

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 3 June 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Bailey (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Owen Bierley (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Jeanette McGhee
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Trevor Young

Also Present: Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mandy Snee

In Attendance:
Ian Knowles Chief Executive
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Alan Bowley Interim Director of Operational and Commercial Services
Nova Roberts Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services
Darren Mellors Performance & Programme Manager
James Makinson-Sanders Economic Growth Team Manager
Grant White Communities Manager
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Roger Patterson

Membership: Councillor Peter Morris was appointed substitute for Councillor Roger Patterson

1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S

The Chairman explained there were two sets of minutes, both for approval.

Having been moved and seconded it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 18 March 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

On taking the second set of minutes, and having been moved and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Concurrent Meeting of the Prosperous Communities and Corporate Policy and Resources Committees held on 13 February 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments, questions or requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions as at 23 May 2025, was **DULY NOTED**.

5 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER FOUR REPORT AND SUMMARY OF YEAR END PERFORMANCE 2024/25

Members gave consideration to the Progress and Delivery Quarter Four Report and Summary of Year End Performance for 2024/25, presented by the Performance and Programme Manager. He highlighted to Members there had been some updated figures since the report had been published, those being under Corporate Health:

- COF01 - Budget variance -£1.126m
- COF03 - Overall Council budget forecast outturn -6.68%

The changes came from £56k from minor variances (each under £10k) and £175k windfall government grants. However, both figures were still subject to final audit of statement of accounts.

Additionally, further to the report having been presented for the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee briefing, a requested amendment was for Saturday market data to be included in the performance improvement plan alongside the Tuesday figures.

It was explained that with regard to the overall performance for the quarter, 87% of KPIs were either exceeding or within the agreed tolerance and this was compared to 83% in Q4 of 2023/24 and 78% in the previous quarter.

Members heard that, with regard to the performance improvement plan, there were six measures included. Two measures related to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), those being the average number of working days from DFG application to completion of work, and the

percentage of DFG referrals completed within 120 working days. It was not expected the performance of those measures would change given the budget position. The third measure was HME07, the percentage of households spending more than 42 nights in bed and breakfast accommodation. This was also expected to remain in the performance improvement plan as the target was set at zero, in line with guidance and what was striven for, however, it was not achievable with the limited temporary accommodation available. Members heard the temporary accommodation project was now in motion which would provide eight additional units, with two of these being outside the Gainsborough area.

With regard to the measure for local land charges market share, it was explained that whilst it was reporting below target, it was accepted that this measure was outside the control of the council. As such, the approved measure sets for 2025/26 had it removed as a target data set, however the detail would remain as a visible statistic within the report. It was also confirmed that the team would continue to focus on maintaining high performance and service delivery.

In addition to markets figures being included in the performance improvement plan, the information had been updated to include updated stalls and layouts, which were due to be delivered in the summer, alongside the opening of the new cinema. A weekly breakdown of markets was included in the year-end report.

The final measure in the performance improvement plan was the Together24 savings delivered, which was an annual cumulative target which was being monitored against the current position.

Members were provided with the details of those measures which had been removed from the improvement plan, including the percentage of Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) completed in 20 days, which was now above target, and the percentage of food inspections completed which was within tolerance.

The Committee received details of the progress and delivery data broken down for each portfolio, highlighting those areas which had been covered within the performance improvement plan as well as those targets which were presenting above target. It was noted that where there had been turnaround in performance, such as council tax collection rates, significant work had been undertaken to achieve those improved results. Narrative summaries were included in the report to provide Members with additional background information.

The presentation was concluded with a summary of the year-end report, which showed that 84% of the Council's KPIs finished either within the agreed tolerance or exceeding their targets for the financial year. This was an increase on the previous year which reported at 81%. A total of 16 measures reported below the target at the end of the year, with six of those continuing to be monitored through the performance improvement plans.

A Member of the Committee raised several enquiries regarding staff absence case management, the average spend per head at the Trinity Arts Centre, the cumulative impact of grant funding for the recipients and associated communities, as well as the review process for targets and measure sets, in order to avoid complacency setting in. In response, Officers explained that information regarding case management processes could be requested alongside more specific information from the Trinity Arts Centre. The

Communities Manager advised the Committee there would be a publicly available community impact report exploring the benefits of the grant funding schemes which had been implemented. This would include case studies and would be shared with Members as well as being available on the website. Members were also advised that the measure sets were reviewed annually, with the focus being to strive for continued improvement.

In response to a question regarding the additional eight units of temporary housing which would be made available, and whether that would be sufficient to meet demand, it was explained that whilst the need had fundamentally changed since the business plan for those eight units had been put in place, it was anticipated that as work continued there would be opportunities to review additional options such as working with partner organisations.

The Committee also drew attention to the reduced levels of employee satisfaction reported within the figures. Members heard that there was now a regular report presented to the Management Team from the People Services Manager and there had been areas of improvement noted within the outcome of the peer review, such as improvement to staff training plans. It was also explained that exit interviews were being monitored, however the wider concerns across the public sector also had an impact on those working within it.

The percentage of abandoned telephone calls through customer services was commented on, with Members hearing that a new contact centre technology had been implemented which provided a fullness of data not previously available. There had been a higher demand through the customer services than anticipated, however there was a full review underway to ensure contingencies were in place to manage that demand. Members acknowledged that communication lines with all local authorities tended to be an area of frustration for residents, it was not only a West Lindsey District Council concern.

A Member of the Committee welcomed the retention of Saturday market figures in the performance improvement plan, noting the level of investment in the marketplace and the desire to continue the growth of the markets and associated local businesses.

In considering the data regarding DFGs contained within the improvement plan, it was enquired whether there could be a further breakdown of information for example the numbers of people on the list and how that impacted both the data sets but also the individuals involved. Additionally, it was suggested that information regarding the location of individuals awaiting DFGs would be useful in building a case for more funding, with the example of delayed hospital discharges or the need to use costly respite care being cited. In response, it was explained that whilst Officers could provide the real time data regarding how many people were on the waiting list, the wider picture often was not available to West Lindsey District Council as the data was held by other organisations such as Lincolnshire County Council. It was acknowledged that there had been membership changes at a county level and as such, it was timely to revisit the debate through the Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group, which oversaw the social elements of the DFGs. Whilst the concerns with DFGs had been a longstanding issue, it was recognised to be an opportunity to address the matter again at a county level.

Further debate regarding DFGs focused on the personal impact to those individuals on the waiting list, with a diminished quality of life being an almost unmeasurable impact, and whether case studies could be used to add weight to the approaches at a county level. It was confirmed that case studies had previously formed a significant part of the data shared

when seeking a funding review, however in recognising the changes at Lincolnshire County Council, this was something which could again be revisited.

With no further comments or questions, the Chairman read aloud the recommendations contained within the report. Having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the performance of the Council's services had been assessed through agreed performance measures and areas where improvements should be made had been indicated, having had regard to the remedial measures set out in the report; and
- b) the Progress and Delivery Performance Improvement Plan for Quarter Four (January-March) 2024/25 be approved; and
- c) the Progress and Delivery Year End 2024/25 Report be approved.

6 WLDC UKSPF/REPF 2025/26 PROGRAMME

The Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Economic Growth Team Manager, seeking approval of the Council's programme for the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26 Programme.

It was explained that the council had been allocated both UK Shared Prosperity Funding and Rural England Prosperity Funding, which was seen as a transitional continuation of the previous 2022 – 2025 programme. Under the new arrangements for the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority, Members heard that North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) were the Accountable Body for this funding.

Additionally, it was highlighted that the Government had set a spend deadline of 31 March 2026, with any unspent funding being lost. The Accountable Body, NELC, would require the council to report on expenditure in September/October 2025 and January 2026. Any funding at risk of being unspent could be reallocated at those stages.

Members were advised that in line with the Council's constitution, the Prosperous Communities Committee was required to approve the investment themes and delegate signatory of the funding agreement. The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee was then required to approve the drawdown and expenditure of funds. It was further highlighted that the proposed investments had been shaped based upon local priorities alongside their fit with the Government's programme requirements, and Greater Lincolnshire priorities.

The Chairman thanked all those involved in the work and invited comments from the Committee. Members expressed their support and thanks for, not only the presented programme for 2025/26 but also for the work which had been previously undertaken.

A Member of the Committee noted his satisfaction that reserve funds were being used to enhance the programme, in particular relating to environmental sustainability, commenting

that it was an opportunity for smaller groups to access the funds to help local sustainability work. It was acknowledged that the Member Working Group for Climate Change, Environment and Sustainability had been instrumental in implementing in how those opportunities could be realised.

Members additionally expressed their support of the cost appraisal for bringing a key town centre building back into use in Gainsborough, as well as a trial of free car parking, with businesses and users having reacted positively to the news. In response to a question regarding the flagship community grant programme, it was explained that the exact timescales had not been confirmed, however the preparatory work was underway to ensure the scheme could be launched as soon as practicable. It was confirmed there would be a focus on communications across the district, and Members were encouraged to interact with the local community groups and to encourage them to apply for funding.

With further support voiced for the investment programme and associated works, the Chairman read aloud the recommendations as detailed within the report, and, having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

- a) the identified UKSPF/REPF 2025/26 programme be approved and authority delegated to the S151 officer to sign-off the funding agreement (in consultation with the Chair of this Committee); and
- b) the UKSPF/REPF 2025/26 programme be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval of the expenditure and monitoring arrangements as set out in para 2.5 of the report.

7 WORKPLAN

With no questions or comments, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 7.16 pm.

Chairman