

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held in the Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA on 28 January 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Bailey (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Trevor Young (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Karen Carless
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Paul Lee
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor Trevor Bridgwood
Councillor Lynda Mullally

In Attendance:
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Laura Hill Senior Homelessness Prevention Officer
Sue Leversedge Business Support Team Leader
Ele Snow Senior Democratic and Civic Officer

Apologies: Councillor Jeanette McGhee

Membership: Councillor Trevor Bridgwood was appointed substitute for Councillor Jeanette McGhee

49 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

50 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 3 December 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

51 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T. Bridgwood made a personal, non-pecuniary declaration in relation to agenda item 6a (Housing Register and Nomination Policy) in that he was an Armed Forces veteran and had been in contact with Officers regarding generic arrangements for veterans.

52 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

It was confirmed that there had been contact between Members and Officers in relation to the Sports and Physical Activity Working Group.

With no further comments, questions or requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising Schedule, setting out the current position of previously agreed actions as at 20 January 2025, was **DULY NOTED**.

53 WEST LINDSEY HOUSING REGISTER & NOMINATION POLICY

Members heard from the Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities regarding the West Lindsey Housing Register & Nomination Policy. It was explained that the policy covered the allocation scheme (as required by the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2012 and Localism Act 2011) for West Lindsey District Council. It set out the framework within which West Lindsey operated in the assessment of housing need on the common housing register and the nomination from that register to social rented properties. The policy detailed how eligibility for accessing the housing register was determined, and set out clear parameters for how housing register applications were banded and awarded priority. The policy also explained how the council nominated to registered providers, and the process for those nominations.

Members heard that the main objectives of the Policy were to:

- Provide a fair, open and accountable framework in which everyone had equality of access when seeking an affordable home
- Prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation
- Assist applicants in the greatest housing needs, whilst ensuring the best use of limited housing resources, and that balanced and stable communities were maintained
- Ensure quality and accessible advice and assistance about the scheme was freely available, to ensure applicants understood and could participate
- Take account of the relevant legislation and statutory guidance
- Have due regard to the Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Members of the Committee were requested to approve adoption of the policy, note the introduction of a Home Choices Customer Charter, and for authority for minor amendments to be delegated to the Director for Planning, Regeneration and Communities.

Members of the Committee expressed their thanks for the work which went into the report and associated work within the team. It was requested that it be a matter of record that the team was considered to be amazing, being open and supportive, and providing excellent

advice. There was also praise for the Registered Providers, for properties being maintained to a high standard and working closely with the Council. It was recognised that, for many reasons, such as the cost of living crisis, the difficult housing market, and the economic uncertainty, homes and housing was a challenging area, added to which being a rural district brought its own considerations when seeking to provide housing.

Thanks were expressed for the briefing session which had been undertaken by Officers and was open to all Councillors. It was noted that feedback had been offered and incorporated. It was also requested that there be widespread communication regarding the policy, for example through Parish Newsletters.

In response to a question relating to the percentage of nominations open to West Lindsey District Council, it was explained that percentage agreements would depend on how individual schemes were funded at the time of approval, however there was not a 100% blanket share of nominations. It was also clarified that the Housing Register and Nomination Policy did not deal with specialist accommodation, however concerns raised regarding placements by other organisations were noted.

A Member of the Committee enquired as to whether there could be an amendment regarding access for veterans, for the details contained within section seven of the policy to be carried into reference 2.3 of the banding criteria found in appendix A of the policy. It was explained the amendment could be undertaken under the delegation, if authorised by the Committee.

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

RESOLVED that

- a) the Housing Register and Nomination Policy be adopted; and
- b) approval for minor amendments to the policy to be delegated to the Director for Planning, Regeneration and Communities; and
- c) the introduction of a Home Choices Customer Charter, to set expectations for customers when accessing West Lindsey's housing register, be noted.

54 PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE DRAFT BUDGET 2025/2026 AND ESTIMATES TO 2029/2030.

The Committee heard from the Business Support Team Leader regarding the Prosperous Communities Committee Draft Budget 2025/2026 and estimates to 2029/2030. It was explained that the net base budget had increased from 2024/25 by £0.781m, with significant movements listed in the table provided at Appendix 4 of the report.

It was highlighted that £0.222m of the movement was an increase in approved use of earmarked reserves – which included the Community Grant programme previously funded from UKSPF, an adjustment to the budget for SLM leisure to reflect the current contract value and fixed term resources.

The remaining £0.559m was mainly due to an increase in salary budgets which had been affected by several factors, including:

- An assumed pay award of 3% for 25/26
- The continuation of the 24 hour CCTV service, previously funded through a combination of General Fund Balances and UKSPF grant, and
- Changes to employers' national insurance. Officers were waiting for confirmation of the NI Compensation Grant from Government, which was due in February 2025, however, estimates were at 55% of the budgeted figure for national insurance.

There had also been an increase in The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan contribution of £39,000, as approved by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee.

The Wellbeing Contract was a reduction in income of £19,000 from 2024/25, however the new contract was a gain for the MTFP of £77,000 in 2025/26 as the service had not been budgeted for beyond 2024/25.

Increased expenditure had been partly offset by the fees and charges review which had increased income by £146,000. Whilst Officers awaited the final settlement due in February, they were able to report that the proposed budgets for this committee contributed towards a balanced budget for 2025/26.

It was highlighted that Members were asked to recommend the budget to the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Members of the Committee expressed their thanks for the clear summary of the report, however, enquired as to whether there could be further work undertaken in relation to the provision costs of the CCTV service. It was noted that the increased monitoring had been approved previously, making use of UKSPF monies, however with funding coming to an end, it was requested that a review be undertaken. Specific areas of interest included whether the 24/7 service was still required, or whether there could be contributions sought from other organisations who gained benefits of the 24/7 CCTV provision. It was noted that it had been agreed for the Savings Board to receive such a review into the services, and this would be further shared with Committee Members in a timely manner. It was also confirmed that the figures included within the budgets were the uplift costs when the service was increased to 24/7 monitoring.

In response to a question regarding consultation responses, it was suggested that a more focussed approach with Town and Parish Councils might generate a greater response rate from parishes.

With no further comments or questions, and having been moved, seconded, and voted upon, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that Members recommend the Prosperous Communities Budget 2025/2026 and revenue estimates to 2029/2030 to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for the purpose of budget setting 2025/2026 and for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025/2026 to 2029/2030 (as amended by any decisions taken on this agenda).

55 WORKPLAN

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

The meeting concluded at 7.06 pm.

Chairman