

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 4 November 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Emma Bailey (Chairman)
Councillor Tom Smith (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Sue Leversedge Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151)
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence

Membership:

18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 15 July 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

20 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

Members were advised that the outstanding matter arising regarding the refresh of the parking strategy had now been marked as completed. There had been consultation undertaken and the refreshed strategy had been added to the committee work plan for decision at a future meeting.

With no further comments, questions, or requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions as at 27 October 2025, was **DULY NOTED**.

Prior to moving onto the public reports, a Member of the Committee enquired as to whether there was a reason the meeting had been called without more business to be considered. He noted that the cost of bringing Councillors and Officers together should be taken into account when considering whether there was sufficient business to warrant a meeting being called.

The Senior Democratic and Civic Officer explained that, owing to the timeframes regarding the paper on proposed fees and charges for financial year 2026/27, it had not been possible to reschedule the planned reports for another meeting.

In response to a question as to whether there was any other business which could have been brought to the Committee at this stage in order to maximise efficiency for Councillors and Officers, it was highlighted that agenda planning was a key consideration for all committees, however there had been no other business for presentation at this stage.

The Vice Chairman highlighted that he had also previously requested the costs involved with holding a meeting, and he advised that Councillor travel expense costs were readily available, and he provided the building costs which had been accurate at his time of asking.

A Member of the Committee commented that all points raised were valid, and agreed that agenda'd business needed to be meaningful for all Council and committee meetings. He proposed the comments be noted and the meeting proceed.

22 PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2026/2027

Members heard from the Financial Services Manager regarding the proposed fees and charges to be implemented from 1 April 2026, for services within the committee. The budget implications reflected both the impact of proposed amendments to fees, and the forecast demand for each service. It was explained that 41% of the charge lines were statutory and were published once they were released by the relevant body. Officers were still awaiting the release of the statutory planning fees, which had been received in late November the previous year. They were based on the September CPI rate which was confirmed recently as being unchanged from August at 3.8%.

The remaining 59% of charge lines were non-statutory and were locally set by the Council. For each service provided, the aim was for total cost recovery where possible however benchmarking data was taken into consideration as well as the budget manager's knowledge of the market and demand. It was highlighted that the main cost driver for the majority of chargeable services was staff time, therefore the pay award increase of 3.2% had been applied as the inflationary uplift for 26/27. From 27/28 2.5% had been applied each year.

Members were advised that in relation to non-statutory fees, 39% had seen no proposed change, this primarily related to markets and car parks. With regard to car parks (section 4.2 of the report), it was noted that a revised car park strategy was imminent so no amendments

to fees were proposed at this time. With regard to Markets (section 4.8 of the report), trader numbers were being maintained and so there were no proposed increases at this stage. There was, however, a proposed fee reduction for Tuesday fees for vans and trailers to encourage more traders. There was no stall erection required for those traders and so it had been deemed appropriate to reduce the fees to be more in line with market stall fees.

The Financial Services Manager explained that, in relation to garden waste fees, there were three options for the 26/27 subscription fee proposed for Member consideration, all of which were based on the current 18 collections per year. The first options was to maintain the annual fee at £46, which forecast a £26,000 shortfall in cost recovery. Option two was to increase the fee to £47, which forecast a £24.7k shortfall, and option three, being the preferred option, was an increase to £48 (which was a £2 or 4.3% increase on the current year), which represented cost recovery for the service. This reflected the increase in staff costs, vehicle costs, and also a risk adjustment for a 2% reduction in subscribers.

Members heard that 60% of the remaining non statutory fees were proposed to increase, the majority of which were based on an increase of 3.2% rounded to the nearest £ or 50p. The total impact on the MTFP had been updated to include the expected increase in planning fees and was an increase in income of £81.5k in 26/27, rising to £126.4k in 30/31.

Members were asked to recommend a preferred option for the garden waste subscription fee to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and also consider the remaining proposed fees and charges and make recommendation to Corporate Policy and Resources for approval. Members were also being asked to consider the request for one day of free car parking to support Christmas events in Gainsborough and Market Rasen. It was noted that in 2022 Members had approved a day of free car parking for the period of three years from 2023 to 2025, with the actual dates each year being signed off by delegation to the Chief Executive. As that approval period had ended, Members were being asked to approve free parking for 2025 on the dates provided, and also for the following three years, again delegating authority to the Chief Executive to sign off the exact date each year.

Members welcomed the report and the newly introduced colour coding of the statutory and non-statutory fees. It was requested that through the review of the car parking strategy the free two hours parking in Gainsborough was continued, recognising the benefits of encouraging visitors to stay in town perhaps longer than they had planned, and the support it provided to help local businesses thrive.

With regard to the garden waste subscription fee, the third option, which amounted to cost recovery, was proposed and seconded. A Member of the Committee requested that the future of the fee was fully appraised in relation to whether it reached a point where, due to staffing costs and vehicle costs, cost recovery would price customers out of the subscription. It was recognised that users of the service had previously fully supported a cost recovery subscription fee, however it was highlighted that with the cost of living continuing to rise, it was possible that in future years cost recovery could lead to a subscription cost which was unreasonable for many users. It was noted that the garden waste service was a discretionary service, and whilst there were cost increases involved, budgets and the budget setting process was closely monitored and scrutinised. A Member of the Committee also noted that charges differed across the county and enquired as to the impact of Local Government Reform (LGR). It was explained that there were many council services across the county which were not aligned, and this would require significant cross-authority work as

LGR progressed.

With regard to the free parking on Christmas event days, it was requested that the scope be widened to include the winter season, as some events may not be marketed as Christmas events but would be the best day for free parking to take place. The example of 'small business Saturday' in Market Rasen was given. Members indicated their agreement to this amendment.

Having been proposed and seconded, each recommendation within the report was voted upon. By majority vote it was

RESOLVED that

- a) options for the Garden Waste Subscription fee for 2026/2027 had been considered and Option 3 be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval, option three being: price to increase to £48 per bin for 18 collections (cost recovery); and
- b) the remaining proposed fees and charges for 2026/2027 had been considered as detailed and be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval; and
- c) the requests for free car parking on Friday 14 November 2025 (Gainsborough) and Saturday 6 December 2025 (Market Rasen) when Christmas Events are to be held had been considered and be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval; and
- d) the request for one day of free parking in Gainsborough and Market Rasen during the winter season for the years 2026, 2027 and 2028 had been considered and it be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for approval. Delegated Authority be granted to the Chief Executive to determine and vary the date on which free parking is held each year up until 2028, in consultation with Event Organisers and the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

23 PRIDE IN PLACE

Members gave consideration to a report presented by the Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities, which provided information on the recently announced Pride in Place programme, through which an area in Gainsborough, being referred to as Gainsborough West, had been allocated a funding package of £20 million over ten years. This funding allocation recognised the hyper local deprivation faced in this area.

It was explained that West Lindsey District Council would be the accountable body for the fund and there was a requirement to establish a neighbourhood board, whose responsibility it would be to create an investment plan and oversee how the funds were spent. The neighbourhood board must have an independent chair and would have representatives from across the community.

A key principle of this programme was engagement with the community within the area of focus. Full details of the programme, the governance requirements and the funding profiling, split, and payment dates were still to be provided. Since the announcement there had been government-provided webinars and the 'prospectus' was due to be published before Christmas. The Council had been allocated a representative from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government delivery unit. It was expected that they would reach out in the next weeks and would visit Gainsborough to learn about the challenges and opportunities as the work developed.

In view of the details being limited, but recognising the desire to start shaping the work, Officers had developed an initial communications plan, with a view to early engagement with communities, partners and stakeholders. Members were asked to note the funding announcement and approve the communications plan.

Members were grateful for the information presented and recognised the awaited detail would be key to making a start on the programme of works. Members made reference to the work already undertaken within Gainsborough and welcomed the opportunity to extend that work. It was also noted that the additional funding for the specific area in Gainsborough could bring more investment to the area and be of benefit to the district by way of greater investment and funding opportunities for communities in other areas.

In response to a question as to how to engage the communities over the full ten year period of funding, it was explained that the neighbourhood board would be key, as would the involvement of the local schools, in order for children to grow up shaping the community through this opportunity. It was acknowledged that the release of further information was needed in order to engage and plan in more detail.

Having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the Pride in Place announcement, associated timescales, and governance be noted; and
- b) the initial communications plan be approved to support the development of the programme.

24 WORKPLAN

In response to a question regarding the car parking strategy, it was confirmed consultation work had been undertaken and the reviewed strategy was on the work plan for a future meeting.

With no further comments, questions, or requirement for a vote, the work plan was **DULY NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 7.20 pm.

Prosperous Communities Committee- 4 November 2025
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on

Chairman