

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 2 December 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Emma Bailey (Chairman)
Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Lynda Mullally
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance:

Sally Grindrod-Smith	Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Alan Bowley	Interim Director of Operational and Commercial Services
Darren Mellors	Performance & Programme Manager
Claire Bailey	Senior Change, Projects and Performance Officer
Steve Leary	Policy and Strategy Officer - Climate and Sustainable Environment
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Sabastian Hague

Membership:

Councillor Roger Patterson was appointed substitute for Councillor Tom Smith
Councillor Lynda Mullally was appointed substitute for Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Peter Morris was appointed substitute for Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Trevor Young was appointed substitute for Councillor Sabastian Hague

25 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed all present, and wished to acknowledge comments which were raised at the previous meeting regarding the length of the agenda, noting there were two reports for consideration previously, and on the current agenda. She highlighted that the point had been addressed at the previous meeting, but reiterated it was important to

recognise that sufficient business did not just cover the number of items on an agenda, but also the content of those reports and the level of detailed information provided for Member consideration and debate. She stated the two reports for consideration were incredibly detailed and covered a large scope of work, making it clear they amounted to sufficient business for this meeting to have been called.

With that in mind, the Chairman also stated her approach to the meeting, in order to ensure that all Committee Members had opportunity to raise questions and comments relating to the two reports, but to keep the flow of debate, each Member would be afforded one comment and one come-back if needed.

26 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

27 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 4 November 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

28 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

There were no outstanding matters arising.

30 PROGRESS AND DELIVERY QUARTER TWO (2025/26)

The Committee heard from the Senior Transformation and Performance Officer regarding the Progress and Delivery Quarter Two report for 2025/26, including the Performance Improvement Plan. It was highlighted that 81% of all KPIs were exceeding target, 6% were within tolerance, and 17% were below target. This figure equated to six measures, five of which were covered by the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Officer provided further context to those measures included in the plan, and summarised actions being taken to improve performance.

It was noted that there were two new measures contained within the PIP, those being the number of services at Lea Fields Crematorium, and the average weekly number of Tuesday and Saturday market traders. It was explained that awareness campaigns were being rolled out for the crematorium, and in relation to the market traders, work was ongoing and a new Market Officer was now in post.

Members discussed in detail the ongoing concerns regarding the Gainsborough markets, noting the extent of the town centre improvements and questioning the plans for seeing real

improvements to the markets. Examples were provided of other areas in the district which were offering successful markets, such as Welton, with concerns raised that the regeneration of the area could falter if efforts were not put in to consistently build footfall and encourage shoppers into the town centre. The markets were seen as having the potential to be a key draw to the town, and Members expressed disappointment that numbers appeared to be falling rather than building.

Officers highlighted that the period covered within the report had been somewhat challenging, with town centre closures in place for building works, as well as staff changes. The cinema had now opened, there were new market hoardings in place and there had been several successful events held, however these fell outside of the reporting period. Members were advised that in real-time data, numbers were increasing, and growth was being seen.

Members acknowledged the ongoing nature of concerns regarding the markets, reiterating the implementation of improvement plans which had brought incremental growth. It was also suggested that those incremental improvements may not appear as a success from one reporting period to the next, however if compared with data from two or three years ago, the offer within the Market Place in Gainsborough was considered drastically improved. The constant challenges of changed shopping habits, for example using supermarkets or online shopping, were highlighted, with Members in agreement that the town centre needed to be seen as an attraction in itself, in order to bring visitors in as well as local residents.

Further discussion highlighted the transport difficulties across the district and beyond, with Members suggesting the Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire should be approached for improving the public transport offering into Gainsborough from surrounding areas. The success of previous focus on, for example, the antiques markets, was noted, with Members highlighting traders who had returned on that basis. The agreed aim from Members was for the markets to be an aspect of the tourist offering in Gainsborough, growing the markets alongside the cinema, the riverside walk, and suchlike.

The Chairman thanked all Members for their comments, and read aloud the recommendation contained within the report..

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

RESOLVED that the performance of the Council's services had been assessed through agreed performance measures, and areas where improvements should be made, having regard to the remedial measures set out in the report, had been indicated.

31 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

In giving consideration to the annual update report regarding the Environment and Sustainability Action Plan, Members were played a short video, introduced by Councillor Stephen Bunney, Chairman of the Environment & Sustainability Working Group, and featuring Councillors from around the district. This summarised the actions which had been put in place since the previous annual report, and where impact had been targeted. It also covered information such as who to contact for assistance with warm home grants, or how to

get involved in volunteer groups.

The Chairman thanked the Policy and Strategy Officer - Climate and Sustainable Environment, and all Officers and Members involved, for the video introduction, acknowledging the breadth of information covered. Members echoed her sentiments and praised the innovative method of information sharing.

During the course of debate, Members enquired as to public engagement and whether there was scope to work with local experts to involve local communities in all possible areas. Examples were provided of other authorities providing free trees to people for planting, and committing to planting a tree per resident, as well as schemes of work being undertaken by schools and community groups which would benefit from cross-working with the council. Additionally, Members enquired as to the planning process and whether environmentally sustainable housing was being championed in the district, alongside the advice to homeowners for improving energy efficiency of their homes.

Members were advised that public involvement had been a key focus since the inception of the strategy in 2021 which followed a period of public consultation. Officers were also focusing on an increased presence online, providing interactive tools and using methods such as the video to increase awareness and engagement. It was also explained that planning applications under the revised Local Plan were beginning to be seen. With regard to working with homeowners, Members heard that West Lindsey had the largest uptake of air source heat pumps in the country, and in working with Lincolnshire County Council, there had been over 300 enquiries for the installation of solar panels, with over 50 applications since September 2025.

Members of the Committee highlighted the need to communicate other avenues, such as green burial spaces where, for example, ashes could be interred in public access orchards, as well as raising public awareness of the waste cycles, and where and how residents' waste was processed. The upcoming food waste collections were referenced, with details given of the site at Hemswell Cliff, where waste would be processed and the produced energy and bio-fertiliser would be used locally.

In response to a question regarding the earmarked reserves and ensuring monies were spent for the benefit of the district as a whole, it was explained there was to be a grants programme launched to enable community based schemes to benefit from funding. Members would be informed of the details in due course and were requested to share details and encourage applications within their wards.

Final comments from the Committee highlighted the success of mapping tools used by other organisations, with Officers noting similar tools had been used in the recently released State of the District report. It was recognised as an area Members were interested in and could be explored further.

The Chairman reiterated her thanks to the Officers and to Members for their engaged discussion. She read aloud the recommendations within the report, those being to note progress against the ten themes identified in the Environment and Sustainability Action Plan, and to note that as a result of Local Government Reorganisation, changes to the Councils internal governance processes, work on setting future Action Plans and how best to monitor and track progress of future Environment and Sustainability Strategy would be reviewed

having regard to those broader changes.

With Members indicating assent, the recommendation were **DULY NOTED**.

32 WORKPLAN

A Member of the Committee enquired to whether there was further progress regarding the leisure project, as there was no associated item on the workplan. The current situation was explained, with a proposal due to be presented to the Committee imminently.

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

The meeting concluded at 7.27 pm.

Chairman