

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 27 January 2026 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 Sabastian Hague
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Moira Westley

Also Present: Councillor Trevor Young

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

Apologies: Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Paul Lee

Membership: Councillor M Westley was appointed substitute for
Councillor J Flear
Councillor P Morris was appointed substitute for Councillor
P Lee

33 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

34 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 2 December 2025 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

35 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

36 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

There were no outstanding matters arising.

37 WEST LINDSEY HOMELESSNESS APPROACH 2026-2028

The Committee heard from the Homes, Health & Wellbeing Team Manager who explained that the paper set out the current approach taken to homelessness in West Lindsey and looked to recommend an approach to delivery over the next two years. The paper gave Members a clear overview of the position in relation to homelessness, the numbers of people who approached West Lindsey as homeless, and the ways in which the team worked with some of the most vulnerable residents to either prevent them from becoming homeless or secure them a new home with any required support needed to sustain a tenancy.

Members heard that the purpose of updating the approach to homelessness was due to the amended way in which homelessness services were going to be funded from April 2026 onwards. Detail was provided on the new funding structure and the proposals on how funding be utilised for the next two years based on the evidenced approach. This approach was consistent with the way in which these services had been delivered to date, with the addition of exploring ways of working with other partners to improve services across the whole system.

The Chairman thanked the officer for her clear presentation, and praised the use of an introduction video which had been previously circulated to Members.

Members of the Committee welcomed the news of the reviewed funding structure, and the stability it would provide leading into the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The proposals to continue seeking ways to work with other organisations and continue improvements to the service were also welcomed.

In response to a series of questions regarding the specifics of housing available to those presenting as homeless, it was confirmed that the provision of the crash bed was for single occupancy only, and was used with the intention of preparing an individual for taking on, and sustaining, a longer term tenancy. The occupancy rate had been lower than anticipated due to the need for repair work to have been carried out. Access to the facility was managed by the team during standard office hours, with out of hours referrals being dealt with by the on-call service and transferred to the team the next working day. Additionally, whilst the use of the crash bed was typically associated with those individuals who may have significant health or social needs, there had been no instances of emergency services being called to attend the location. With regard to the costs involved with the provision, Members heard that full occupancy of the service would equate to £55 per night, and this was comparable with similar provisions across the county.

In response to a question regarding past experiences of working with partner agencies and

use of emergency accommodation which had caused difficulties in the local community, it was explained that the accommodation referred to was no longer used, and the experience had been used to better inform what was, or was not, suitable as emergency accommodation. With regards to working with local NHS Trusts, there had been significant movement with the Trust leading on new approaches having also employed to a designated housing role. It was acknowledged that housing difficulties impacted on inpatient discharges into the community, however there had been renewed focus on working together across all sectors to address delayed discharges caused by housing issues.

Members welcomed this, however it was highlighted that there were wider, national, issues in relation to NHS services being pared back and local authorities having what were perceived as unreasonable expectations placed upon them.

With no further comments or questions, and with thanks once again extended to the team for their work, the paper was duly proposed, seconded, and voted upon. It was

RESOLVED that

- a) the positive work of the Homelessness Services as detailed in the report be acknowledged; and
- b) the homelessness approach as set out within the report detailed at section 15 be approved and recommended for inclusion within the Medium-Term Financial Plan; and
- c) officers continue to work with Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust to develop proposals for new ways of working.

38 PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE DRAFT BUDGET 2026/2027 AND ESTIMATES TO 2030/2031

The Committee gave consideration to the Prosperous Communities Committee Draft Budget 2026/2027 and estimates to 2030/2031, presented by the Financial Services Manager (Deputy S151). It was explained that the report outlined the draft budget for 2026/27 for services within the committee and provided estimates for the following four years. These were service controllable budgets only, and did not include central support recharges and capital charges, which made it easier to compare year on year budgets for services. Members were advised that where pressures had been identified, budget holders had sought to identify savings or options to increase income to offset the pressure in the first instance.

Details of significant movements from the 2025/26 base budget to those proposed for 2026/27 were included within the report at Appendix 3, with it summarised that the net base budget for services within the committee had increased by £1.221m. The main reasons for the increase were that the approved use of reserves built into the base budgets had reduced by £139,000, this related to the funding of fixed term posts in 2025/26; an increase in the establishment of 19 posts for the delivery of the food waste service from April had increased staffing costs by £763,000; also in relation to employee costs, a pay award of 3% had been

assumed for 2026/27, with 2.5% applied each year after. This increased the salary costs for the committee by £227,000.

It was also explained that the actuarial review of the pension fund was completed in October and set the employer contribution amounts payable for the three year period from 2026/27. The results had been favourable in budgetary terms, which reflected the national position in terms of the local government pension scheme. For the committee this had resulted in a reduction in salary costs of £289,000. Additionally, the fees and charges review reported to the committee in October increased income by £167,000.

In other movements, Members heard that the items listed for Homelessness Grant and expenditure included the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping grant referred to in the previous item in the meeting. It was explained that the grant was previously issued as a stand-alone grant and was budgeted for within the service, however, the grant was now part of the finance settlement from 2026/27, and under accounting rules it was necessary to account for it within the funding section of the budgets rather than in service. There was no impact on the bottom line for the council, the movement simply showed it being removed from service to then be included in the MTFP funding section as a new line.

The Committee was advised that the small budget variations included £39,200 of increases across a number of contracts which had been extended or reviewed, and which were individually below £10,000. There were also inflationary increases applied across all services which totalled £51,600 against utilities, ongoing contracts, subscriptions, and memberships where inflationary increases were included within the agreement.

In conclusion, Members heard that the Council had received the provisional three year finance settlement, with the multi-year settlement providing reassurance around funding levels up to 2028/29. Whilst the final settlement was due in February, Officers were able to report that the proposed budgets for the committee contributed towards a balanced budget for 2026/27. Members are asked to recommend the budget to Corporate Policy & Resources Committee for inclusion in the medium term financial plan.

In response to a question from a Committee Member, it was explained that the assumption of inflationary increases was based on contracted and provider assumptions, with those figures being used.

Members thanked the Officer for her clear presentation, and, having been proposed seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that the Prosperous Communities Budget 2026/2027 and revenue estimates to 2030/2031 be **RECOMMENDED** to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for the purpose of budget setting 2026/2027 and for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026/2027 to 2030/2031 (as amended by any decisions taken on this agenda).

39 PRIDE IN PLACE

The Committee heard from the Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities who explained that the Pride in Place Prospectus had been published in full on 3 December

2025, and included links to the governance requirements and funding information for the Pride in Place initiative. She noted that as the accountable body for the Gainsborough West Pride in Place programme, the council was required to establish the Neighbourhood Board and appoint a chairperson, doing so in consultation with the local MP.

Members were asked to consider the proposal for appointing a chairperson, based on a published job description, as well as to review the draft terms of reference for the Neighbourhood Board. Details were also provided to explain the process through which the council would support the chairperson to appoint members of the Neighbourhood Board.

The Committee heard details of the funding allocation, which included an initial capacity payment of £150,000 to be received by the council in early 2026, noting that the initial capacity funding was to be used to establish the programme at pace, and a further paper would be presented to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in February 2026, to consider in more detail.

In response to a question regarding ensuring appropriate appointments were made and there were no conflicts of interest for those involved, it was explained that, in addition to the details contained within the Terms of Reference, training would be on offer for example in relation to Standards. Additionally, as the accountable body, Statutory Officers within West Lindsey District Council would be making reports to the government, ensuring increased oversight of appointments.

Members questioned the potential impact of the impending local government reorganisation and how that would be mitigated. It was explained that the Neighbourhood Board, and the Pride in Place programme, was to cover a 10 year period, regardless of the local government structures in place. It was anticipated that the Board and programme would aid the transition for the local community.

In recognition of the initial capacity funding due to be received, a Member of the Committee enquired as to whether allocated funds would be focused solely on administration costs. Members were advised of the use of both capital and revenue funding, with the requirement to spend capital funding on capital costs, meaning that it had to be invested in community assets, and would not be spent on administrative costs.

In recognising the focus of the Committee being the governance arrangements, and having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was

RESOLVED that

- a) the Guiding Principles and Programme Objectives set out in paragraphs 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 of the report, be noted; and
- b) the requirements of the Neighbourhood Board Chairperson, including the job description, be noted, and the appointment of the Chair, following a recruitment exercise, be delegated to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities, in consultation with the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee, the Leader of the Council, and the local MP; and

- c) the draft initial Terms of Reference (appendix 3) for the Neighbourhood Board be approved; and
- d) the requirement for the Chair of the Neighbourhood Board to recruit board members be noted, and authority to support the appointment of members to the Neighbourhood Board be delegated to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities in consultation with the Chairman of this Committee and the local MP.

40 WORKPLAN

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

The meeting concluded at 7.21 pm.

Chairman