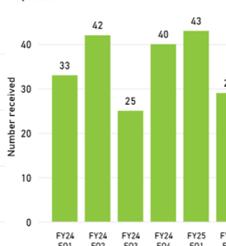
Numbers received

Information requests

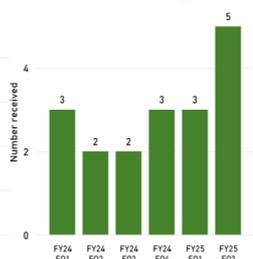
Freedom of Information requests



Environmental Information Regulations requests



Subject Access Requests



% of requests completed within the statutory timeframe

Freedom of Information requests



Environmental Information Regulations requests



Subject Access Requests



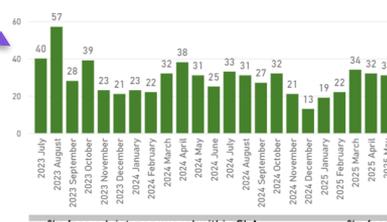
Tracking compliance with statutory timeframes

Breakdown by service area

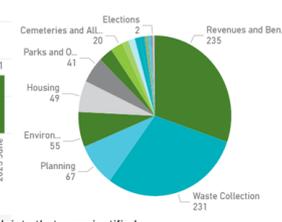
Complaints

Customers are at the centre of the council's business and any feedback is useful to help us develop our services. We have a customer complaints policy which supports a structured, consistent method in dealing with complaints and reaching an appropriate resolution.

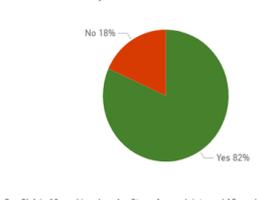
Number of complaints received over time



Number of complaints by service

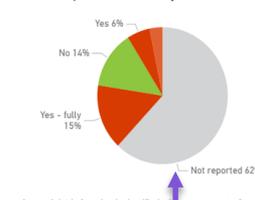


% of complaints answered within SLA



Our SLA is 10 working days for Stage 1 complaints and 15 working days for Stage 2 complaints.

% of complaints that were justified



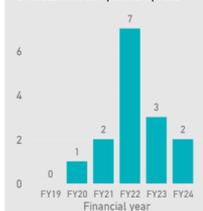
A complaint is found to be justified where we accept after an internal investigation, that there was a fault in the service provided by the council.

Tracking compliance with process timeframes

Number of justified complaints

Customers who have been through Stage 1 and 2 of our Complaints Policy may refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman for independent review if they are not satisfied with the council's response. Complaints are classified as upheld where the Ombudsman finds that the council was at fault.

Number of Local Government Ombudsman complaints upheld



Find out more about our Complaints Policy and Procedure



Complaints

Redesigned into the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy.

- Updated in line with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints handling code
- Clear process for compliments and comments
- 15 • Other key changes include:
 - A strengthened focus on engaging directly with complainants at an early stage, alongside an enhanced emphasis on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations
 - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
 - Inclusion of definitions and expansion of the legal framework section
 - Clarity of matters not in scope



Any questions?

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Charlotte Marriott

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