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West Lindsey District Council

Guildhall Gainsborough
Lincolnshire DN21 2NA
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AGENDA

<u>This meeting will be webcast live and the video archive published on our website</u>

Thriving Council Committee
Thursday, 24th September, 2026 at 6.30 pm
Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA

Members: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
Councillor Paul Swift (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Matthew Boles
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Ian Fleetwood
Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
Councillor Paul Key

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Public Participation Period**
   Up to 15 minutes are allowed for public participation. Participants are restricted to 3 minutes each.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)** (PAGES 3 - 13)
   To confirm and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Thriving Council Committee held on Thursday, 30 July 2026

4. **Declarations of Interest**
   Members may make declarations of interest at this point or may make them at any point in the meeting.

5. **Public Reports for Approval**

   i) Community Asset Transfer – Market Rasen Town Council (PAGES 14 - 21)

   ii) Community Asset Transfer - The Levelling's - Gainsborough Town Council (PAGES 22 - 30)

iii)	Trinity Arts Centre - Creative Foundation Fund Application	(PAGES 31 - 58)
iv)	Squaddie Box	(PAGES 59 - 102)
v)	Closure of the Environment & Sustainability Working Group	(PAGES 103 - 121)
vi)	Committee Work Plan	(PAGES 122 - 126)

6. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

To resolve that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 1, 2, and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

7. **Exempt Report(s)**

i)	Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant	(PAGES 127 - 147)
ii)	Approval to Extend Accommodation Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Contracts	(PAGES 148 - 164)

Paul Burkinshaw
Head of Paid Service
The Guildhall
Gainsborough

Wednesday, 16 September 2026

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Thriving Council Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 30 July 2026 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present:	Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
	Councillor Paul Swift (Vice-Chairman)
	Councillor Matthew Boles
	Councillor Karen Carless
	Councillor Ian Fleetwood
	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan
	Councillor Paul Key
Also Present:	Councillor S Bunney

In Attendance:

Paul Burkinshaw	Chief Executive
Peter Davy	Director Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)
Sally Grindrod-Smith	Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Natalie Kostiuk	Customer Experience Officer
Grant White	Head of Localities and Community Services
Sue Leversedge	Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151)
Sarah Scully	Finance Business Support Team Leader
Sarah Elvin	Head of Housing, Health and Wellbeing
Ele Snow	Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

10 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PERIOD

There was no public participation.

11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee held on Thursday, 25 June 2026 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

13 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

With no comments the Matters Arising Schedule was **DULY NOTED**.

14 ANNUAL VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER REPORT 2025/26

The Customer Experience Manager presented the Annual Voice of the Customer Report 2025/26, which provided an overview of customer feedback, satisfaction levels and demand across the Council's main access channels.

Members were advised that complaint volumes had increased slightly during the year, largely attributable to the introduction of the new waste service, whilst complaint handling performance had remained strong. It was reported that customer satisfaction had reduced slightly, with feedback relating to the introduction and communication of the food waste service contributing to this trend.

The Committee heard that customer demand remained high, with online forms and telephone contact continuing to be the main methods through which customers accessed services. Waste services continued to generate the highest volume of customer contact and feedback.

Reference was made to service improvements implemented because of customer feedback, including updates to waste policies, improvements to information sharing processes, and officer development. Members were advised that further changes to waste services and the introduction of a revised complaints procedure may influence future reporting.

During the debate a Member of the Committee commented on changing customer expectations and communication behaviours and thanked the Customer Experience Manager for her work in responding to customer feedback and complaints.

A Member sought assurance regarding the monitoring and implementation of service improvements identified through complaints. In response, the Customer Experience Manager advised that actions arising from complaints were monitored through an improvement action process, with follow up arrangements in place to ensure actions were completed and issues resolved.

Further discussion took place regarding the nature of complaints received and whether repeat complaints were received from the same individuals. Members were advised that whilst some customers submitted multiple complaints, no consistent group of repeat complainants had been identified.

The Chief Executive provided additional context regarding waste service complaints, noting the operational challenges associated with the introduction of the food waste collection service, workforce growth, and staff recruitment. Members were advised that further improvements were being developed to support service delivery, including proposed technology enhancements and the appointment of a new Director.

Members also expressed their appreciation for frontline waste service staff and recognised their efforts in continuing to deliver services during periods of adverse weather conditions.

Clarification was sought regarding complaints relating to staff behaviour. Members were advised that such matters were addressed through the Council's established procedures, with appropriate action taken where required.

With no further comments, having been proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was

> **RESOLVED** that that the contents of the Annual Voice of the Customer Report 2025/26 be received and the progress made by the Council in improving customer experience over the previous 12 months be noted.

15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGSCO) ANNUAL REVIEW LETTER REPORT 2025/26

The Customer Experience Manager presented the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter Report 2025/26, providing an overview of complaints referred to, considered by and upheld by the Ombudsman during the year.

Members were advised that 18 complaints had been referred to the Ombudsman during the reporting period, with planning related matters continuing to generate the highest number of referrals. Of the complaints considered, one complaint had been upheld and related to the suitability of temporary accommodation provided as part of a homelessness case. It was reported that the Council had fully complied with the Ombudsman's recommendations and had undertaken work to increase the availability of suitable temporary accommodation within the district.

Reference was also made to benchmarking data comparing West Lindsey District Council's performance with that of similar district councils. Members were advised that the report provided assurance that the Council's complaint handling arrangements were operating effectively whilst continuing to identify opportunities for service improvement.

During the debate, a Member of the Committee welcomed the benchmarking information contained within the report and sought assurance that learning from complaints and Ombudsman investigations was used to inform service improvements. In response, the Customer Experience Manager confirmed that complaint outcomes were regularly reviewed and used to identify policy, procedural and service improvements where appropriate.

Reference was made to the number of planning related complaints received by the Ombudsman. A Member noted the nature of planning decisions and welcomed the independent oversight provided by the Ombudsman process.

Members sought clarification regarding the financial remedy awarded in relation to the upheld homelessness complaint and the provision of temporary accommodation. Officers outlined the Ombudsman's approach to calculating remedies and provided an update on work being undertaken to increase the supply of suitable temporary accommodation within the district.

In further discussion, Members welcomed the Council's overall performance and the positive commentary contained within the Ombudsman's review regarding the Council's complaint handling arrangements.

With no further comments, having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

> **RESOLVED** that the Committee receive the report and, having considered its contents, be assured that the current complaint handling procedures were functioning adequately.

16 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE THRIVING PEOPLE COMMITTEE: COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME 2026-2028

The Head of Localities and Community Services presented a report referred from the Thriving People Committee seeking approval of the budget allocations required to deliver the Community Grants Programme between 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Members were advised that the proposed programme would bring together a range of grant funding opportunities to support community projects across the district. Approval was sought for the allocation of funding from the Reprioritisation (Investment for Growth) Reserve and the Community Grant Scheme Reserve to support both grant awards and programme delivery. It was noted that a formal review of the programme would be undertaken once £2 million had been awarded, or during Quarter One of 2027/28, whichever occurred sooner.

During the debate, Members welcomed the proposed programme and highlighted the positive impact that grant funding could have in supporting community organisations, local initiatives and projects across the district. Reference was made to the importance of ensuring funding was distributed and awarded within the remaining timeframe available before local government reorganisation.

Members emphasised the importance of ensuring equitable access to funding across all parts of the district, and sought assurance that smaller organisations with limited experience of grant applications would be supported through the process. In response, officers advised that support and guidance would be available to applicants throughout both the application and project delivery stages.

Further discussion took place regarding the promotion of the programme and engagement with community organisations, parish councils and town councils. Officers outlined the communications and support arrangements that would be implemented to maximise awareness and encourage applications from across the district.

Members also reflected on the positive outcomes delivered through previous grant programmes and the value of supporting projects that benefitted local communities.

With no further comments, having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon it was

> **RESOLVED** that
>
> a) the allocation of up to £4,000,000 from the Reprioritisation (Investment for Growth) Reserve to deliver the Community Grants Programme across

2026/27 and 2027/28 be approved; and

b) authority to approve expenditure from the £4,000,000 allocation be delegated to the Thriving People Committee, with a formal review to be undertaken when £2,000,000 had been awarded or during Quarter One of 2027/28, whichever occurred sooner; and

c) the allocation of up to £86,400 from the Community Grant Scheme Reserve for staff costs associated with delivering the Community Grants Programme across 2026/27 and 2027/28 be approved.

17 GUILDHALL BOILER REPLACEMENT

Members heard from the Section 151 Officer who presented a report seeking approval for the replacement of the Guildhall's existing boiler system, which had exceeded its expected operational lifespan and was becoming increasingly unreliable and costly to maintain.

Members were advised that two options had been considered. Option One, the recommended option, proposed a like for like replacement with modern high efficiency gas boilers together with upgrades to the existing rooftop photovoltaic array. Option Two proposed the installation of a hybrid heating system incorporating air source heat pumps alongside gas boilers and upgrades to the photovoltaic array. It was noted that whilst Option Two would provide greater carbon reduction benefits, it would involve higher capital costs and greater technical complexity.

During the debate, Members expressed support for the officer recommendation and acknowledged the work undertaken to evaluate the available options. Reference was made to the financial and operational advantages of Option One and its lower delivery risk when compared with the alternative proposal.

With no further comments or indications to speak, and having been proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote. It was

RESOLVED that

a) the drawdown of £145k including contingency (Recommended option 1) for gas for gas replacement of the existing boilers alongside additionally replacing and upgrading the existing rooftop photovoltaic array, be approved, with the drawdown to be funded as £70k Maintenance of Facilities reserve for the boiler replacement and £75k from the Climate Change Reserve; and

b) an amendment to the capital programme for 2026/27 to create a new capital scheme for ‘Guildhall Boiler Replacement’ with a total scheme cost of £145k be approved.

18 BUDGET CONSULTATION 2026

The Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) presented the report, which outlined the proposed approach, timeline and questionnaire for the Council's 2026 budget consultation process.

Members were advised that the consultation would seek the views of residents, businesses, and stakeholders through a range of engagement methods, including online and paper questionnaires, market stall events, and direct stakeholder engagement. It was noted that the results of the consultation would be used to inform the Council's 2027/28 budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

During the debate, Members welcomed the proposed consultation process and the continued use of a well-established approach to gathering stakeholder views. A Member highlighted the value of obtaining meaningful feedback from residents and stakeholders, and sought assurance that detailed responses and suggestions received through the consultation process were considered and responded to where appropriate. Officers confirmed that written submissions received from consultees would receive a direct response.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed question relating to car parking. Members and a Visiting Member raised concerns that the accompanying explanatory wording could cause confusion regarding the scope of the question. Following discussion, it was agreed that the wording would be amended to ensure the question sought views on car parking provision across the district and did not unintentionally focus on a specific location.

Members also highlighted the importance of promoting the consultation widely and ensuring opportunities were available for residents from across the district to participate.

With no further comments, having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

> **RESOLVED** that the proposed budget consultation process, timeline and questionnaire for 2026 be approved, subject to amendments to the wording of the car parking consultation question as discussed at the meeting.

19 BUDGET AND TREASURY MONITORING - QUARTER 1 2026/27

The Committee gave consideration to the Budget and Treasury Monitoring Report for Quarter One 2026/27, presented by the Finance Business Support Team Leader.

Members were advised that the forecast revenue outturn position indicated a net pressure of £0.073m against budget as at 31 May 2026. Reference was made to pressures arising from fuel costs, whilst it was noted that grant income relating to Internal Drainage Board levy support was higher than originally anticipated. Members were also advised of proposed budget amendments required to support the delivery of externally funded projects.

In relation to capital expenditure, Members were advised of the current projected capital outturn position and the proposed amendment to the CCTV Expansion Scheme, funded from the Community at Risk Reserve.

The Committee heard that treasury management activity remained within approved limits, with no breaches of treasury or prudential indicators reported during the period.

Attention was drawn to appendix three, which detailed the forecast balance on reserves including all approved movements in reserves as at 31 May 2026. This also included the £8m previously allocated for reprioritisation. It was noted that a separate review of reserves report would be presented to the committee in November 2026 as part of the budget setting process.

Members were advised that the council had been successful in securing Growth Development Fund support for three local projects, and were asked to approve the creation of the revenue income and expenditure budgets to support the delivery of these projects, and to approve the use of £10,000 from reserves as match funding for one project.

During the debate, a Member of the Committee sought clarification regarding the volatility of fuel prices and whether alternative procurement arrangements could mitigate future fluctuations. In response, officers outlined the challenges associated with fuel procurement and the impact of market conditions on operating costs, particularly following the introduction of the food waste collection service.

Members acknowledged the influence of wider economic and international factors on fuel prices and welcomed the overall financial position reported. Praise was also expressed for the clarity and presentation of the report and the work undertaken by officers in managing the Council's finances.

With no further comments, and having been proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote. It was

RESOLVED that

REVENUE

a) the forecast out-turn position of a £0.073m net contribution from reserves as of 31st May 2026 (see Section 1) relating to revenue activity be accepted; and

b) the creation of revenue income and expenditure budgets to support delivery of the three projects detailed at 1.3.2 be approved, and the match funding of £0.01m from the Feasibility Reserve be approved.

CAPITAL

c) the current projected Capital Outturn position of £5.713m (Section 2) be accepted; and

d) the amendments to the Capital Schemes as detailed in 2.2 be approved with any amendments to be actioned at Qtr. 2.

TREASURY

e) the report, the treasury activity and the prudential indicators (Section 3) be accepted.

20 THRIVING COUNCIL THEMATIC BUSINESS PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Members heard again from the Section 151 Officer, who presented the Quarter One Thriving Council Thematic Business Plan Progress Report for 2026/27.

Members were advised that the report provided an update on performance, delivery of key priorities, and strategic risks associated with the Thriving Council theme of the Corporate Plan. It was noted that the new reporting format brought together performance measures, deliverables and risks into a single report and incorporated trend data to assist Members in assessing performance over time.

The Committee heard that overall performance remained positive, with most key performance indicators achieving target. Strengths were reported across financial services, digital services, information governance, and technology. Reference was made to customer satisfaction and complaints performance, which had been affected by the introduction of the food waste collection service, although complaint response times remained within target.

Members were also advised that several key projects had been completed and were recommended for removal from future reporting, including the food waste collection project, depot electrification feasibility study, Community Asset Transfer Policy and Workforce Plan.

During the debate, Members welcomed the report and the strong overall performance position reflected within the indicators. Whilst noting the small number of indicators reporting below target, it was acknowledged that these were linked to operational pressures previously discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

A Member sought assurance regarding the monitoring of workforce wellbeing and organisational resilience considering preparations for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). In response, the Chief Executive outlined the measures in place to support staff, including engagement activities, staff focus groups, leadership development, workforce planning, and regular monitoring through the thematic business plan framework. Assurance was provided that the impact of LGR on staff would continue to be closely monitored and reported.

Members welcomed the new reporting format and the inclusion of trend data, which was considered to provide greater clarity when assessing performance.

With no further comments, and having been proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that

a) the aligned deliverables, performance measures and strategic risks associated with the Thriving Council aim of the Corporate Plan had been assessed; and

b) the Quarter One Thriving Council Thematic Business Plan Progress Report be approved.

21 MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT THE LOCAL COUNCILS' NETWORK (LCN) CONFERENCE 2027 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2027

The Committee gave consideration to a report seeking approval for increased Member attendance at the Local Councils' Network Conference 2027 and the Local Government Association Annual Conference 2027.

Members were advised that the proposal would increase the number of places available for attendance at each conference to a maximum of five Members and would delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine attendance.

During the debate, Members recognised the value of both conferences in supporting Member development, networking and engagement with wider local government matters, particularly in the context of local government reorganisation.

With no further comments or indications to speak, and with the recommendation having been proposed and seconded, on taking the vote, it was

RESOLVED that a total of up to five Member spaces be reserved at both the Local Councils' Network Conference and the Local Government Association Annual Conference, and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to determine Member attendance.

22 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Members were advised that additional items had been added to the Work Plan since publication of the agenda, including reports scheduled for the September and November meetings. The Chairman noted the evolving nature of the Work Plan considering ongoing preparations for Local Government Reorganisation.

With no comments, questions, or requirement for a vote, the Work Plan was **DULY NOTED.**

23 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The meeting entered closed session at 8.04pm

24 MARKET STREET RENEWAL LTD - 2026/2027 BUSINESS PLAN

Members heard from the Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities regarding the 2026/27 Business Plan for Market Street Renewal Ltd. She provided a summary of the company's performance over 2025/26, and the business plan forecasts through to 2028/29.

It was explained there was a vacant Director role on the board of the company, with the Committee being asked to approve the appointment of the soon-to-be appointed Director of Environmental and Cultural Services into the vacancy.

Members voiced their support for, and pleasure at, the regeneration within Gainsborough town centre, stating the area had been transformed.

Having been proposed and seconded, and with no further indications to speak, the Chairman took the vote and it was

RESOLVED that

a) the Market Street Renewal Limited Business Plan be noted; and

b) the vacant company director role be filled by the Director of Environmental and Cultural Services once appointed.

25 BROWNFIELD LAND FUND

The Committee heard from the Head of Housing, Health and Well-being regarding a report seeking approval to submit applications to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority's Brownfield Housing Fund for three priority brownfield sites. It was explained that the fund provided an opportunity to secure external investment to address viability, remediation and infrastructure constraints that were currently limiting the delivery of new housing on the identified sites. Furthermore, the proposed applications would build upon the evidence and site assessments undertaken through the West Lindsey Housing Pipeline project, and aligned with both local and regional housing and regeneration objectives.

The approval sought was to enable officers to submit funding bids within the 9 August 2026 deadline, with successful schemes expected to be announced later in 2026. Securing funding would help accelerate housing delivery, and support brownfield regeneration.

During the course of significant debate, Members raised concerns regarding the wider infrastructure improvements required, the need to secure funding from developers for additional works, alongside the desire for mixed use sites as opposed to solely housing developments.

It was explained that, should the applications be successful, there would be legal processes to work through, as well as planning policy to be adhered to, all of which would address concerns such as the mix of affordable housing, and consideration of liability during the house building phase.

Members noted the tight timeframe and welcomed the opportunity to apply to the fund, whilst recognising genuine concerns around infrastructure. Officers highlighted that the approval to apply to the fund would place the council at the forefront of the opportunities offered.

In bringing debate to a close, the Chairman confirmed the recommendations had been proposed and seconded, and duly took the vote. It was

RESOLVED that

a) funding applications for the three sites identified be submitted to the Brownfield Housing Fund; and

b) authority for submission of the bids be delegated to the Director for Planning, Regeneration and Housing in consultation with the Chair of Thriving Council Committee; and

c) an update on the sites be presented to the Committee should the applications for funding be successful.

Note: Councillor P. Key requested that his vote against be recorded in the minutes.

The meeting concluded at 8.40 pm.

Chairman

Thriving Council Committee	
Thursday, 24 September 2026	

Subject: Community Asset Transfer – Proposed Freehold Transfer of Site S093 – LL301674, Festival Hall Offices, Market Rasen to Market Rasen Town Council

Report by:	Director of Environment and Cultural Services
Contact Officer:	Gary Reevell Gary.reevell@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the freehold transfer of S093 Festival Hall Offices, Market Rasen to Market Rasen Town Council. The Offices are leased from West Lindsey DC by Market Rasen Town Council and are attached to the main Festival Hall premises which are owned by MRTC. The facilities comprise of a reception area, main office, two interview rooms, back office, two toilets and a kitchen.

Appendices to Report

- Nil

RECOMMENDATION(S):

(a) The committee approves, in principle, the transfer of the freehold interest in site S093 - Festival Hall Offices, Market Rasen to Market Rasen Town Council at nil or nominal consideration, subject to completion of the necessary legal, valuation and property checks.

(b) That the transfer be completed subject to appropriate covenants, restrictions (where applicable) securing the continued community use of the premises

(c) The authority be delegated to the appropriate Director, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer/Section 151 Officer, to finalise the transfer documentation and deal with any consequential matters, subject to agreed terms.

1. Introduction

1.1 Market Rasen Town Council has applied seeking the transfer of the West Lindsey District Council's freehold interest in the Festival Hall Offices (Site S093/LL301674) under the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy

1.2 The Town Council already owns the freehold of the remainder of the adjoining Festival Hall and occupies the offices under and existing 99-year full repairing lease which ends on 28th Feb 2118

1.3 The proposed transfer would consolidate ownership of the entire building within a single public authority, simplifying ownership, maintenance responsibilities, future investment and operational management.

1.4 The application submitted by the Town Council demonstrates that they possess the governance, financial stability, operational capacity and long-term commitment required by the Community Asset Transfer Policy

1.5 Officers have assessed the proposal against the adopted policy and conclude that it satisfies the policy objectives, provides continuing community benefit and supports the long-term stewardship of an important community asset.

1.6 This report considered the application by Market Rasen Town Council for the transfer of the West Lindsey District Council's freehold interest (LL301674) in Site S093 Festival Hall Offices, Market Rasen

1.7 The proposal is being considered under the Council's Community Assets Transfer Policy 2026 and has been informed by the Town Council's application and findings from West Lindsey's retained Deed Packet (D1635)

1.8 The proposed transfer would move legal ownership to Market Rasen Town Council which already owns, manages and maintains the attached Festival Hall. Such transfer will secure future use of the premises for Town Council and Community use.

2 Background

2.1 West Lindsey District Council currently owns the freehold interest in site S093 Festival Hall Offices, Caistor Road, Market Rasen (Land Registry Title LL301674)

2.2 Market Rasen Town Council owns the freehold interest of the adjoining Festival Hall complex (LL422837) and occupies the office accommodation under a 99-year full repairing lease agreement

2.3 The application received seeks to transfer the office freehold interest to the Town Council, bringing the entire building into single ownership.

2.4 The application confirms that there will be;

- no change to the current use of the building
- no reduction in community access
- no interruption to existing services, and
- continued management by the Town Council

3 Community Asset Transfer Policy Assessment

3.1 The Community Asset Transfer Policy establishes a transparent framework for considering transfers where they deliver of community benefit, support the Councils Corporate Plan and wider strategic objectives.

3.2 The Policy specifically recognises Town and Parish Councils as eligible organisations for Community Asset Transfer

3.3 Market Rasen Town Council is a democratically elected local authority with established governance arrangements, experienced elected members and qualified officers.

3.4 Market Rasen Town Council therefore satisfies the eligibility requirements of the policy.

4 Suitability of the Asset

4.1 The Policy advises that freehold assets owned by West Lindsey District Council may be transferred where the proposal benefits the community and supports Council objectives

4.2 The Festival Hall Offices satisfies these criteria because:

- WLDC owns the freehold
- The asset already supports community activities
- The transfer rationalises ownership of the entire building
- Future management will be simplified and
- Continued public benefit is secured.

4.3 The Policy also confirms that transfers to Town and Parish Councils will normally be by way of freehold disposal.

5 Governance and Management

5.1 The application demonstrates that Market Rasen Town Council has:

- Established governance arrangements
- Appropriate financial controls
- Experienced employees
- Adopted statutory policies
- Experience on managing community buildings

- Appropriate insurance arrangements

5.2 The Officers are satisfied that Market Rasen Town Council possesses sufficient organisational capacity to own and manage the asset on a permanent basis.

6 Financial Sustainability

6.1 The application demonstrates that:

- Maintenance responsibilities already rest with the Town Council through the existing full repairing lease.
- Sufficient financial reserves are maintained
- Future investment will be incorporated within the Town Council's annual financial planning process and
- No additional operational burden will arise from the transfer.

6.2 The proposal therefore represents a sustainable long-term solution

7 Community Benefit

7.1 Although there will be no operational change following the transfer, significant community benefits arise from;

- Safeguarding continued community ownership
- Maintaining an import community facility
- Strengthening local democratic accountability
- Enabling quicker local investment decisions
- Simplifying estate management
- Support the long-term future of the Festival Hall

7.2 The transfer therefore delivers continuing social wellbeing in accordance with the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

8 Environmental Benefits

8.1 The Town Council has identified future improvements including;

- Improved insulation
- Replacement heating systems
- Improved lighting and
- Future replacement of the solar panels.

8.2 These proposals support the Council's environmental objectives and the longer-term sustainability of the building.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Having undertaken a detailed assessment against the Community Asset transfer policy, It is concluded that the proposal satisfies the relevant policy requirements

9.2 The Town Council is an eligible applicant with the governance, experience and financial capacity to own and manage the asset

9.3 The proposal delivers continuing social value, safeguards an important community building and provides a logical rationalisation of ownership by transferring the remaining freehold interest to the Authority already responsible for managing the wider Festival Hall.

9.4 The proposed transfer is considered to represent an appropriate disposal at less than best consideration in accordance with the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 and the Councils Community Asset Transfer Policy.

9.5 Accordingly, Committee is recommended to approve the transfer.

10 Alternative Options

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	**Approve the transfer (recommended)**	**This secures unified ownership, simplifies future management and supports the long-term sustainability of the Festival Hall**
2	**Refuse the application**	**This would retain split ownership of the building, extend unnecessary management complexity and provide no additional community benefit over the current arrangements**

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The proposed transfer is consistent with the Councils adopted Community Asset Transfer Policy

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to obtain best consideration unless statutory consent applies

The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 enables disposals at less than best consideration where the authority considers the transfer is likely to contribute to the promotion and/or improvement of the economic, social and/or environmental wellbeing of its area.

The Officers consider that the proposal satisfies those requirements.

The transfer documentation will also include such covenants and protections as considered necessary to safeguard the public interests.

Existing premises attached to the Festival Hall Officers were transferred by West Lindsey DC to Market Rasen Town Council in March 2006.

Financial: FIN/50/27/SL

The transfer is proposed at less than best consideration under the provisions of the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003

West Lindsey District Council currently receives only a peppercorn rent from the property

As repairing obligations already rest with the Town Council, the proposal does not create additional financial liabilities for the Council

The disposal also removes the future freehold ownership responsibilities whilst securing continued community benefit

A valuation of the property has been obtained to inform the decision-making process and demonstrate the extent of any undervalue.

Since 2012 West Lindsey DC has benefited from a Solar Feed In tariff from an array on the premises. Typical annual payments are approximately £2.2k per annum and these are set to continue until 2037. Transferring the premises could mean that these payments would be made to MRTC in the future. However an agreement with MRTC that WLDC retains ownership of the array until 2037 could protect this.

Revenue costs budgeted for within the Medium Term Financial Plan are property insurance £0.2k pa and Business Rates £2.9k pa.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report

LGR implications: N/A

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

No adverse equality impacts have been identified. Public access to the building will continue unchanged

Data Protection Implications: There are no data protection implications arising directly from this report

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The proposal supports continued investment in improving the environmental performance of the building through local ownership and management

Future energy efficiency improvements identified within the application are consistent with the Council's environmental ambitions.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: None

Health Implications: None

Risk Assessment:

The principal risks have been assessed as low:

Risk	**Mitigation**
Future use of the building changes	Addition of restrictive covenants and legal controls
Financial failure	Town Council has established governance and reserves
Poor asset management	Existing operational experience of managing the building
Loss of community benefit	Legal protections and continued Town Council Ownership

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
West Lindsey District Council Community Asset Transfer Policy 2026 Community Asset Transfer Application – Market Rasen Town Council Deed Packet 1635 – Rear of 20 King Street, Market Rasen (LL301674)

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)	**Yes**		**No**	**X**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications	**Yes**		**No**	**X**

Thriving Council Committee
Thursday, 24 September 2026

Subject: Community Asset Transfer – Proposed Freehold Transfer of S187 - The Levelling's (Hickman Bacon Memorial Park) Gainsborough to Gainsborough Town Council

Report by:	Director of Environment and Cultural Services
Contact Officer:	Gary Reevell Gary.reevell@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the freehold transfer of site S187 The Levelling's to Gainsborough Town Council. The Levelling's is a public recreational asset associated with the Hickman Bacon Memorial Park which provides children's play park facilities, skate ramps, footfall pitch and dog walking area

Appendices to Report

- Nil

RECOMMENDATION(S):

(a) The committee approves, in principle, the transfer of the freehold interest in The Levelling's (Hickman Bacon Memorial Park), Gainsborough to Gainsborough Town Council at nil or nominal consideration, subject to completion of the necessary legal, valuation and property checks.

(b) That the transfer be completed subject to appropriate covenants, restrictions and conditions securing the continued recreation/community use of the land and compliance with any requirements arising from the 1951 Deed of Gift.

(c) The authority be delegated to the appropriate Director, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer/Section 151 Officer, to finalise the transfer documentation and deal with any consequential matters, subject to agreed terms.

1. Introduction

1.1 Gainsborough Town Council has submitted an application seeking transfer of the District Council's freehold interest in Site S187 - The Levelling's, Love Lane, Gainsborough, a public recreational asset associated with the Hickman Bacon Memorial Park. The application identifies the District Council's freehold title as LL298664 and seeks transfer of the freehold at nil or nominal consideration.

1.2 The historic Deed Packet identifies a Deed of Gift dated 26 January 1951 between Sir Edmund Castell Bacon and the Urban District Council of Gainsborough. The land was given as a memorial to the late Sir Hickman Beckett Bacon and was subject to use as parks, pleasure grounds, playing fields and recreation grounds, including associated entertainment and refreshments.

1.3 Historic correspondence also records an intention for Gainsborough Town Council to assume management and control of the park. The Town Council's current Community Asset Transfer application states that it has managed the site under lease since 1998. It therefore already undertakes the day-to-day management and financial responsibility for the asset.

1.4 The application demonstrates an established track record of managing and investing in the site. The Town Council has secured approximately £100,000 of external funding for improvements to the children's play areas and has funded a new footpath within the dog-walking area from its precept.

1.5 The Town Council proposes to retain The Levelling's as public open space, including its play areas and football pitch, for recreation, community events and informal leisure. No change of use or restriction of public access is proposed.

1.6 Officers consider that the application demonstrates an established ability to manage and financially sustain the asset and provides a strong basis for transfer under the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy, subject to confirmation of the legal title, Deed of Gift restrictions, valuation and other necessary due diligence.

1.7 This report considers the application by Gainsborough Town Council for the transfer of the District Council's freehold interest in S187 - The Levelling's, Gainsborough.

1.8 The proposal is being considered under the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy and has been informed by the Town Council's application and the findings from the review of the historic Deed Packet.

1.9 The proposed transfer would move legal ownership to the Town Council, which already manages and maintains the site, while securing its continued recreational and community use.

2 Background

2.1 The findings identify a Deed of Gift dated 26 January 1951 between Sir Edmund Castell Bacon and the Urban District Council of Gainsborough.

2.2 The Deed records that the land was given as a memorial to the late Sir Hickman Beckett Bacon and that it was to be used as parks, pleasure grounds, playing fields and recreation grounds, including associated entertainment and refreshments.

2.3 Historic correspondence records that Gainsborough Town Council was to assume full management and control of the park from 1 April 1997, subject to the terms and use provisions contained within the Deed of Gift. The Town Council's current application states that it has managed the site under lease since 1998.

2.4 The findings state that the site was subsequently registered to West Lindsey District Council in July 2008. The historical evidence therefore demonstrates the longstanding management arrangement but does not replace the need to confirm the current registered ownership and legal position.

2.5 The proposed transfer provides an opportunity to regularise the ownership position and align the freehold with the authority already responsible for the site's management.

3 Community Asset Transfer Policy Assessment

3.1 The Community Asset Transfer Policy provides a framework for transfers which deliver community benefit and provide a sustainable future for Council assets.

3.2 Gainsborough Town Council is a democratically elected local authority established in 1992 under the Local Government Act 1972 and is an eligible body under the Community Asset Transfer framework. It comprises up to 18 elected councillors, with Full Council and committee arrangements covering matters including finance and property.

3.3 The application demonstrates established governance arrangements supported by policies covering health and safety, safeguarding, equality and diversity, environmental sustainability, risk management and data protection. Appropriate insurance arrangements are also in place.

3.4 The Town Council has extensive direct experience of managing the asset and wider experience of managing parks, open spaces, allotments and community facilities across Gainsborough. Its investment in The Levelling's includes approximately £100,000 of externally funded play-area improvements and a new footpath funded from its precept.

3.5 Officers consider that the application demonstrates appropriate governance, management capacity, financial sustainability and continuing community benefit to support the transfer in principle.

4 Suitability of the Asset

4.1 The Levelling's is suitable for consideration as a community asset because it has an established recreational and community purpose consistent with the historic Deed of Gift.

4.2 The application identifies the asset as S187 – The Levelling's, Love Lane, Gainsborough, DN21 2NT. The site is reported to be generally in good condition and fully operational as public open space. Minor repairs to sections of the footpath network have been identified and will be incorporated into the Town Council's planned maintenance programme.

4.3 The transfer would:

- align ownership with the Town Council's established management role;
- secure continued public and recreational use;
- provide clearer long-term responsibility for management and investment;
- strengthen local accountability; and
- provide greater certainty over future ownership and management.

4.4 The precise extent of the freehold interest, title and any registered restrictions must be confirmed before completion

5 Governance and Management

5.1 Gainsborough Town Council has an established governance and management structure supported by elected members, officers and committee arrangements.

5.2 Importantly, the Town Council is not a new operator of the asset. It advises that there Council has managed The Levelling's since 1998 and already undertakes the operational management and maintenance of the site.

5.3 Gainsborough Town Council have track record of securing external funding and investing its own resources in the site which provides further evidence of their capacity to manage and improve the asset.

5.4 Officers consider that the Town Council has demonstrated an appropriate level of governance, operational experience and organisational capacity to hold the freehold and continue managing the asset on a long-term basis.

6 Financial Sustainability

6.1 Gainsborough Town Council is seeking transfer of the freehold at nil or nominal consideration for community benefit purposes.

6.2 The Town Council already meets the ongoing maintenance and operational costs of The Levelling's under its existing full repairing lease. Routine costs are incorporated within its approved annual budget and precept and no additional routine expenditure is anticipated solely as a result of the transfer.

6.3 Significant future capital improvements would be considered through the Town Council's annual budget-setting process and, where appropriate, supported through external grant funding. The Town Council also maintains general reserves in accordance with proper practices for local authorities.

6.4 A current valuation should be retained on the decision file to establish the extent of any undervalue and demonstrate compliance with relevant statutory and policy requirements.

6.5 Officers consider that the application demonstrates an established and sustainable financial arrangement for the continued management of the asset.

7 Community Benefit

7.1 The principal community benefit is the long-term safeguarding of The Levelling's as freely accessible recreational and amenity space.

7.2 The site currently provides public open space, children's play areas and a football pitch and supports recreation, community events, dog walking and outdoor physical activity. The Town Council intends to retain these uses and consider future enhancements where appropriate.

7.3 Local ownership would enable decisions concerning the site to be taken directly by the authority already responsible for its management and would strengthen local democratic accountability.

7.4 Formal consultation has not been undertaken specifically for the transfer because no change of use, restriction of access or alteration to the existing management arrangements is proposed. The Town Council receives ongoing community feedback through its normal democratic and engagement processes.

7.5 The proposal therefore provides continuing social and community value and is consistent with the objectives of the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

8 Environmental Benefits

8.1 The Levelling's is an established public green space which contributes to local amenity, biodiversity and residents' wellbeing.

8.2 The Town Council intends to continue its existing grounds and green-space management arrangements and identifies opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, tree and habitat management and sustainable maintenance practices where resources permit.

8.3 Retaining the land as public open space will continue to contribute to urban green infrastructure and local climate resilience.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Having considered the Community Asset Transfer Policy, Gainsborough Town Council's application and the historic Deed Packet findings, there is a strong case for transferring The Levelling's to Gainsborough Town Council.

9.2 The Town Council has an established management relationship with the site and already meets its operational and maintenance responsibilities. It has demonstrated its ability to invest in the asset, including securing approximately £100,000 of external funding for play-area improvements and funding additional improvements from its own precept.

9.3 The proposed transfer would therefore principally change the legal ownership of the asset rather than its day-to-day management or community use.

9.4 The current legal title, effect of the 1951 Deed of Gift and extent of any undervalue must be confirmed before completion. Appropriate protections should be incorporated into the transfer documentation to safeguard the future recreational and community purpose of the land.

9.5 Subject to these matters, transfer to Gainsborough Town Council would provide a clear long-term ownership arrangement, strengthen local accountability and secure the continued community benefit of The Levelling's.

9.6 Committee is therefore recommended to approve the proposed transfer in principle, subject to completion of the necessary legal, valuation and property checks.

10 Alternative Options

Option	Rationale	Assessment
1. Approve the transfer (recommended)	Transfers the freehold to Gainsborough Town Council, which already manages and	Recommended, subject to legal, title and valuation checks.

	maintains the asset, while securing its continued community use.	
2. Refuse the application	Retains District Council ownership despite the Town Council's established operational and financial responsibility for the site.	Not recommended.
3. Retain ownership and continue the existing lease	Maintains the existing arrangement without transferring the freehold.	Less satisfactory as a long-term solution and retains split ownership/management responsibilities.

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The site was obtained via a Deed of Gift and this is a material consideration in determining the appropriate form and conditions of any transfer.

The historic findings record a right of pre-emption/right to offer the premises back to the Estate for a defined period and state that previous Legal Services advice concluded that this period expired in 2012. This should be reviewed and confirmed against the original Deed and current legal position before completion.

The findings also record that, in 1991, the Trustees did not wish to exercise their rights in relation to the relevant plots. This provides useful historical context but should not be treated as a substitute for current legal advice.

Legal Services should confirm whether any Deed of Gift restrictions remain enforceable, whether Charity Commission involvement is required and the appropriate wording of any covenant or restriction required to protect the memorial and recreational purpose of the land.

The current Land Registry title should also be checked to confirm the exact extent of the District Council's registered interest and any entries affecting the proposed disposal.

Financial: FIN/49-27/SL

The last current valuation for sale received from Bruton Knowles in 2014 was £110,000.

The last Historical Cost valuation on the 31/03/2026 as a community asset was £0.

The current lease (LOUT000190) to Gainsborough Town Council is for a peppercorn rent and expires 30/01/2033.

There are no revenue costs associated with this land..

Staffing: There are no staffing implications arising from this report. Any work related to this transfer will be delivered within existing officer capacity and support of Legal Service Lincolnshire. Such works are factored within Property & Assets Service Plan.

LGR implications: N/A

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

Data Protection Implications: There are no data protection implications arising directly from this report

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

None arising from this report

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: None

Health Implications: Long term management and retention of the site for public open space and play parks supports the Health and Wellbeing objectives held by the Council.

Risk Assessment:

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

West Lindsey District Council Community Asset Transfer Policy 2026

Community Asset Transfer Application – Gainsborough Town Council

Findings from review of the Deed Packet for The Levelling's / Hickman Bacon Memorial Park

Deed of Gift between Sir Edmund Castell Bacon and the Urban District Council of Gainsborough dated 26 January 1951

Historic correspondence between West Lindsey District Council, the relevant Trustees and Gainsborough Town Council

Current Land Registry title and title search

Property valuation report

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)	**Yes**		**No**	**X**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications	**Yes**		**No**	**X**

Thriving Council Committee
Date: Thursday 24 September 2026

Subject: Trinity Ars Centre – Creative Foundations Fund

Report by:	Cara Thornhill Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
Contact Officer:	Cara Thornhill Cara.thornhill@west-lindsey.gov.uk Craig Sanders Craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Executive Summary:

This report requests approval to submit a Full Application to Arts Council England's Creative Foundations Fund for investment in Trinity Arts Centre. The bid seeks £598,000 of external funding towards a programme of capital improvements that will increase accessibility, expand audience capacity, improve visitor facilities and reduce ongoing operational costs through energy-efficiency measures. The application requires £100,000 of match funding, which can be provided through a combination of cash and eligible in-kind contributions. Following a successful Expression of Interest, approval is now sought to proceed to the final application stage

Appendices to Report

1. Expression of Interest Submission
2. Outcome Letter

RECOMMENDATION(S):

(a) That Members of the Thriving Council Committee approve the submission of a full application to Arts Council England's Creative Foundations Fund and approve the allocation of £100,000 match funding, subject to the application being successful.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Arts Council England Creative Foundations Fund (CFF) is a capital funding programme that helps creative and cultural organisations in England improve, repair, modernise and future-proof their buildings and equipment. The fund is aimed at ensuring cultural venues can continue delivering services to the public while becoming more sustainable and resilient

Further information can be found at Arts Council England Creative Foundation Fund

1.2 Funding Criteria

- Building repairs and restoration.
- Replacement of outdated infrastructure and systems.
- Energy efficiency improvements and decarbonisation work.
- Accessibility improvements.
- Renewal or upgrade of cultural assets.
- Essential equipment purchases (Strand 1 only).
- Projects that prevent asset failure and improve long-term sustainability.

1.3 Funding Levels

The Creative Foundations Fund Round 2 is divided into two strands:

Strand	Grant Value
Strand 1	£100,000 to £1,000,000
Strand 2	Over £1,000,000 up to £10,000,000

The Trinity Arts Centre applied to strand one.

2 Trinity Arts Centre Expression of Interest

2.1 The Centre Manager submitted an expression of interest (EOI) to the fund on 7 August 2026 for £598k with a match fund of 14.3%, the equivalent to £100k Please see appendix one for details.

2.2 The Council was notified on 7 September that the EOI was successful, and the Council has been invited to submit a full application by 23 October 2026.

3. Project Ambitions

3.1 Key priorities include;

- increasing and improving auditorium capacity and flexibility to attract touring productions and maximise income.
- Upgrading sanitary facilities to meet modern standards; enhancing accessibility for customers and artists with mobility needs.
- Investing in renewable energy solutions to reduce operating costs and improve environmental sustainability.
- A new building management system is also required to improve heating and cooling efficiency, helping to reduce energy consumption and provide greater operational resilience.

4. Key Milestones

Milestone	Date
Expression of Interest Submitted	Completed
Invitation to Full Application Received	7 September 2026
Full Application Deadline	23 October 2026 (12 noon)
Funding Request	£598,000
Funding Decision	TBC by Arts Council England
Design Development	Subject to funding approval
Construction Start	TBC
Project Completion	TBC

5. Match Funding Sources

The £100k match funding will be allocated from a range of sources, including the Trinity Arts Centre Levy, the Strategic Asset Management Plan (works already identified and budgeted), crowd funding and further funding applications (Theatres Trust £20k).

6. Alternative Options

Members may choose from the following alternative options. These have been considered alongside the recommended option to approve submission of the full application and the associated £100,000 match funding requirement should the bid be successful.

The recommended option remains to proceed with the full application because it offers the opportunity to secure significant external capital investment for Trinity Arts Centre, reduce future operational costs and improve the long-term sustainability and accessibility of the venue.

	Option	**Rational for not recommending**
1	Do nothing: do not submit a	This is not recommended because the

	full application to the Creative Foundations Fund.	Council would lose the opportunity to secure £598,000 of external investment following a successful Expression of Interest. It would also delay essential improvements to accessibility, capacity, visitor facilities and energy efficiency, leaving existing operational and maintenance pressures unresolved.
2	Submit a reduced or revised application with a smaller scope of works.	This is not recommended at this stage because the current proposal has already progressed successfully through the Expression of Interest stage and reflects the key priorities needed to improve the venue. Reducing the scope may weaken the final application, reduce the impact of the project and leave priority works unfunded.
3	Proceed with the full application but seek to identify alternative match funding sources only.	This is not recommended because the application timetable is limited and delaying confirmation of match funding could create uncertainty for the bid. The proposed approach provides a clearer funding position while still allowing eligible in-kind contributions and other funding opportunities to be explored as part of the final application.

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation to submit a full application. If the application is successful, any grant funding agreement, procurement activity, contract appointments or property-related permissions required to deliver the capital works will be reviewed in accordance with the Council's governance, legal and procurement requirements.

Financial: FIN/81/27/TC/SSc

The financial implications for this report would be the £100k match funding if the application were successful.

The match funding to be financed from:

- Trinity Arts Centre Levy Reserve £30k (current balance is £50k)
- Maintenance of facilities Reserve £50k (current balance is £382.6k)
- A potential further funding application £20k (Theatres Trust) – if unsuccessful, this would increase the use of the Trinity Acts centre Levy Reserve up to £50k.

A review of the VAT implications has confirmed that the proposed £698k spend on Trinity Arts Centre would not breach our partial exemption limit.

Staffing:

There are no direct staffing implications arising from the submission of the full application. Existing officer resource will be required to develop and submit the application and, if successful, to support project delivery, procurement, monitoring and grant reporting. Any additional staffing requirements will be considered as part of project planning.

LGR implications:

There are no specific Local Government Reorganisation implications arising from the recommendation. The proposal supports investment in an existing Council-operated cultural asset and would improve its long-term resilience.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

The project is expected to have positive equality and accessibility implications. Proposed improvements include enhanced accessibility for customers, performers and artists with mobility needs, alongside improvements to visitor facilities. Equality considerations will be kept under review as the project scope is developed.

Data Protection Implications:

There are no direct data protection implications arising from the recommendation. Any personal data processed as part of project delivery, consultation, procurement or grant monitoring will be managed in accordance with the Council's data protection policies.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The proposal presents climate-related opportunities, particularly through investment in energy-efficiency measures, renewable energy solutions and a new building management system to improve heating and cooling efficiency. These works are expected to reduce energy consumption, support operational resilience and contribute to the Council's wider sustainability objectives.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

There are no direct Section 17 crime and disorder implications arising from the recommendation. Any construction-phase risks relating to site security, public safety or anti-social behaviour will be considered through normal project and contractor management arrangements.

Health Implications:

The project is expected to have positive health and wellbeing implications by improving access to cultural activity, enhancing the visitor experience and supporting continued use of Trinity Arts Centre as a community cultural venue.

Risk Assessment:

Key risks include the application being unsuccessful, project costs exceeding available funding, match funding not being fully secured, delivery timescales changing and disruption to venue operations during any works. These risks will be managed through project governance, cost control, procurement planning, grant monitoring and regular reporting if the funding application is successful.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)	**Yes**		**No**	X

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications	**Yes**	X	**No**	

Introduction

Creative Foundations Fund

If you meet all of the eligibility criteria in the Guidance for Applicants and believe you have a proposal that could make a significant contribution to the aims and outcomes of this fund, please tell us about it by completing an Expression of Interest. This gives you the opportunity to describe your outline proposal in no more than 2,500 characters.

IMPORTANT: Each organisation may submit only ONE Expression of Interest, except for statutory bodies or other public bodies applying for separate projects in different locations.

Applicant details

Applicant name:	West Lindsey District Council
Applicant number:	52286638
Applicant type:	Organisation
What is your organisation's legal name?	West Lindsey District Council
What name is your bank account registered in?	West Lindsey District Council
Please give any other names your organisation uses:	N/A
Which option most closely describes your organisation?	Government / public body
Which option most closely describes your organisation's status?	Local government body
Which category most closely describes your organisation?	Professional organisation
Are you a registered charity?	No
Are you based in England?	Yes

Applicant details continued

Are you applying to fund works to a listed property?	Yes
Is the location of your project currently closed to the public?	No

Address information

Non-UK address or address not found:	☐
Address name or number:	WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL,
Street:	Marshalls Yard
Locality:	
Town / city:	GAINSBOROUGH
Postcode:	DN21 2NA
Main contact number:	01427 676676
Email address: (Organisation email address if applicant is an organisation)	customer.services@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Website address:	https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/
Fax number:	

Your contact information

Contact type	Main contact	First name	Last name	Primary contact number	Email
Grant administrator	Yes	Craig	Sanders	01427 676676	craig.sanders@wes ...

Contact details

Contact type:	Grant administrator
Is this the main contact for the applicant?	X
First name:	Craig
Middle name:	
Last name:	Sanders
Position:	Trinity Arts Centre Manager
Primary contact number:	01427 676676
Alternate contact number:	
Mobile phone number:	
Email address:	craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Fax number:	

Monitoring information

We will use this information to better understand the leadership of your organisation, which will then help us to better direct our support for under-represented groups recognised in the previous round as noted in the guidance. You will have the opportunity to update this information as required should you proceed to full application stage.

When filling in Monitoring Information:

- If a member of senior management also sits on your board/council, please only count them once in the category that accounts for most of their time
- If you do not know some of the information or you would prefer not to provide it, fill in the 'Not known/Prefer not to say' box
- You must enter at least 1 management/board/council member
- You must complete all the categories below, and the number of members you give in each category must add up to the total number of senior management and board/council members given at the top of the screen
- If Gender identity and neurodivergence is not known or not relevant, enter ‘0’

Number of senior management: 5
Number of board/council members: 36

Leadership

	Equivalent position if different:	Identifies as Black, Asian, Ethnically Diverse?	Identifies as Disabled?	Identifies as LGBTQ+?	Identifies as Female?	Occupation of the highest income earner in the household at age 14?
Chief Executive:		No	No	No	No	Prefer not to say
Artistic Director:	Trinity Arts Centre Manager	No	No	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Executive Director:	Council Leader	No	No	No	Yes	Prefer not to say
Chairperson:	Chairman	No	No	No	No	Prefer not to say

Please complete the following tables for the total numbers of senior staff and board members, as reported above:

Ethnicity:

White:	Number:
British	
Irish	
Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller	
Any other White background	

Mixed:	
White and Black Caribbean	
White and Black African	
White and Asian	
Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	

Asian/Asian British:	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
Any other Asian background	

Black/Black British:	
African	
Caribbean	
Any other Black background	

Other:	
Arab	
Latin American	
Any other ethnic background	
Prefer not to say	41
Not known	

* Please enter the number of people in each category:

Sexual Orientation	Number:
Bisexual	
Gay Man	
Gay Woman/Lesbian	
Heterosexual/Straight	
Queer	
Number who identify in another way	
Prefer not to say	41

Not known	

* Enter the total number of board/management members by the category of highest income earner of their household when they were 14
Click here to see examples of how we define the occupations below

Socio-economic Background	Number:
Modern Professional Occupations	
Clerical and Intermediate Occupations	
Senior Managers and Administrators	
Technical and Craft Occupations	
Semi-Routine Manual and Service Occupations	
Routine Manual and Service Occupations	
Middle or Junior Managers	
Traditional Professional Occupations	
Self-employed	
Short Term Unemployed	
Long Term Unemployed	
Retired	
Not applicable	
Don't know	
Prefer not to say	41
Other - please specify	

Please click the 'Save' button below after you have answered the question.

Age:

Age	Number:
0-19	
20-34	
35-49	
50-64	
65-74	
75+	
Prefer not to say	41
Not known	

* Disability status:

Number of D/deaf and/or Disabled people, or who have a long term health condition:

	Number:
D/deaf and/or Disabled	
Not D/deaf and/or Disabled	
Prefer not to say	41
Not known	

* Neurodivergent:

Number of neurodivergent board/management: 0

Sex:

Sex	Number:
Female	
Male	
Intersex	
Prefer not to say	41
Not known	

Gender Identity:

Gender Identity	Number:
Woman	
Man	
Non-binary	
Number who identify in another way	
Not applicable	
Prefer not to say	41
Not known	

* Sex registered at birth:

Number whose gender identity is different to their sex as registered at birth: 0

Project cost and amount to be requested

Please confirm the overall cost of your project and the amount you will request from us if you are invited to apply.

Total project cost:	£698,000
Amount to be requested from Arts Council:	£598,000
Matched Funding Percentage:	14.3266%

Moveable equipment

Does your project only involve the purchase of vehicles, moveable equipment and/or furniture not permanently fixed to a building? No

Please note that answering ‘No’ to this question will designate your project as a Building Project.
– see guidance for details

Statutory Approvals

Statutory Approvals are legal permissions and approvals needed for a building project. You should take advice on what statutory approvals apply to your project.

Please confirm whether any part of your project is required to comply with one or more of the following statutory approvals, selecting 'Not applicable' if statutory approvals are not required:

Full Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent, Building Regulations

Design Development

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) organises the process of managing and designing building projects and administering building contracts into a number of key work stages.

Select the latest stage of design development completed on your project from the RIBA Plan of Work 2020 below, or select 'Not applicable' if your project is not following the RIBA work stages.

For example, RIBA Stage 3 (Spatial Coordination) is typically considered complete when the design is spatially coordinated—meaning the architectural, structural, and building services designs are integrated, finalised, and signed off by the client. The designs should be sufficiently detailed to meet building regulations and provide coordinated updates to the cost plan. In many cases, they will also be ready for planning application submission.

RIBA workstage: RIBA Work Stage 3: Spatial Coordination

Tell us about your project

Provide a brief outline of the project you are asking us to support, including:

- how your project contributes to the aims and outcomes of the fund
- the preparatory work you have completed
- why the work must be carried out in the next three years
- sources of partnership funding and whether these are expected or confirmed
- the timescale for your project.

Proposed project:

No more than 2,500 characters.

Trinity Arts Centre is a vital cultural hub in the South-West Ward of Gainsborough, the largest town in the rural district of West Lindsey. The ward is among the most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK, while West Lindsey is recognised as a DCMS Cultural Priority Place.

Housed within the Grade II listed former Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Arts Centre has delivered cultural activity for more than 40 years. The venue was transformed in the late 1970s by local arts volunteers and remains owned and operated by West Lindsey District Council. For almost two decades, it has operated without dedicated external funding, supported by strong ticket sales, a vibrant community hire programme and a modest council subsidy.

We are seeking support from the Cultural Foundations Fund to deliver a phased programme of capital improvements that will secure Trinity's long-term sustainability, improve accessibility and strengthen its resilience ahead of Local Government Reorganisation. In 2025, Trinity delivered more than 200 events, welcomed over 32,000 visitors and achieved an average occupancy rate of 83%, demonstrating both significant demand and a performance level substantially above comparable neighbouring venues.

While the success of our programme highlights the community's appetite for culture, the building now requires urgent investment to remain relevant, accessible and financially sustainable. Key priorities include increasing and improving auditorium capacity and flexibility to attract touring productions and maximise income; upgrading sanitary facilities to meet modern standards; enhancing accessibility for customers and artists with mobility needs; and investing in renewable energy solutions to reduce operating costs and improve environmental sustainability. A new building management system is also required to improve heating and cooling efficiency, helping to reduce energy consumption and provide greater operational resilience.

To support project development, we have engaged specialist consultants, including Thornton-Firkin, to advise on feasibility and cost planning. Partnership funding will be provided by West Lindsey District Council, alongside applications to other funders including the Wolfson Foundation and Pride in Place.

To minimise disruption to cultural activity and community use, the works will be delivered in carefully planned phases. Subject to funding, we anticipate delivery between August 2027 and February 2029.

Submission summary

The submission summary displays a list of all the steps you've worked through. If you have completed a step successfully, there will be a green tick beside it. If a step is incomplete or has not been completed successfully, this will be indicated by a red tick. A hyperlinked statement will tell you what part of each step needs attention. Click on this hyperlinked statement to take you to the step and make your amendments.

By clicking submit, you are submitting your completed Expression of Interest for our consideration.

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By clicking submit, you are submitting your completed Expression of Interest for our consideration.

Page	Last Updated	Last Updated By
Introduction	No Input Required	
Applicant details	04/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)
Applicant details cont.	04/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)
Address information	04/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Contact information	04/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)
Monitoring information	05/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)
Project cost and amount to be requested	05/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)
Moveable equipment	04/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)
Statutory Approvals	04/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)
Design Development	04/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)
Tell us about your project	04/08/2026	Craig Sanders (craig.sanders@west-lindsey.gov.uk)

Project information

Reference Submissions
Step
Expression of Interest

Creative Foundations Fund

Applicant name: West Lindsey District Council
Project title: Trinity Arts Centre CFF R2
Project number: TCFF-00889902
Amount requested (£): £598,000

Expression of Interest notification

Dear Craig Sanders

Programme: Creative Foundations Fund
Applicant name: West Lindsey District Council
Reference: TCFF-00889902
Name of activity: Trinity Arts Centre CFF R2
Strand: Strand 1

Thank you for submitting your Expression of Interest for the Creative Foundations Fund.

We have reviewed all of the Expressions of Interest against the strategic aims and objectives for the Creative Foundations Fund, and have decided that we would like to invite you to make a full application.

Please note that the application deadline is noon on 23rd October 2026 and full guidance is available on our website.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact our Customer Services team us at capital@artscouncil.org.uk.

Kind regards

Customer Services

I have read the Expression of Interest notification:

Submission summary

Page	Last Updated
Project information	No Input Required
Expression of Interest notification	Please Complete

Notes:

Not all reviews complete. Click here to return to the form.

Committee **Thriving Council Committee**
Date 24/09/2026

Subject: Squaddie Box

Report by:	Director for Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Contact Officer:	Sarah Elvin Head of Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Executive Summary:

This report seeks approval to fund a two-year pilot of the Squaddie Box project in West Lindsey, following the recommendation from Thriving People Committee.

Squaddie Box is a Community Interest Company that supports veterans and emergency services personnel who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by providing access to a secure, verified postal address. The pilot would provide one Squaddie Box pod, supporting up to four homeless veterans at any one time.

The total cost to West Lindsey District Council is £15,000, covering the annual licence infrastructure fee of £7,500 per year for two years; the installation cost of the pod will be met by Squaddie Box CIC. The pilot will be managed within existing officer capacity, with the pod location to be agreed in consultation with Squaddie Box and the Council's Armed Forces Member representative.

During the pilot, officers will continue to explore match funding opportunities and assess the impact of the service on homelessness prevention, access to support services and outcomes for veterans, with any potential extension to be considered only where an evidenced need is established.

Appendices to Report

- Squaddie Box Full proposal August 2027
- Squaddie Box Overview
- Squaddie Box Partnership proposal

RECOMMENDATION(S):

(a) That Members approve the allocation of £15,000 from the Health and Wellbeing Reserve to fund a two-year pilot of the Squaddie Box project in West Lindsey.

(b) That Members note that officers will work with Squaddie Box CIC and the Council's Armed Forces Member representative to agree the pod location, continue to explore match funding opportunities, and evaluate the impact of the pilot before any future extension is considered.

1. Introduction

1.1 Agreement was determined at Thriving People Committee on 16th July 2026 to undertake a pilot of the Squaddie Box project.

1.2 As part of that decision, it was agreed that Thriving people Committee would recommend to Thriving Council Committee to fund the £15,000 for the project from reserves and for officers to look for match funding opportunities for this project.

1.3 Due to the timescales involves between committees, no funding has been secured to contribute towards the Squaddie Box project. As this is a two-year project, it will be on-going that funding is sought which could reduce the funding required from West Lindsey.

2 What is Squaddie Box?

2.1 Squaddie Box is a CIC specialising in supporting veterans and emergency services personnel who are facing homelessness. The charity offers practical solutions in the form of a personal mailbox to help rebuild lives and restore dignity to homeless veterans and their families.

2.2 Squaddie Box provides secure physical mailboxes, placed at trusted community locations which allows mail to be delivered to a safe and secure place via the normal postal system.

2.3 As a specialised service for veterans, Squaddie box understand many veterans who present to homelessness services are navigating complex transition issues after leaving the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces Covenant recognises that this cohort can face challenges linked to relationship breakdown, mental health issues and the broader difficulties that can arise during transition to civilian life.

2.4 More detail can be found on the full proposal, which includes information from Squaddie box on the location the box should be places, eligibility, referral pathways and general operating procedures.

2.5 The proposal put forward by squaddie box also includes some detail on the Veteran Identity Support Programme. This is training delivered to help front line staff identify Armed Forces connections consistently. This will be discussed internally and reviewed as part of the West Lindsey staff training requirements so is not being considered as part of this proposal.

4 Squaddie Box proposal & financial implication

4.1 The proposal would provide 1 Squaddie Box pod which would support up to 4 homeless veterans at any one time to provide a secure verified postal address for them to receive their mail in a secure place with access 24 hours a day.

4.3 The cost of installation of the pod itself would be fully funded by Squaddie Box CIC – this is detailed by Squaddie Box as costing £1000 and is a capital cost to the charity upfront. The location for the box will be scoped out and determined in conjunction with Squaddie Box and the WLDC Member rep for Armed Forces.

4.4 The costs to be funded by WLDC are to cover the Annual Licence Infrastructure Fee of £7500 per annum for 2 years totalling £15,000 for the 2- year pilot. These costs are set out in the Squaddie Box Partnership Proposal detailed at appendix 1 section 20.

4.5 The annual licence fee covers the following:

- Infrastructure Provision
- Safeguarding and verification Framework
- Compliance and Governance
- Operational Oversight

Full details of all elements which are covered in the licence fee are explained at appendix 2 paragraph 4.

4.6 Should the budget be agreed, the roll out of the pilot project and the programme phasing will be implemented as set out in the Partnership proposal Appendix 3 for a 2-year period initially, with the potential to extend should an evidenced need for this be established through the pilot.

4.7 The Partnership Proposal does include figures which are not fully evidenced in relation to savings on temporary accommodation or emergency placements, the pilot project will seek to understand how the implementation of this can have an impact on homelessness prevention and improve the lives of those who are able to utilise this service.

4.10 More detail on the original Squaddie Box Proposal can be found at appendix 1

5. Alternative Options

5.1 Alternative options were set out for Thriving people Committee and the option to implement a two-year pilot project was recommended to Thriving Council Committee.

Legal:

None

Financial: FIN/75/27/TC/AP

The uncommitted balance on the Health and Wellbeing Reserve is £202.2k.

It is proposed to fund the annual licence infrastructure fee of £7.5k pa over 2 years (26/27 and 27/28) – a total of £15k – from this reserve.

This will reduce the balance on the reserve to £187.2k.

Staffing:

This service will be managed within existing resource capacity

LGR implications:

No LGR implications

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

N/A

Data Protection Implications:

GDPR compliance is detailed in appendix 1 section 15

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

N/A

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

N/A

Health Implications:

Barriers to accessing services alongside safe and secure housing can have a huge impact on your physical and mental health. This project suggests a correlation between having a safe and secure mailbox and accessing these services and looks to overcome those barriers and evidence how this can create a better and healthier environment for veterans.

Risk Assessment:
A risk assessment of the location of the Squaddie Box will be undertaken as part of the implementation of the project

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
Squaddie Box Paper 16th July 2026 IMPLICATIONS Motion to Full Council 13th April 2026 Agenda for Council on Monday, 13th April, 2026, 7.00 pm | West Lindsey District Council

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)	**Yes**		**No**	**x**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications	**Yes**		**No**	**x**

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL
SQUADDIE BOX

Community Support & Veterans Stability Pilot

Full SLT / Thriving People Committee Proposal
Including Optional Veterans Identification Support Programme (VISP)

Prepared for West Lindsey District Council
Ahead of the Thriving People Committee - 24 September 2026

Prepared by Dean Wormleighton
CEO, Squaddie Box CIC

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7	Understanding Identified Need and Hidden Need
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1. Executive Summary

This paper presents a revised, committee-ready business case for a two-year Squaddie Box pilot in West Lindsey. It responds directly to the Council's July 2026 assessment and to subsequent discussions with Sarah Elvin, Head of Housing, Health & Wellbeing. The revised case accepts the Council's position that the project will not be financed from its homelessness prevention allocation and instead positions Squaddie Box primarily as community-support and veterans-stability infrastructure under the Council's Thriving People priorities.

The proposal does not abandon the homelessness rationale. West Lindsey's current Corporate Plan explicitly links Thriving People with tackling homelessness, enabling independent living, improving health and wellbeing, supporting vulnerable residents and supporting Armed Forces communities. The Council's own homelessness information also defines prevention as early intervention and identifies people leaving the Armed Forces as a known risk point. The appropriate distinction is therefore between the funding source and the outcomes: Squaddie Box may be funded as community support while still contributing to homelessness prevention.

The July report recorded 17 homelessness approaches over three years from people who declared previous Armed Forces service, including five people with no fixed abode. It concluded that there was insufficient evidence of identified need. This revised proposal treats that concern as an evaluation question rather than disputing it: the pilot will test actual local demand, referral routes, service barriers and outcomes.

> **Core proposition: approve a controlled two-year community-support pilot, measure it properly, and use the resulting West Lindsey evidence to decide what happens next.**

An optional Veterans Identification Support Programme (VISP) is also offered as a separately scoped training enhancement. VISP is not required for the Squaddie Box pilot and is not included in the core £15,000 pilot request. Its purpose is to help relevant frontline staff identify Armed Forces connections consistently, understand why veterans may not self-identify, and make appropriate referrals. This directly addresses the question of whether low recorded demand reflects genuinely low need or some degree of under-identification.

2. Decision Requested

Senior Leadership Team / Thriving People Committee is asked to:

- Approve the proposed two-year Squaddie Box Community Support & Veterans Stability Pilot, subject to confirmation of final commercial and contractual terms.
- Approve the use of an appropriate community-support/reserve funding route rather than requiring the project to be funded from the homelessness prevention allocation.
- Authorise officers to agree the final location, referral pathway, operational protocol, safeguarding arrangements, data-protection responsibilities and review timetable with Squaddie Box CIC.
- Require proportionate quarterly and formal six-/twelve-/twenty-four-month evaluation so the Council can establish actual local need and outcomes.
- Note that Squaddie Box complements, but does not replace, West Lindsey's statutory housing/homelessness functions or the work of DWP, NHS, Op FORTITUDE and other agencies.
- Note the optional VISP training offer and, if considered useful, request a separate training scope and quotation for selected staff.
- Note that Civvie Box is not part of the current funding decision and should only be considered as a later evidence-led option.

Recommended position

The recommended approach is to approve the core Squaddie Box pilot now, keep VISP as an optional enhancement, and defer any Civvie Box decision until evidence from the veteran pilot is available.

3. Background and Development of the Proposal

Full Council agreed in April 2026 that West Lindsey should consider a pilot of the Squaddie Box project. The July 2026 Thriving People report subsequently described the service, its proposed two-year cost and the Council's existing Armed Forces Covenant activity, but recommended that the service should not be implemented at that time because officers considered the local evidence of need insufficient.

That report nevertheless recorded several points that remain material to the present case: Squaddie Box can provide private and secure 24-hour access to correspondence; stable correspondence can support continued engagement with benefits, housing, employment and other services; and the project could help generate anonymised evidence about barriers faced by veterans.

Subsequent discussions with officers have moved the proposal forward. The current task is no longer to argue that Squaddie Box must sit within a homelessness grant. It is to provide the Council with a sufficiently robust community-support proposition, delivery model and evidence framework to allow funding and implementation to be finalised.

Source: West Lindsey District Council, Squaddie Box report to Thriving People, 16 July 2026 (document supplied by Squaddie Box CIC).

4. Why Community Support is the Primary Funding Case

Squaddie Box is best understood as a small piece of community stability infrastructure. The physical mailbox is the delivery mechanism, not the entire intervention. Its purpose is to provide a dependable point of contact when an individual's accommodation, relationships or personal circumstances are unstable.

- Continuity: important correspondence can continue to reach the user while accommodation changes.
- Dignity: the user has a private, recognised place to receive and collect mail.
- Independence: access does not depend on repeatedly asking friends, family or support workers to receive correspondence.
- Connection: the mailbox can sit within a referral network connecting the user to existing statutory and voluntary services.
- Early intervention: the service can engage an individual before circumstances deteriorate into visible rough sleeping or crisis.
- Evidence: the pilot can capture anonymised information about demand, barriers and referral outcomes.
- Community resilience: the model strengthens the local network around vulnerable veterans without duplicating existing statutory services.

This framing directly reflects West Lindsey's Thriving People emphasis on supporting communities to thrive, enabling independent living, supporting vulnerable residents and providing a safety net during times of crisis.

Source: West Lindsey District Council, Corporate Plan 2026-2030 - Thriving People.

5. Strategic Alignment with West Lindsey 2026-2030

West Lindsey adopted its Corporate Plan 2026-2030 in March 2026. Its vision is to improve lives and communities through good-quality services, with three themes: Thriving People, Thriving Places and Thriving Council. Squaddie Box aligns most directly with Thriving People.

Corporate objective	Contribution
Supporting communities to thrive	Creates a practical community asset delivered through partnership and referral networks.
Enable independent living	Provides a stable and private correspondence point during unstable circumstances.
Support vulnerable residents	Targets a defined cohort at periods of housing, relationship or personal instability.
Dignity, choice and belonging	Gives users greater control over how and when they receive correspondence.
Prevent homelessness through early intervention and targeted support	Can operate before crisis and support continued connection with formal prevention services.
Improve health and wellbeing	Maintains a route for health-related correspondence and signposting; reduces one practical engagement barrier.
Boost skills and pathways into employment	Provides continuity for employment-related correspondence and referrals.
Support Armed Forces communities	Creates a visible local mechanism focused on veterans and service-related disadvantage.

The project should therefore be assessed against multiple community outcomes rather than a single question of whether a postal address is legally required to access a particular service.

Source: West Lindsey District Council, Our West Lindsey, Our Future - Corporate Plan 2026-2030.

6. Contribution to Homelessness Prevention

The Council has made clear that it does not intend to fund the project from its homelessness prevention allocation. This paper accepts that decision. However, the Council's own policy material supports recognising homelessness prevention as an outcome of the pilot.

West Lindsey describes homelessness prevention as helping households remain in their current home where appropriate, enabling planned and timely moves and sustaining independent living. It describes early intervention as identifying those at risk before problems escalate and pre-crisis intervention as including targeted services at known risk points such as leaving care, prison or the Armed Forces.

The Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 is also wider than rough sleeping alone and places emphasis on prevention, protection and partnership. Accordingly, the relevant question is not simply whether a user is currently sleeping rough. It is whether a modest intervention can help preserve contact and support before or during housing instability.

> **Funding classification and strategic contribution are different questions: the pilot can be funded as community support while still contributing to prevention.**

Source: West Lindsey District Council, Preventing Homelessness; Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027.

7. Understanding Identified Need and Hidden Need

The July report's demand evidence should be retained accurately: 17 approaches to West Lindsey's homelessness service over three years from people who declared they had served in HM Armed Forces; five of those were recorded as having no fixed abode; and none of those five was described as rough sleeping.

Those figures are evidence of identified demand. They are not, by themselves, a census of every veteran experiencing instability. A person may be sofa surfing, temporarily staying with family, moving between addresses, experiencing relationship breakdown, or may simply not disclose their Armed Forces history when approaching a service.

The revised pilot therefore avoids making unsupported claims about the size of hidden need. Instead it establishes a testable proposition: if a controlled referral network and improved identification routes are introduced, what demand is actually observed?

- Measure referrals and their source.
- Record whether veteran status was already known or identified during contact.
- Record broad presenting circumstances without collecting unnecessary sensitive detail.
- Track occupancy, duration and reasons for exit.
- Track onward connections and known outcomes.
- Review non-use and referral failures as well as successful cases.

This is a more defensible approach than either assuming substantial hidden demand or treating low recorded presentations as proof that no unmet need exists.

8. Armed Forces Covenant Contribution

West Lindsey's Armed Forces Covenant page states that the Covenant Duty requires relevant public bodies to have due regard to Covenant principles when exercising specified functions, including housing. The Council explains that due regard involves consciously considering the unique obligations and sacrifices of the Armed Forces community, the desirability of removing service-related disadvantage and the possibility that special provision may sometimes be justified.

This paper does not claim that the Covenant Duty creates a legal requirement to commission Squaddie Box. The stronger and more proportionate proposition is that the pilot gives West Lindsey an additional practical means of identifying service-related barriers, connecting veterans with appropriate help and demonstrating continuing consideration of the Armed Forces community.

West Lindsey's own Armed Forces housing page already directs homeless veterans and those at risk of homelessness to Council housing services and Op FORTITUDE. The Squaddie Box pathway should explicitly reinforce those routes.

Source: West Lindsey District Council, Armed Forces Covenant; Armed Forces - Housing.

9. Health, Wellbeing, Dignity and Independent Living

The July report captured an important behavioural issue: formal availability of a service does not automatically mean a vulnerable person will remain engaged with it. For some veterans, trauma, pride, anxiety, loss of identity, neurodivergence or other barriers may make repeated attendance at public offices difficult.

The project does not claim that every veteran experiences these barriers. Its design simply recognises that some do. A discreet and independently accessible correspondence point can remove one practical friction at a time when the individual may already be navigating several agencies.

- Use clear, accessible information and avoid unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Provide discreet collection arrangements.
- Make reasonable adjustments within the service where practical.
- Do not require unnecessary disclosure of health or personal information.
- Ensure referral partners understand that the service is a support mechanism, not a diagnostic or clinical service.
- Use the mailbox as an opportunity for appropriate signposting rather than as a substitute for professional support.

Source: West Lindsey District Council, Corporate Plan 2026-2030 - objective to support vulnerable residents through dignity, choice and belonging.

10. The Squaddie Box Service

The proposed core pilot provides one secure Squaddie Box pod supporting up to four users at any one time. The July report described the installation cost as being funded by Squaddie Box CIC and the Council-funded annual licence as covering infrastructure provision, safeguarding and verification, compliance and governance, and operational oversight.

What the core service provides

- Secure physical mailbox infrastructure at an agreed location.
- User eligibility and verification process.
- Allocation and administration of mailbox slots.
- Safeguarding and operational procedures.
- Governance and compliance framework.
- Operational liaison with the host and agreed Council contacts.
- Referral/signposting pathway into existing services.
- Proportionate anonymised monitoring and evaluation.
- Review and exit arrangements so limited capacity can be recycled.

What it does not provide

- It is not accommodation.
- It does not replace a homelessness assessment or statutory duty.
- It is not a substitute for DWP, NHS, probation, Op FORTITUDE or veterans charities.
- It does not guarantee a housing, benefits, employment or health outcome.
- It should not be represented as a legal address solution for every purpose without the receiving organisation's own requirements being checked.

11. Proposed West Lindsey Delivery Model

Stage	Proposed approach
1. Identify / Refer	An eligible veteran is identified through an approved partner, Council team or agreed self-referral route.
2. Verify	Squaddie Box completes the agreed eligibility and identity checks.
3. Allocate	A mailbox slot and user instructions are issued.
4. Connect	Where relevant, the user is connected to West Lindsey Housing, Op FORTITUDE, DWP, health, employment or other support.
5. Receive / Collect	Correspondence is delivered and collected through the agreed secure arrangements.
6. Review	Use is periodically reviewed, including inactivity and continued need.
7. Transition	When stable arrangements are achieved or the service is no longer required, the allocation ends.
8. Evaluate	Anonymised information is reported against agreed KPIs.

The operating protocol should be finalised jointly before launch. The objective is to keep West Lindsey's additional administrative burden proportionate while ensuring that statutory responsibilities remain with the appropriate agency.

12. Location Requirements

The preferred location should be:

- Safe, accessible and suitable for disabled access where reasonably practicable.
- Discreet, so that users are not unnecessarily identified or stigmatised.
- Available as close to 24-hour access as reasonably achievable.
- Accessible by public transport and reasonably located for the intended catchment.
- Suitable for secure installation, inspection and maintenance.
- Compatible with postal delivery arrangements.
- Supported by the landowner/host and covered by a documented site agreement.
- Located where access does not create avoidable safeguarding, anti-social behaviour or community-safety concerns.
- Ideally close to complementary community, transport or support infrastructure.

A joint site assessment should be undertaken by West Lindsey, Squaddie Box and the host before installation. Final siting should be evidence-led rather than predetermined.

13. Referral and Eligibility Pathway

A broad but controlled referral network is recommended. This increases the chance of identifying genuine need without making the Council the sole gateway.

- West Lindsey Housing and Homelessness teams.
- Council Armed Forces / community contacts.
- Op FORTITUDE and recognised veterans organisations.
- DWP or employment support services where appropriate.
- NHS and health partners.
- Lincolnshire County Council services where relevant.
- Police, probation and other statutory agencies where appropriate.
- Approved charities, CICs and voluntary-sector partners.
- Potential self-referral, subject to the same verification and eligibility controls.

Eligibility, prioritisation, inactivity and exit criteria should be documented before launch. If demand exceeds capacity, the existence and scale of a waiting list becomes useful evidence for review.

14. Operational Management and Council Resource

Party	Indicative responsibility
Squaddie Box CIC	Day-to-day mailbox administration; verification; onboarding; operational records; host liaison; agreed monitoring; issue escalation; periodic service review.
West Lindsey District Council	Strategic oversight of the funded pilot; agreed referrals/signposting; participation in review; consideration of evidence and future decisions.
Host location	Practical site access; notification of physical/site issues; cooperation with risk and maintenance arrangements.
Referral partners	Appropriate referral and delivery of their own statutory/voluntary support; outcome feedback only where lawful and proportionate.

The model is specifically designed not to create a new Council case-management service. West Lindsey remains responsible for its own statutory functions; Squaddie Box manages the mailbox service; partners manage their own interventions.

15. Safeguarding, Governance and Data Protection

Before launch, the parties should document a minimum governance package. The July report already recognised safeguarding, verification, compliance and governance as elements of the annual licence.

- Eligibility and verification procedure.
- Safeguarding policy and escalation route.
- Site risk assessment and host agreement.
- Incident, complaint and misuse procedures.
- Mailbox allocation, inactivity, suspension and exit rules.
- Named operational contacts.
- Data-protection roles and responsibilities based on the final workflow.
- Data minimisation and purpose limitation.
- Retention and deletion schedule.
- Procedure for lost access credentials, damaged infrastructure and undeliverable items.
- Quarterly operational review and formal evaluation timetable.

The final UK GDPR controller/processor position should be determined from the actual data flows and contractual arrangements. Committee reporting should use anonymised or aggregated information wherever individual identification is unnecessary.

16. Partnership and Onward Referral

Squaddie Box is most valuable when embedded in a wider pathway. West Lindsey's homelessness strategy emphasises partnership, and the Council's Armed Forces pages already identify established specialist services.

- West Lindsey Housing / Home Choices for statutory housing and homelessness support.
- Op FORTITUDE for single veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- SSAFA and Royal British Legion for appropriate veterans support.
- DWP and employment support where benefits or work are relevant.
- NHS / health partners where healthcare access or wellbeing support is required.
- Other local voluntary-sector services agreed through the pilot.

The box should therefore function as a stable access point and referral bridge, not as a parallel support system.

Source: West Lindsey District Council, Armed Forces - Housing; Homelessness pages.

17. Optional Additional Training - Veterans Identification Support Programme (VISP)

VISP is offered as an optional additional training service. It is not required for the Squaddie Box pilot to operate and is not included within the core £15,000 two-year pilot funding request. If West Lindsey wishes to commission it, scope, cohort size, delivery format and price should be agreed separately.

Purpose

The Veterans Identification Support Programme is designed to help relevant frontline personnel recognise that an individual may have an Armed Forces background, understand why some veterans may not readily identify themselves, ask appropriate and proportionate questions, and connect the individual with suitable veteran-specific or statutory support.

Indicative learning outcomes

- Recognise potential indicators of previous Armed Forces service without stereotyping.
- Understand why veteran status may not be disclosed or considered relevant by the individual.
- Ask appropriate, respectful and proportionate questions about Armed Forces connections.
- Understand common transition and service-related factors that may affect engagement, while avoiding assumptions about individual veterans.
- Recognise when service history may be relevant to housing, health, employment, benefits or wider support.
- Understand local and national referral/signposting pathways, including Council housing services and Op FORTITUDE.
- Improve consistency of veteran identification and recording where lawful and relevant.
- Support earlier intervention and better organisational intelligence about local Armed Forces need.

Potential West Lindsey audiences

- Housing and Homelessness.
- Customer Services.
- Community / Health & Wellbeing.
- Benefits and financial inclusion.
- Community Safety.
- Employment and skills-facing teams.
- Armed Forces Covenant leads/champions.
- Other relevant frontline teams or agreed partner organisations.

The aim is not to turn Council employees into veterans specialists. It is to give staff enough awareness and confidence to identify a possible Armed Forces connection, ask the right question and know what to do next.

18. VISP and the Evidence Gap

The July report's recorded demand depends upon people having declared previous Armed Forces service. VISP creates a practical way to test whether identification can be improved without assuming in advance that significant hidden need exists.

> **VISP asks a different question: not 'how many veterans do we think are hidden?', but 'are our frontline routes consistently capable of identifying veteran status when it is relevant?'**

If commissioned, West Lindsey could establish a simple baseline before training and then compare appropriate identification/referral information afterwards. This could include the proportion of relevant contacts where Armed Forces status is recorded, the number of veteran-specific referrals made, staff confidence feedback and any recurring barriers identified.

Complementary pathway

VISP and Squaddie Box can be presented as two independent but complementary components:

Component	Function
VISP	IDENTIFY AND CONNECT - improve frontline recognition, questioning and referral.
Squaddie Box	STABILISE AND MAINTAIN CONTACT - provide a secure correspondence point during instability.

IDENTIFY -> UNDERSTAND -> REFER -> STABILISE -> SUPPORT -> REVIEW

West Lindsey may choose the core Squaddie Box pilot alone, commission VISP later, or request a separate VISP proposal alongside implementation. Keeping the decisions separate protects the simplicity of the current funding request.

19. Monitoring, KPIs and Evaluation

The monitoring framework should answer whether the service is used, who refers into it, why it is required, whether users remain connected with support and what the Council learns about local need. It should avoid overclaiming causation.

Domain	Suggested measures
Demand	Referrals; accepted/refused; active users; occupancy; waiting list.
Identification	Whether veteran status was already known or identified through contact/referral.
Referral source	Council, veterans sector, DWP, health, statutory partner, voluntary sector, self-referral.
Presenting circumstance	Broad reason for needing stable correspondence; no unnecessary sensitive detail.
Use	Aggregate mail activity; duration of allocation; inactivity.
Connections	Housing, Op FORTITUDE, health, DWP, employment, veterans-sector or other onward referral.
Outcomes	Known housing progression, stable address, service reconnection or other relevant outcome.
Experience	User and partner feedback on accessibility, dignity, usefulness and barriers.
Governance	Incidents, complaints, safeguarding escalations and operational issues.
Learning	Unmet need, referral gaps and recommendations for continuation/redesign.

Evaluation discipline

Where a positive outcome is achieved, reporting should distinguish between an outcome directly delivered by Squaddie Box and an outcome to which the mailbox/referral pathway plausibly contributed. This protects the credibility of the pilot and gives members a more reliable basis for future decisions.

20. Financial and Value-for-Money Case

The July report recorded an annual licence infrastructure fee of £7,500 for two years, totalling £15,000, with the pod installation capital cost funded by Squaddie Box CIC. It stated that the annual fee covered infrastructure provision, safeguarding and verification, compliance and governance, and operational oversight.

The same report concluded that the homelessness prevention grant was not an available funding route and indicated that, if approved, the two-year requirement would need to be met from reserves. The present proposal is deliberately aligned with the alternative community-support route requested by officers.

Core funding request

Item	Position
Squaddie Box two-year pilot	£15,000 total, subject to final confirmation of current agreed terms.
Pod / installation	To be confirmed against the final agreement; July report recorded the installation cost as funded by Squaddie Box CIC.
VISP training	Optional additional service; not included in the core pilot figure; separately scoped and costed if requested.
Civvie Box	Not part of the current decision.

Value-for-money questions for review

- Was the service used by the intended cohort?
- Did it reveal need or barriers not visible in existing datasets?
- Did it improve continuity of engagement with existing services?
- Did it generate useful evidence for future commissioning or policy?
- Was Council administrative burden proportionate?
- Did referral partners consider the service useful?
- Is continuation justified after two years?

This paper intentionally avoids presenting unverified cashable savings as fact. Any future cost-avoidance model should be based on actual pilot outcomes and transparent assumptions.

21. Risk and Mitigation

Risk	Effect	Mitigation
Low demand	Under-utilisation and weak value case.	Broad approved referral routes; partner briefing; utilisation reviews; capture reasons for non-use.
Under-identification	Veterans who could benefit are not recognised.	Clear referral questions; optional VISP; partner awareness.
Scope confusion	Mailbox mistaken for a housing service.	Clear communications and referral protocol.
Safeguarding concern	Vulnerable user requires urgent support.	Documented escalation routes and emergency procedures.
Data protection	Unnecessary or inappropriate information sharing.	Data minimisation; documented roles; anonymised reporting.
Site/security issue	Damage, misuse or unsafe access.	Site assessment; secure installation; inspections and incident procedure.
Capacity pressure	Demand exceeds four slots.	Transparent prioritisation/waiting process; evidence for future capacity decision.
Stigma	Users are visibly labelled as homeless/veterans.	Discreet siting and neutral access.
Outcome overclaim	Benefits attributed solely to the mailbox.	Contribution-based evaluation and transparent evidence.
Training perceived as compulsory	VISP complicates core approval.	Explicitly separate VISP from the core pilot and cost.

22. Two-Year Implementation Plan

Phase	Timing	Activity
Mobilisation	Approval to launch	Confirm funding/contract; select site; agree host; finalise governance, data and referral documents.
Installation & partner briefing	Month 1-2	Install pod; test postal/access arrangements; brief Council and approved partners; open referrals.
Early operational review	Month 3	Check occupancy, referral mix, site issues, safeguarding and partner awareness.
First evaluation	Month 6	Review demand, barriers, early outcomes and any pathway changes.
Year-one review	Month 12	Formal SLT/officer review; confirm continuation into year two and refinements.
Year-two development	Month 13-18	Continue service; strengthen weak referral routes; optional VISP evaluation if commissioned.
Final evaluation	Month 21-24	Assess sustained demand, outcomes, governance, value and future options.
Decision	Before expiry	Continue, modify, expand or conclude based on evidence.

Optional VISP timing

If commissioned, VISP can be delivered either before launch to strengthen identification from day one or after an initial baseline period so the Council can compare pre- and post-training identification/referral data. The preferred approach should be agreed with officers.

23. Future Option - Civvie Box

Civvie Box should remain outside the September funding decision. The immediate objective is to implement the veteran-specific model already considered by the Council and produce credible West Lindsey evidence.

If the pilot demonstrates wider civilian demand for stable correspondence infrastructure, spare capacity, or recurring referrals involving non-veterans in similar circumstances, West Lindsey could later request a separate Civvie Box business case. That decision should consider demand, funding, capacity, safeguarding and equality implications afresh.

> **Phase Two principle: Squaddie Box first; evidence second; Civvie Box only if the evidence supports it.**

24. SLT / Committee Conclusions and Recommendation

The revised proposition is materially stronger because it no longer asks West Lindsey to decide whether a mailbox should be funded solely as a homelessness intervention. It asks whether a modest, governed community-support service can help vulnerable veterans retain continuity and connection, while giving the Council better evidence about local need.

The Council's own current strategy supports the underlying principles: thriving communities, dignity, independent living, support for vulnerable residents, early homelessness intervention, partnership working and recognition of the Armed Forces community.

The previous evidence concern is not ignored. It is built into the design. A two-year pilot with clear referral routes and KPIs is a proportionate way to establish whether the service has a sustainable role in West Lindsey.

VISP adds a separate option for improving frontline identification and referral. It should be available to the Council but should not be allowed to complicate or inflate the core pilot decision.

Recommended resolution

Approve the two-year Squaddie Box Community Support & Veterans Stability Pilot, subject to final agreement of funding and implementation arrangements; require proportionate monitoring and review; note the optional VISP training offer; and defer any Civvie Box expansion until evidence from the pilot supports a separate decision.

Appendix A - Policy Alignment Matrix

Policy / framework	Relevant principle	Application
Corporate Plan 2026-2030 - Thriving People	Communities to thrive; vulnerable residents; independent living; dignity, choice and belonging; homelessness prevention; health/wellbeing; employment; Armed Forces.	Primary basis for community-support framing.
Preventing Homelessness	Early intervention and targeted pre-crisis services, including at the point of leaving the Armed Forces.	Supports prevention as an outcome without dictating funding source.
Lincolnshire Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027	Prevention, protection and partnership; countywide approach to homelessness and rough sleeping.	Supports partnership pathway and wider understanding of instability.
Armed Forces Covenant	Due regard to service-related disadvantage in housing and recognition that special provision may sometimes be justified.	Supports veteran-specific consideration; does not itself mandate Squaddie Box.
Armed Forces - Housing	Council housing/homelessness support and Op FORTITUDE route.	Provides onward referral pathway.
Workforce Plan 2026-2030	Investment in staff development, confidence and high-quality resident services.	Supports consideration of optional VISP as workforce development.

Appendix B - Performance Dashboard

Indicator	Frequency	Purpose
Referrals received	Monthly/quarterly	Demand and partner awareness.
Accepted allocations	Monthly/quarterly	Eligible demand.
Active users / occupancy	Monthly	Utilisation and capacity.
Veteran status identification route	Quarterly	Whether status was already known or newly identified.
Referral source	Quarterly	Which pathways work.
Broad presenting circumstance	Quarterly	Nature of instability / need.
Onward signposting/referral	Quarterly	Connection to existing support.
Known positive engagement	Quarterly	Housing/health/DWP/employment/veterans-sector engagement.
Stable exit	Quarterly	Users who no longer require the service.
User feedback	6/12/24 months	Dignity, accessibility and practical value.
Partner feedback	6/12/24 months	Operational usefulness and duplication.
Incidents / complaints	Quarterly summary	Governance assurance.
Learning / recommendations	6/12/24 months	Evidence-led continuation or redesign.

Appendix C - VISP Optional Training Schedule

This appendix is illustrative and does not constitute a price quotation or contractual commitment. Final content, duration and cohort arrangements should be separately agreed if West Lindsey wishes to commission VISP.

Module	Theme	Indicative content
Module 1	Why veteran identification matters	Service history, transition, disclosure and relevance to local services.
Module 2	Recognition without assumption	Potential indicators; avoiding stereotypes; respectful curiosity.
Module 3	The identification conversation	Appropriate questions, consent, proportionality and recording.
Module 4	Barriers to engagement	Housing instability, pride, trauma, neurodivergence, relationship breakdown and other possible barriers - presented without assuming they apply to every veteran.
Module 5	Referral pathways	West Lindsey Housing, Op FORTITUDE and other agreed veteran/statutory support.
Module 6	Scenario practice	Housing, customer service, community and multi-agency examples.
Module 7	Data and organisational learning	Consistent recording, privacy, trends and feedback.
Module 8	Action planning	How teams incorporate veteran identification into normal practice.

Potential delivery options may include a concise awareness session or a fuller training package. The precise offer should be confirmed by Squaddie Box CIC before any committee paper quotes duration, accreditation or price.

Appendix D - Evidence and Sources Reviewed

- West Lindsey District Council, Squaddie Box - Thriving People committee report, 16 July 2026 (supplied source document).
- West Lindsey District Council, Our West Lindsey, Our Future - Corporate Plan 2026-2030.
- West Lindsey District Council, Corporate Plan 2026-2030 - Thriving People detail.
- West Lindsey District Council, Preventing Homelessness.
- West Lindsey District Council, Homelessness.
- Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027.
- West Lindsey District Council, Armed Forces Covenant.
- West Lindsey District Council, Armed Forces - Housing.
- West Lindsey District Council Workforce Plan 2026-2030.
- West Lindsey District Council, Housing Strategy Refresh 2022-2024 (historic/contextual only where relevant).

Evidence note

Council policy material was checked against publicly available West Lindsey sources in August 2026. The July Squaddie Box committee report is treated as the primary source for the previous local demand figures, previous financial proposition and the Council's earlier assessment. Where this revised proposal makes recommendations, they are presented as proposals rather than as existing Council policy.

Squaddie Box©

Veterans Address Stability Infrastructure Proposal

West Lindsey District – Gainsborough

Who are we?

Squaddie Box provides secure, verified postal address infrastructure for homeless and housing-unstable veterans.

We operate under a licensed national safeguarding framework designed to:

- Protect veterans
- Protect councils
- Protect partner organisations
- Ensure consistent governance and controlled verification

We are not a housing provider.
We remove a structural barrier that prevents reintegration.

WHY THIS IS NEEDED

The veteran currently residing in Gainsborough does not have a recognised postal address.

Without an address, a veteran cannot reliably:

- Maintain Universal Credit or PIP claims
- Receive housing correspondence
- Register or remain registered with a GP
- Receive NHS referrals or hospital letters
- Maintain banking access
- Apply for employment
- Receive legal correspondence
- Renew identification documents

The system is address-dependent.

Without one, progress slows, paperwork is delayed, benefits can be disrupted, and engagement with services becomes inconsistent.

WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING

Deployment of:

1 Squaddie Box Pod

Supporting up to 4 verified veterans
Located within West Lindsey District (Gainsborough)

Annual Licensed Infrastructure Fee:
£7,500 per year
24-month minimum term

The capital purchase of the pod is funded separately (by council or sponsor).
Currently £1000

The annual fee covers:

- Brand licence and IP usage
- Safeguarding and verification framework
- Data governance and GDPR compliance
- Operational standards and oversight
- Allocation and access management
- Escalation and incident protocols
- Annual reporting and compliance assurance

This is not rental of a mailbox.

It is licensed veterans reintegration infrastructure.

SELF-ENABLING MODEL

Squaddie Box does not create dependency.

It enables independence.

Once a stable address is in place:

- Benefit applications process more smoothly
- Housing correspondence is received without delay
- NHS appointments are not missed
- Banking access can be maintained
- Employment applications become viable

Administrative friction reduces.

Reduced friction accelerates reintegration.

It allows the veteran to move forward under their own momentum.

COMPLEMENTING EXISTING SERVICES

Squaddie Box does not replace:

- Council housing services
- Outreach teams
- Veterans charities
- Armed Forces Champions
- Support workers

It complements them.

It gives all partners a stable administrative anchor point.

Once installed, it speeds up the administrative processes required when applying for:

- Benefits
- Housing support
- Healthcare services
- Identification documents
- Employment and training opportunities

It strengthens the work already being done locally.

WHEN

Subject to agreement on host site and capital funding route, implementation can begin immediately.

Typical deployment timeframe: 4–8 weeks from approval.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Each pod supports up to 4 veterans.

At £7,500 per year:

- £1,875 per veteran per year
- £156 per month
- £5.13 per day

Compared to:

- Temporary accommodation (£15,000–£25,000 per year)
- Housing First and other intensive support models

This is a preventative infrastructure investment.

If just one escalation event is avoided — emergency accommodation, sanction, enforcement action — the intervention offsets its cost.

SUMMARY

Squaddie Box provides:

- Address stability
- Administrative acceleration
- System access
- Dignity and legitimacy

It is a practical, low-cost intervention that strengthens local support structures rather than replacing them.

For Gainsborough, this is not abstract policy.

It is a direct solution to an identified barrier.

Dean Wormleighton CEO Squaddie Box CIC ©

SQUADDIE BOX©

Veterans Stability, Identity & Reintegration (VSIR)

10-Year Managed Infrastructure Plan

West Lindsey District Council – Gainsborough

Prepared by:
Dean Wormleighton
CEO – Squaddie Box CIC

Unit 7c Modern Moulds Industrial Estate, Littlehampton.

Date: 1st March 2026

1. Executive Overview

West Lindsey District Council has requested a 10-year strategic framework for the deployment of Squaddie Box VSIR infrastructure within Gainsborough.

This proposal sets out a 10-year managed service model in which:

- Squaddie Box funds and retains ownership of the pod infrastructure.
- The Council pays a revenue-based annual licence fee.
- No capital purchase is required from the Council.
- No asset liability sits with the Council.

This structure removes procurement friction and simplifies budget allocation.

2. Financial Structure (Revenue-Only Model)

Capital Cost of Pod:
Fully absorbed and funded by Squaddie Box CIC.

Annual Licensed Infrastructure Fee:
£7,500 per annum.

Years 1–2: Fixed
Years 3–10: Indexed annually by CPI.

No additional capital contribution required from West Lindsey.

3. 10-Year Financial Projection (3% CPI from Year 3)

Year	Annual Fee
1	£7,500
2	£7,500
3	£7,725
4	£7,957
5	£8,196
6	£8,442
7	£8,695
8	£8,956
9	£9,225
10	£9,502

Estimated 10-Year Total: ~£83,698

No capital exposure for Council.

4. What the £7,500 Annual Licence Covers

This is not rental of a mailbox.

It is licensed reintegration infrastructure under managed governance.

The annual licence includes:

Infrastructure Provision

- Fully funded pod installation
- Secure 4-compartment unit
- Maintenance coordination
- Asset lifecycle oversight
- Replacement planning

Safeguarding & Verification Framework

- Controlled allocation
- Identity verification standards
- National safeguarding model
- Access governance

Compliance & Governance

- GDPR compliance
- Data governance structure
- Incident management protocols
- Annual compliance assurance

Operational Oversight

- Allocation management
- Escalation protocols
- Reporting framework
- Partner integration guidance

The Council pays for stability infrastructure, not hardware ownership.

5. Programme Phasing

Phase 1: Pilot (Years 1–2)

Objectives:

- Establish operational baseline
- Confirm local demand
- Measure reintegration acceleration
- Review referral pathways

18-month review milestone.

Phase 2: Consolidation (Years 3–5)

- CPI index applied
- Embed within housing workflows
- Strengthen stakeholder engagement
- Introduce structured outcome reporting

Optional break clause at Year 5.

Phase 3: Long-Term Integration (Years 6–10)

- Longitudinal data analysis
- Cost avoidance measurement
- Strategic renewal review
- Potential scaling decision

6. Capacity & Impact

Each pod supports up to 4 veterans concurrently.

Conservative throughput:
8–10 veterans per year.

Over 10 years:
80–100 veterans supported.

Annual cost per veteran:
£1,875.

Daily cost per veteran:
£5.13.

7. Return on Investment

Temporary accommodation:
£15,000–£25,000 per year per individual.

Emergency accommodation:
£80–£120 per night.

If one 30-day emergency placement (£2,400–£3,600) is prevented, the cost begins to offset.

If one long-term escalation is prevented annually, the intervention materially exceeds its cost.

The programme operates as preventative infrastructure.

8. Governance & Risk

Infrastructure Ownership:
Retained by Squaddie Box CIC.

Council Asset Risk:
None.

Inflation Risk:
Managed through CPI index from Year 3.

Failure Contingency:
Asset replacement or repair coordinated by Squaddie Box.

Termination Protection:
Structured review points at Years 2, 5, and 10.

9. Why This Model Strengthens the Council Position

- No capital outlay
- No depreciation or disposal liability
- Revenue-only budgeting
- Predictable CPI-adjusted expenditure
- Clear review milestones
- Low-cost preventative intervention

10. Summary

This 10-year VSIR model provides:

- Fully funded infrastructure
- Licensed reintegration framework
- Administrative stability for veterans
- Structured governance
- CPI-protected sustainability
- Minimal financial exposure for Council

For Gainsborough, this is a practical structural solution to an identified barrier.

Thriving Council Committee
Thursday, 24th September 2026

Subject: Review of the Environment & Sustainability Member Working Group

Report by:	Rachael Hughes Assistant Chief Executive, Policy & Delivery rachael.hughes@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Contact Officer:	Steve Leary Policy & Strategy Officer – Environment & Sustainability steve.leary@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Executive Summary:

In 2025, following a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, Full Council resolved to review the organisation's existing Member Working Groups to assess whether they remained relevant, delivery focused, and aligned to corporate priorities. Resultingly, a review of the Environment & Sustainability Member Working Group has recently been completed, with a recommendation to close the Working Group. This report sets out the findings of the review, and, as required by the Terms of Reference, seeks committee approval to formally close the Environment & Sustainability Member Working Group. Provision has been made for the continued delivery of the Council's Environment & Sustainability Strategy through business-as-usual activity as set out in this report.

Appendices to Report

- Environment & Sustainability Working Group Terms of Reference
- Member Working Group Activity and Achievements 2019 - 2026

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That members agree to disband the Environment and Sustainability Member Working Group, effective from the point of decision.

2. That members note the ongoing arrangements that are in place to ensure continued delivery of this work area.

1. Introduction

1.1 In 2020, the Council's Environment and Sustainability Member Working Group was formally established to oversee development of the Council's Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy; and to oversee delivery of the corresponding Action Plan. The Strategy was adopted by Full Council in May 2021, and refreshed in June 2024 to align it with the 2023 Corporate Plan and to introduce updated decarbonisation milestones.

1.2 Sitting alongside the Strategy is the Environment and Sustainability Action Plan, which has recently been reviewed and updated to reflect the 2026 Corporate Plan.

1.3 Throughout this period, the cross-party Environment and Sustainability (E&S) Member Working Group has met regularly throughout this period to steer and oversee delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan. As per the Council's Constitution, the E&S member working group has no decision-making powers and exists to provide an overview and steer. Formal decisions relating to this work area have, until recently, rested with Prosperous Communities Committee as the parent committee. Following the recent review of Council governance, this responsibility now rests with Thriving Places Committee.

1.4 In 2025, Full Council resolved to undertake a review of the Council's member working groups to ensure they remained delivery focused and aligned to the priorities of the Corporate Plan, which was formally adopted in March 2026. This report presents the outcome of the review of the E&S Member Working Group, with a recommendation that the group be formally closed for the reasons outlined in the report.

2 Outcome of the Review of the Environment & Sustainability Member Working Group

2.1 The review was co-ordinated by officers from the Policy Team, with close involvement from the Member Working Group, and in consultation with the Administration to ensure alignment with the new Corporate Plan and the priorities of the Council.

2.2 In considering the need for a Working Group, the review considered the new internal governance arrangements adopted by Full Council in March 2026; the existing workplan of the Member Working Group; the priorities of the Council; and the requirements of Local Government Reorganisation. The government's recent announcement (7th September 2026) that LGR is paused pending a review does not impact the outcome of the review of the Environment and Sustainability Working Group, nor the recommendations in this paper.

2.3 The Council's new governance arrangements are the main driver for recommending the closure of the Member Working Group. These arrangements mean that progress updates on the Council's key deliverables (such as project updates and strategy delivery) are considered and scrutinised through the new governance framework, aligned to the Corporate Plan, negating the need for a separate Member Working Group. As such progress against deliverables relating to Environment and Sustainability are updated at the relevant Strategic Delivery Panel, and reported through the relevant Thematic Business Plan to the appropriate policy committee.

2.4 Neither the E&S Member Working Group, or the Strategic Delivery Panels have decision-making powers meaning that any future Environment and Sustainability policies, projects or grant funding opportunities requiring a member decision will continue to be presented to the relevant policy committee for approval in the usual way. Taking this approach means that officer and member time can be maximised on value-added activity that is aligned more closely to the Council's priorities, and to the requirements on the organisation in respect of Local Government Reorganisation.

2.5 A review of the Environment & Sustainability action plan found that much of the project-based work has either been completed, or has gone through the required decision-making process and is now moving into delivery. The remainder of the plan includes actions such as communications, community engagement, horizon scanning for new and relevant opportunities, and working with partner organisations, all of which can be considered business as usual activity which does not require specific input or oversight from the Member Working Group. It is considered that business as usual activity can continue in the usual way, co-ordinated by the Policy Team as part of its day-to-day activity and working with other teams across the Council as required.

3 Continuing to Deliver the Environment and Sustainability Strategy

3.1 The Environment and Sustainability Strategy was refreshed and re-adopted in June 2024. The principles and commitments of the Strategy remain of importance to the Council, acknowledging the uncertainties that exist around the future direction of LGR. Taking this into account, the current focus is on delivering those elements of the E&S Strategy that can be continued or achieved in a meaningful and purposeful way. This includes contributing to the delivery of the Council's recently adopted enhanced Community Grants Programme, which includes an element of Environment and Sustainability grant funding; and continuing to work with and support community groups in applying for external grant funding. One such example is the ongoing work to roll-out the Council's recently adopted Community Benefits Policy to ensure local communities receive maximum benefit.

3.2 Externally, work continues with partner organisations and with other Lincolnshire Councils to identify and progress opportunities. This includes policy development work linked to the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and ongoing work with other Lincolnshire Councils to explore opportunities on matters such as community preparedness and resilience. Such work is an important contributor to the delivery of the Council's E&S Strategy.

3.3 Internally, support continues to be provided on recently approved projects relating to Council assets to ensure sustainability is factored into decision-making. The Council's long-established communications campaign "Small

Steps, Big Impact" will continue as an important tool in supporting residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint. Work is underway to enhance this communication and ensure maximum coverage through all of the Council's contact channels.

3.4 More generally, horizon scanning continues so that any new and relevant opportunities can be brought to members attention for decision as required.

3.5 Taken together, this work demonstrates the continued targeted and purposeful delivery of the Council's Environment and Sustainability Strategy in a co-ordinated manner that is aligned to the Corporate Plan and associated governance framework. The Strategy can now be considered embedded into the Corporate Plan and business as usual operations, with activity actively reported in Thematic Business Plans to the Strategic Delivery Panels and policy committees.

3.6 It is therefore recommended that the Environment and Sustainability Member Working Group can be formally closed, acknowledging the significant amount of positive work that members and officers of the group have undertaken over the years to progress the Council's agenda in this area and to support residents, businesses and communities. These efforts have ensured that such work can continue and that priorities for the district's people and places in respect of climate change and sustainability can be clearly articulated and enabled.

4. Alternative Options

	Option	**Rationale for not recommending**
1	To continue the role of the Member Working Group (i.e. 'do nothing')	It is considered that the Working Group has fulfilled its brief as set out in the Terms of Reference, with the Environment & Sustainability Strategy now well-embedded and with much of the action plan now being delivered through business-as-usual. As such, continuing the Working Group is not considered an effective use of Member and Officer time.

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None arising from this report

Financial: FIN/77/27/TC/SL

In 2021, the Council set aside an earmarked Environmental and Climate Change Reserve of £500k. The current balance stands at £282.2k, which is uncommitted. The Council is currently undertaking a review of all earmarked reserves – the Environmental and Climate Change Reserve will be considered as part of that review which is due to be presented to Thriving Council Committee for decision in November.

Staffing:

None arising from this report.

LGR implications:

None arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

Not applicable in the context of this report.

Data Protection Implications:

Not applicable in the context of this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The Council remains committed to the principles and aspirations of its Environment and Sustainability Strategy. Activity will continue as outlined in this report. As such, the recommendations in this report are not considered to carry any inherent risks.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

Not applicable in the context of this report

Health Implications:

Not applicable in the context of this report.

Risk Assessment:
Not applicable in the context of this report.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
None

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)	**Yes**		**No**	**X**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications	**Yes**		**No**	**X**

Environment and Sustainability Working Group:

Approved by Prosperous Communities Committee

1 Background

The Council notes that the impacts of climate change are a cause of serious environmental issues both locally and around the world

The 'Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C', published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018

(a) describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and

(b) Confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector

Policies to reduce environmental damage caused by human activity can also have associated health, wellbeing and economic benefits

Council at its meeting passed a resolution to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2050, in line with the UK Government's target.

To assist the Council in achieving this position, work has been completed to produce a Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy and action plan for the Council. The production of this was overseen by a previous Environment and Sustainability Working Group. Now that work has been completed, a revised terms of reference is required for the Group.

2 Purpose of the Working Group

To oversee the delivery of the Council's Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy and action plan, designed to reduce the impact of the Council's activities to a net-zero carbon position by 2050, or earlier, and for a similar position to be achieved across the District within the same timescales.

To use their influence to promote carbon reduction and sustainability within their respective Groups and across the Council, District and Greater Lincolnshire.

3 Membership of the Group and Chairmanship and Appointments

3.1 The Working Group shall comprise six Members including the Member Champion for Environment and Climate Change.

3.2 The remaining five Members will be made up from serving Members of either of the Council's policy committees (Prosperous Communities Committee and Corporate Policy & Resources Committee) or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.3 Membership will comprise cross party representation.

3.4 The Working Group shall be chaired by the Member Champion for Environment and Climate Change.

3.5 For continuity purposes the Membership of the Group shall remain in place until Annual Council 2023. Re-appointments will be made each Election Cycle, until such time as the Group's work has concluded. *

* Members who are designated to serve on the Working Group should give this work priority. Should any Member find that they are unable to maintain commitment, the Chair will inform the respective Committee Chairmen who will identify and nominate replacement(s). Change in representation by this means will be recommended to the Prosperous Communities Committee for approval.

3.6 Other elected Members may attend the Working Group, but their level of contribution will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

3.7 Officers, on behalf of the Working Group, may commission the services of experts, residents, and partners as it considers necessary. Such attendees will not be voting Members of the Working Group but will be present on an information sharing/gathering basis.

4 Frequency of Meetings and Quorum

4.1 The quorum for a meeting shall be four members.

4.2 The Working Group shall determine its own meeting frequency dependent upon need. But meetings will be called with at least seven days' notice.

4.3 Members may be required to engage with partners and gather information between meetings.

5 Reporting Lines and Accountability

5.1 The Working Group is directly responsible to the Prosperous Communities Committee.

5.2 The Working Group has no direct decision making powers and will make recommendations to the Prosperous Communities Committee.

6 Resources

6.1 The Working Group does not have a supporting budget. Budgets will be identified on recommendations made to the relevant Policy Committee.

6.2 Officers will support the Working Group and provide advice, information, guidance and logistical support.

6.3 Administrative support will be provided by Democratic Services and notes from each meeting will be retained.

7 Milestones

7.1 Progress reports on the delivery of the action plan will be presented to the Prosperous Communities Committee at least annually, with the first report due by the end of March 2022.

7.2 Any significant additions to, or deviations from, the action plan will be reported to the Prosperous Communities Committee for approval as necessary.

APPENDIX 2

SMALL STEPS, BIG IMPACT

Seven years of the Environment and Sustainability Member Working Group

December 2019 to July 2026

A celebration of the achievements of the Council's cross-party Working Group, presented with the report *Review of the Environment and Sustainability Member Working Group* to Thriving Council Committee on Thursday 24 September 2026.

FOREWORD

FROM THE CHAIR

Cllr Stephen Bunney, Chair of the Working Group and Member Champion for Environment and Climate Change

When this Council resolved in November 2019 to make its activities net zero carbon by 2050, we set up a cross-party Working Group to turn that ambition into a strategy, and then into action. Nearly seven years on, I am proud of what the Group, and the officers who supported it, have achieved.

I want to begin by thanking former Councillor Tracey Coulson, who chaired the Group in its founding years and steered our first Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy through to unanimous adoption in June 2021. Her insistence that carbon reduction should go hand in hand with tackling fuel poverty, protecting nature and improving health and wellbeing shaped everything that followed.

The pages that follow tell the story: solar panels on our buildings and our waste trucks, a new depot built as a green hub, twin-stream recycling that cut contamination by two thirds, a carbon net zero Local Plan, and a campaign that reached more than 100,000 people. Most recently, the Group helped shape a Community Benefit Policy that will give communities living alongside large solar developments a fair and lasting return.

None of this was the work of one party or one person. Members from across the Council gave their time freely, challenged constructively and kept the agenda moving through changes of administration and the demands of local government reorganisation. Officers turned ideas into funded, delivered projects.

The Strategy is now embedded in how the Council works, and its delivery continues through our new governance. The Working Group has done its job. Together, our small steps have made a big impact.

Councillor Stephen Bunney
Chair, Environment and Sustainability Member Working Group

THE GROUP AT A GLANCE

ESTABLISHED
3 December 2019 by Prosperous Communities Committee, following the Council's unanimous net zero motion of 4 November 2019

PURPOSE
To develop, and then oversee delivery of, the Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

MEMBERSHIP
Six cross-party Members plus the Member Champion for Environment and Climate Change, who chairs

CHAIRS
Cllr Tracey Coulson (founding Chair) and Cllr Stephen Bunney

REPORTED TO
Prosperous Communities Committee, later Thriving Places Committee, with annual progress reports from 2022

STRATEGY
Adopted June 2021; refreshed June 2024 to reflect new policy developments; ten themes; Action Plan updated 2025 and 2026

MEETINGS
Regular cross-party meetings with an action log and standing updates from officers

CLIMATE FINANCE
£500,000 Environmental and Climate Change Reserve set aside by the Council to support delivery – more than £500,000 brought in through competitive funding bids and spent on delivery

FINAL MEETING
9 July 2026

> *Embracing this strategy fully into the fabric of our Council will ensure all decisions and policy making has to put our mission to reduce carbon and consideration for our environment at the forefront.*
>
> **Cllr Tracey Coulson, founding Chair, on the adoption of the Strategy, June 2021**

THE JOURNEY

2019 TO 2026

Nov 2019	Full Council unanimously resolves to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2050 and to develop a new strategy on sustainability, climate change and the environment.
Dec 2019	Prosperous Communities Committee establishes the cross-party Working Group, chaired by the Member Champion for Environment and Climate Change.
Feb 2021	Carbon Management Plan 2021 to 2026 published, measuring the Council's footprint against a 2008/09 baseline.
Jun 2021	Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan adopted unanimously by Full Council. Revised Terms of Reference (July 2021) move the Group from developing the Strategy to overseeing its delivery.
Nov 2021	The £5 million Caenby Corner depot opens as a green hub with rooftop solar, battery storage, air source heat pumps, LED lighting and electric vehicle charging, following a successful bid for Government Funding that the E&S group championed.
Apr 2022	Twin-stream recycling begins with the purple-lidded paper and card bin. Scheme cuts contamination and saves cash for taxpayers with increased revenue for recycling and reduced disposal cost
Sep 2022	Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme bid to replace the Guildhall's gas boilers with a cleaner system and more solar. Bid unsuccessful – but knowledge gained led to a successful bid in 2023
Apr 2023	Central Lincolnshire Local Plan adopted: one of only three carbon net zero local plans in the country.
Jul 2023	Solar panels fitted to six waste collection trucks. The Small Steps, Big Impact campaign launches.
Autumn 2023	First Small Steps, Big Impact achievements brochure published with the annual progress report.
Jun 2024	Refreshed Strategy adopted, aligned to the 2023 Corporate Plan with new decarbonisation milestones for 2028, 2030 and 2035.
Jul 2024	Vehicle Decarbonisation Strategy approved, setting the route to a fully decarbonised fleet by 2035.
Nov 2024	Annual progress report to Prosperous Communities Committee with Small Steps, Big Impact Edition 2 – highlighting more successes and achievements
2025	545 solar panels installed at Gainsborough Leisure Centre with £401,500 of Government funding following a coordinated bid that was supported by E&S Members. Clean energy produced will cut costs and help financial sustainability. Annual report accompanied by achievements video – highlighting more big wins in this area.
Mar 2026	First Biodiversity Duty Report published. The Group.input into Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Solar Community Benefit Policy. £50,000 Community Sustainability Grants scheme created from the Climate Reserve.
Jul 2026	Final meeting on 9 July. Following E&S Member work in developing and endorsing it, the Large-Scale Renewable Energy Community Benefit Policy is adopted unanimously by Thriving Places Committee on 14 July.

SEVEN YEARS OF DELIVERY

THE GROUP IN NUMBERS

28%

lower net emissions than the 2008/09 baseline: 2,036 tonnes down to 1,467 tonnes CO2e in 2024/25

6

waste trucks fitted with solar panels, each saving around 600 litres of diesel and six tonnes of CO2 a year

545

solar panels at Gainsborough Leisure Centre, funded by £401,500 of Government grant, saving about 42 tonnes of CO2 a year and keeping costs down by cutting energy bills

£10m

Home Energy Upgrade scheme launched, with 90 homes helped to improve their energy efficiency in 1st year

100,000+

people reached by the Small Steps, Big Impact campaign since its launch in July 2023

£500,000

Green Growth grant fund for local businesses, alongside the Green Tourism Toolkit and the Hospitable Green Programme

29

staff certified as Carbon Literate, and 11 schools visited to promote waste awareness in 1 year

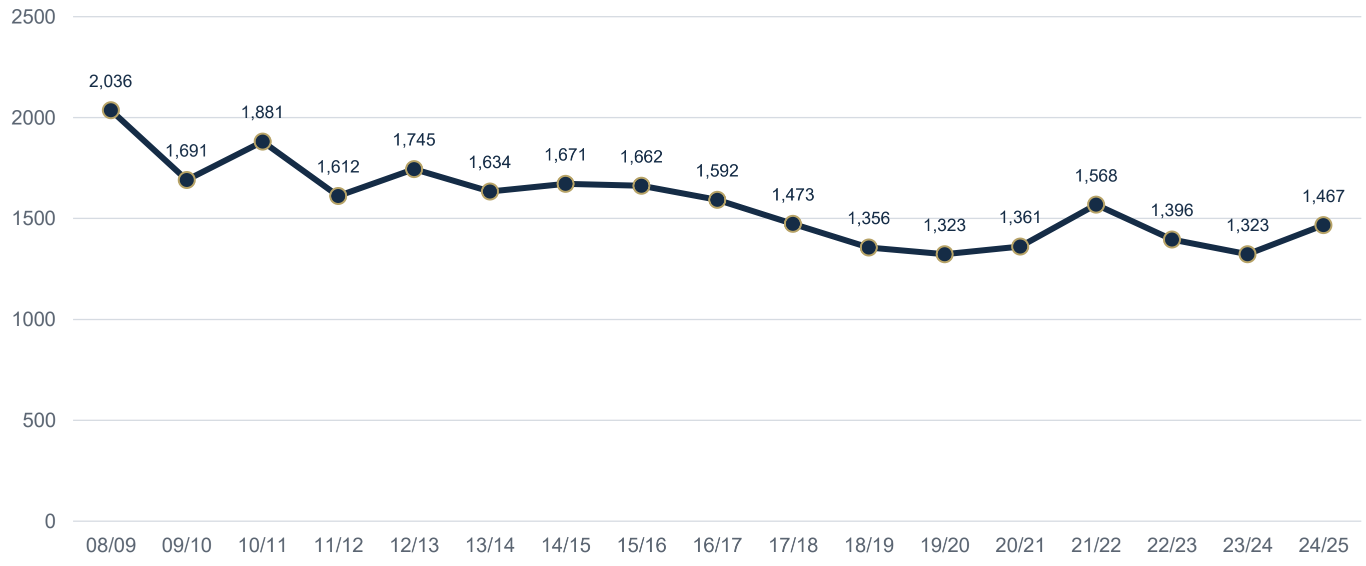
2.5GW+

of consented solar covered by the Community Benefit Policy: at least £500 per MW targeted every year for host communities

7,000t

of West Lindsey paper and card and ‘dry recycling’ through twin-stream collections annually, with contamination cut from over 30% to under 5%

Council net greenhouse gas emissions, 2008/09 to 2024/25 (tonnes CO2e)



Source: WLDC Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2024 to 2025 (published 24 September 2025). The 2021/22 rise reflects post-Covid recovery and the first inclusion of Market Rasen Leisure Centre and Lea Fields Crematorium; the 2024/25 rise reflects higher DEFRA conversion factors and increased activity. The green electricity tariff saved 83.56 tonnes CO2e in 2024/25.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

The Group kept the Council's own estate, fleet and services at the front of the agenda, so that the organisation could ask others to act with credibility.

Solar panels on the Council's waste collection fleet, July 2023 (WLDC)

Solar panels on West Lindsey Leisure Centre (Gainsborough), July 2025

A green hub at Caenby Corner

The £5 million operational depot opened in November 2021 with rooftop solar and battery storage, air source heat pumps for heating and hot water, LED lighting and six electric vehicle charging points. Part funded through Govt Funding following an Officer bid. Supervisor vans were cut from six to three, two of them electric.

Cleaner fleet, cleaner collections

Solar panels on six waste trucks (July 2023) cut each vehicle's diesel use by around 600 litres and emissions by six tonnes a year. The Vehicle Decarbonisation Strategy (July 2024) charts the 38-vehicle fleet's route to full decarbonisation by 2035, informed by a depot electrification study funded by the Midlands Net Zero Hub.

Decarbonising our buildings

Solar on the Guildhall, Gainsborough Leisure Centre and Festival Hall has earned around £21,000 a year in feed-in tariff income for over a decade. A Low Carbon Skills Fund bid (2023) set the path to make our buildings cleaner and more efficient, and 545 new panels at the Leisure Centre (2025) save about 42 tonnes of CO_2 and 221 MWh a year – whilst reducing running costs too.

Right thing, right bin

Twin-stream recycling, agreed in November 2021 and rolled out from April 2022, has seen almost 6,000 tonnes of West Lindsey paper and card collected, with contamination falling from over 30 per cent before roll-out to under 10 per cent. Next: kerbside battery and vape collection, agreed for 2027, following information gathering and campaigning by E&S Members.

Measuring what matters

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reports covering Scopes 1, 2 and 3 have been published every year, and a green electricity tariff saved 83.56 tonnes of CO_2e in 2024/25 alone. Carbon intensity has fallen from 4.1 to 3.1 tonnes CO_2e per full-time employee since 2008/09. A Climate, Environment and Sustainability Impact Assessment now sits at the front of every committee report, so that climate is weighed in every decision.

COMMUNITIES AND NATURE

Parish councils, village halls, charities and volunteers took the lead, with the Council providing grants, advice and a route to funding.

Mulsanne Park Pavilion, Nettleham: solar and storage with £10,000 of grants

Rock Foundation, Caistor: community allotment and solar. Officers helped write a successful bid for £120,000 worth of energy efficiency and heating

Parish and community energy

Mulsanne Park Pavilion became a sustainability exemplar for Nettleham after £10,000 of grants, including £5,000 from Zero Carbon Parishes, paid for solar panels and energy storage: instant savings and a blueprint for other parishes. The Rock Foundation in Caistor gained permission for solar to power its whole site. Toft Newton Village Hall and Bardney Christian Trust added solar, Great Limber planted a community orchard, and groups such as Welton Village Hall secured energy assessments to plan their next steps.

Grants that unlock local action

Officers helped community organisations apply successfully for national funding for tree planting, protecting nature, improving heating systems and energy efficiency, and running events. We are also supporting a £50,000 Community Sustainability Grants scheme, paid for from the Climate Reserve. It offers grants of £200 to £5,000 for local projects that reduce carbon emissions, save energy or support nature. We will keep supporting national bids and make a positive difference through the Community Grants Programme launched this summer.

Wildflower meadow, West Lindsey (WLDC)

Planning for nature and net zero

The carbon net zero Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2023) sets standards for energy use in new development and for nature recovery, and several Neighbourhood Plans now promote community-led climate initiatives. The Council's first Biodiversity Duty Report (March 2026) works alongside Lincolnshire’s new Nature Recovery Strategy to aid protection of assets such as the Bardney Limewoods and the Witham and Ancholme river corridors.

Keeping communities informed

The Small Steps, Big Impact campaign, launched in July 2023, reached 100,000 people in its 1st year alone, with practical ideas for homes, businesses and parishes. A regular funding digest, newsletters and parish bulletin now signposts grants, news items and advice across the district as we keep amplifying our messages and keep our public informed of opportunities.

BUSINESSES AND HOMES

Local businesses cut costs and carbon with Council support, and Government funding was brought into the district to make homes warmer and cheaper to run.


Hemswell Antiques Centre


Sudbrooke Village Store

Depot Rail Ltd, Gainsborough


Cherry Tree Garden Centre

Green Growth for local business

A £500,000 Green Growth grant fund, delivered through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, helped businesses invest in energy efficiency and renewables. The Green Tourism Toolkit and four Hospitable Green sessions gave the visitor economy a route to certified sustainability, and businesses were signposted to the Lincolnshire Energy Toolkit, a carbon calculator and free advice. Agri-tech innovation was supported with Riseholme College.

Businesses making the change

Hemswell Antiques Centre, Europe's largest, joined more than 400 others on the Council's commercial waste service and added solar, insulation and EV charging. **Sudbrooke Village Store** fitted 26 panels generating 8.51 MWh - 22 per cent of its needs. **Depot Rail Ltd** installed six battery units to make the most of its solar, cutting over 2.5 tonnes of CO2 a year. **Cherry Tree Garden Centre** moved to LED lighting, rainwater harvesting and efficient kitchen equipment, saving over 17,000 kWh and 3,300 kg of CO2e a year. Businesses are picking up the baton realising that being greener makes good financial sense too.

Warmer homes

The £10 million Home Energy Upgrade scheme was launched – a regional scheme lead and hosted by WLDC staff. More than 100 West Lindsey homes received funding to improve their energy efficiency. Earlier rounds brought £800,000 of insulation and renewables grants to 90 homes and over £300,000 to improve insulation in 150 hard-to-reach homes, with Lincs 4 Warmer Homes signposting residents to help. Officers brought regular updates to the group and Members provided support, encouragement and directional steer.

Skills and awareness

Twenty-nine staff completed certified Carbon Literacy training, alongside three councillors, building the knowledge to make climate part of everyday decisions. Officers visited 11 schools to promote waste awareness, and the Council's waste vehicles became rolling advertisements for solar power.

> *This investment is a key element of our ambition to make the business more sustainable in the longer term.*
>
> **Arvind Bhutiya, owner, Sudbrooke Village Store**

> *Our business is continuing to expand and we intend to try and make our Gainsborough premises zero carbon.*
>
> **Owen Snell, Director, Depot Rail Ltd**

A FAIR SHARE FOR COMMUNITIES

£500

per megawatt, per year
index-linked, targeted for the full operational lifetime of each development

5	consented solar NSIPs: Gate Burton, Cottam, West Burton, Tillbridge and One Earth
2.5GW+	combined capacity, one of the largest concentrations of consented solar in England
Tens of millions	of pounds potential for host communities over the lifetime of the projects

Turning concern into a lasting return

West Lindsey hosts one of the largest concentrations of consented utility-scale solar in England. The Working Group's response evolved from concern about scale, with the Leader writing to Ministers in October 2022, into a constructive policy that secures a fair share for the communities that will live alongside this infrastructure for decades.

Over many months the Group examined the approach adopted by other councils and case studies elsewhere, tested its thinking - with local campaign groups as a critical friends - responded to the Government's consultation on mandatory community benefits, and liaised with live schemes such as Sutton Bridge locally, to see community benefit models working in practice.

The Large-Scale Renewable Energy Community Benefit Policy was adopted unanimously by Thriving Places Committee on 14 July 2026. It sets a floor, not a ceiling, and aligns West Lindsey with North Kesteven to give developers a consistent framework across Central Lincolnshire.

HOW THE GROUP SHAPED IT

Oct 2022
Leader writes to Ministers on the cumulative scale of solar proposals

Jan 2024
North Kesteven adopts a £500 per MW community benefit floor

June 2025
Group workshops; response to the Government consultation on mandatory community benefits

Feb 2026
Policy update to the group from Member / Officer sub-group.

Mar 2026
Legal advice and liaising with community organisations. Examining best practice

14 Jul 2026
Policy adopted unanimously by Thriving Places Committee. Communication Plan launched and then letters to developers

> *Communities that will live alongside this infrastructure for many years should receive a fair share of the benefits. This policy is about making sure local people see a lasting return from developments in their area.*
>
> **Cllr Stephen Bunney, July 2026**

> *This was a unanimous decision and reflects a shared commitment to securing the best outcome for our communities.*
>
> **Cllr Peter Morris, Chair of Thriving Places Committee, July 2026**

LEGACY

THE WORK CONTINUES

Embedded in how the Council works

The Strategy is now delivered through business as usual. Progress on Environment and Sustainability deliverables is reported through the Thriving Places Strategic Delivery Panel and the Thematic Business Plans to the Council's policy committees, and a Task and Finish Group can be convened if a specific piece of work ever needs it. The Working Group has fulfilled the brief set out in its Terms of Reference.

Continuing to deliver for West Lindsey

- Environment and Sustainability grant funding within the Community Grants Programme 2026 to 2028
- Rolling out the Community Benefit Policy so that communities receive the maximum benefit
- Sustainability built into decisions on Council assets, including any decision on the leisure centre
- Partnership work with Lincolnshire councils on community preparedness and resilience
- Small Steps, Big Impact communications through every Council channel delivering to a plan. Newsletters, funding updates etc
- Horizon scanning so that new opportunities reach Members for decision

WITH THANKS

Members who served on the Group

Founding Group, 2019 to 2023
Cllr Tracey Coulson (Chair)
Cllr Stephen Bunney, Cllr Owen Bierley, Cllr Lesley Rollings, Cllr Jane Ellis, Cllr Steve England, Cllr Caralyne Grimble, Cllr Jeff Summers

2023 to 2026

Cllr Stephen Bunney (Chair)
Cllr John Barrett, Cllr Emma Bailey, Cllr Matt Boles, Cllr Karen Carless, Cllr Ian Fleetwood, Cllr Maureen Palmer, Cllr Paul Swift

Officers
The Group was led by Steve Leary, supported by colleagues from the Policy and Strategy team and Democratic Services, with colleagues from across the Council, including waste and operational services to property, planning, communities, economic growth and communications, turning the Group's steer into delivered projects. Special thanks to Sue Norman for support throughout.

"Together, our small steps can have a big impact on our environment."

Cllr Stephen Bunney

FIND OUT MORE

- Environment and Sustainability Strategy (2024) and Action Plan (2025)
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2024 to 2025
- Biodiversity Duty Report (2026)
- Large-Scale Renewable Energy Community Benefit Policy (2026)

www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/climate

Thriving Council Committee Work Plan (as at 16 September 2026)

Purpose:
This report provides a summary of items of business due at upcoming meetings.

Recommendation:
1. That Members note the contents of this report.

Date	Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of the report	Date First Published
24 SEPTEMBER 2026				
24 Sep 2026	Approval to Extend Accommodation Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Contracts	Anna Grieve, Business Development Officer Contracts & Procurement	This report seeks approval from Members to extend two existing service contracts to ensure continuity of essential council services and provide value for money during a period of significant organisational change associated with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The extensions will ensure continuity of service, avoid operational disruption and provide an efficient and proportionate approach while the Council prepares for future service arrangements.	
24 Sep 2026	Community Asset Transfer – Market Rasen Town Council	Gary Reevell, Head of Property and Assets	To consider and approve the transfer of the Festival Hall offices to Market Rasen Town Council	
24 Sep 2026	Closure of the Environment & Sustainability Working Group	Ellen King, Head of Policy	Per the Terms of Reference, this paper seeks formal approval from Thriving Council Committee as the parent committee to close the Environment & Sustainability Member Working Group.	

24 Sep 2026	Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant	Sarah Elvin, Head of Housing, Health and Wellbeing	Thriving Council is asked to agree a one off Discretionary DFG	
24 Sep 2026	Squaddie Box	Sarah Elvin, Head of Housing, Health and Wellbeing	paper to agree funding for the Squaddie Box proposal	
24 Sep 2026	Trinity Ats Centre - Creative Foundation Fund Application	Cara Thornhill, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services	The Council has been invited to submit an application to the Creative Foundation Fund based on a successful expression of interest to the capital fund.	
24 Sep 2026	Community Asset Transfer - The Levelling's - Gainsborough Town Council	Gary Reevell, Head of Property and Assets	Report to recommend the Freehold transfer of The Levelling's grounds in Gainsborough to Gainsborough Town Council via the Community Asset Transfer Policy	
12 NOVEMBER 2026				
12 Nov 2026	Thriving Council Thematic Business Plan Progress Report	Peter Davy, Director Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)	To present the progress report for the Thriving Council Thematic Business Plan	17 June 2026
12 Nov 2026	Budget and Treasury Monitoring - Quarter 2 2026/2027 (1st April 2026 to 30th September 2026)	Sarah Scully, Finance Business Support Team Leader	This report sets out the revenue, capital and treasury management activity from 1st April 2026 to 30th September 2026	17 June 2026
12 Nov 2026	Proposed Fees and Charges 2027/2028	Caroline Capon, Corporate Finance Team Leader	Proposed Fees and Charges to take effect from 1 April 2027	17 June 2026
12 Nov 2026	Guildhall passive fire stopping	Luke Matthews, Senior Building and Projects Officer	To present the findings of the recent Passive Fire Protection Survey, provide details of the remedial works required, and seek approval for the allocation of funding to undertake the recommended works.	

12 Nov 2026	In-Cab tech	Robert Gilliot, Head of Waste and Street Cleansing	Look into the functions and costings of installing in-cab tec to all vehicles	
10 DECEMBER 2026				
10 Dec 2026	Review of Usable Reserves 2026/27	Sue Leversedge, Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151)	To review the Council's usable reserves as part of the MTFS process.	17 June 2026
10 Dec 2026	Gainsborough Market Power Supply Refurbishment	Luke Matthews, Senior Building and Projects Officer	This reports seeks funding for the replacement of 12x 'pop up' market trader electrical supplies in Gainsborough Market Place and Silver street as identified in the Strategic Asset Management Plan.	
10 Dec 2026	Customer Experience Strategy - update	Lyn Marlow, Head of Customer Services	Amendments made to Customer Experience Strategy to bring in line with the recently updated Corporate Plan	
10 Dec 2026	Safeguarding Policy & Procedures 2026-2029	Grant White, Head of Localities and Community Services	To approve the Council's Safeguarding Policy & Procedures following a 3 year full review.	22 July 2026
10 Dec 2026	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2027-2028	Angela Matthews, Benefits Manager	options for the Local Council Tax Support Scheme effective from 1 April 2027	
10 Dec 2026	Installation of "Sign In" Application	Lyn Marlow, Head of Customer Services	Obtaining permission to install "Sign In" Application for the registering of visitors and officers to the Guildhall.	
10 Dec 2026	Mid-Year Treasury Management Report 2026-27	Caroline Capon, Corporate Finance Team Leader	This report provides the Mid-Year update for Treasury Management Indicators in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003	17 June 2026
10 Dec 2026	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy	Katy Allen, Corporate Governance Officer	New Strategy for 2026 -2029	17 June 2026

10 Dec 2026	Free Parking Periods Review and Options	Luke Matthews, Senior Building and Projects Officer	This paper provides an overview of free parking periods across the district, including a review of the Gainsborough two-hour free parking trial. It presents feedback from local businesses, together with the outcomes of the public consultation, to inform Members' consideration of future parking arrangements.	22 July 2026
11 FEBRUARY 2027				
11 Feb 2027	Thriving Council Thematic Business Plan Progress Report	Peter Davy, Director Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)	To present the progress report for the Thriving Council Thematic Business Plan	17 June 2026
11 Feb 2027	Crisis & Resilience Fund Update 2026-27	Angela Matthews, Benefits Manager	An update on the distribution of the Crisis & Resilience Fund 2026-27	22 July 2026
11 Feb 2027	Thriving Council Committee Draft Budget 2027/2028 and estimates to 2031/2032.	Sarah Scully, Finance Business Support Team Leader	The report sets out details of the Committee's draft revenue budget for the period of 2027/2028 and estimates to 2031/2032.	17 June 2026
11 Feb 2027	Budget and Treasury Monitoring - Quarter 3 2026/2027 (1st April 2026 to 31st December 2026)	Sarah Scully, Finance Business Support Team Leader	This report sets out the revenue, capital and treasury management activity from 1st April 2026 to 31st December 2026.	17 June 2026
11 Feb 2027	Medium Term Financial Plan 2027/28 to 2031/32 The Budget 2027/28 Capital Programme 2027/28 to 2031/32	Sue Leversedge, Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151)	The purpose of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is to set a robust overall framework for the Council's Financial Strategy and spending plans over the next 5 years in support of delivering the Corporate Plan. The report sets out the revised financial plans within the Financial Analysis for changes in Government Funding, the	17 June 2026

			economic environment, local engagement and the priorities for the Council. The plan reflects the revisions to previous estimates and covers the period 2027/28 to 2031/32. The Capital Investment Strategy and Capital Programme records the Council's five year investment plan. The Treasury Management Strategy details the Council's Investment, Borrowing Strategies and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.	
22 APRIL 2027				
22 Apr 2027	Thriving Council Thematic Business Plan Progress Report	Peter Davy, Director Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)	To present the progress report for the Thriving Council Thematic Business Plan	17 June 2026

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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