

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 17 March 2026 commencing at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Owen Bierley
Councillor Frazer Brown
Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Jacob Flear
Councillor Mrs Angela Lawrence
Councillor Trevor Young
Councillor Paul Key
Councillor Peter Morris
Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings

In Attendance:
Sally Grindrod-Smith Director Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Cara Markham Commercial, Cultural and Leisure Development Manager
Grant White Communities Manager
Hannah Lane Community Officer - Sport & Physical Activity
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager

Apologies: Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor Sabastian Hague
Councillor Paul Lee

Membership: Councillor P Key was appointed substitute for Councillor C Darcel
Councillor P Morris was appointed substitute for Councillor P Lee
Councillor L Rollings was appointed substitute for Councillor S Hague

41 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

42 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 27 January 2026 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

43 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

There were no outstanding matters arising.

45 LEISURE, CULTURE, EVENTS AND TOURISM MEMBER WORKING GROUP, TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee heard from the Commercial, Cultural and Leisure Development Manager with a report seeking to review and update the Terms of Reference for the Leisure, Culture, Events and Tourism Member Working Group. It was explained that the requested amendments were minor, and in line with other working groups. Changes included the quorum of a meeting to be three Members, meetings to be held online unless otherwise specified, and business to be considered on a six month plan.

Members expressed their agreement with the amendments however there were concerns raised regarding the use of the word 'behaviour' when referring to Member attendance at meetings of the working group. With consensus of the committee it was agreed that the word 'behaviour' be replaced with 'attendance'.

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

RESOLVED that the reviewed Terms of Reference for the Working Group, as shown at appendix 1, and subject to the replacement of the word 'behaviour', be approved.

46 VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR FUNDING 2026/27

The Committee heard from the Communities Manager who presented recommendations regarding the approval of future voluntary & community sector core funding awards. It was explained that the Council provided a range of core Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grants to support the delivery of projects and services for the benefit of communities and residents. The delivery of these services contributed towards the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and various other strategies, with the current VCS funding agreements due to end on 31 March 2026. A summary of organisations currently receiving core VCS funding was provided, with an ongoing base budget within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) of £184,700 per annum in relation to the commitment for Voluntary & Community Sector funding grants, which matched the proposed grant awards for 2026/27.

Members heard that at the Prosperous Communities Committee meeting on 3 December 2024, a second recommendation had been approved to continue the VCS Funding Review work, with further engagement and site visits for Councillors during 2025. It was explained that review work was still required, and the report proposed conducting further engagement and review during 2026, taking into consideration key developments such as Local Government Reorganisation.

Members of the Committee expressed their recognition of the work undertaken by the voluntary and community sector, highlighting the financial difficulties faced across the board. The suggestion for a review to be undertaken was noted to have been referenced in the previous report to committee, with Members expressing disappointment that this had not progressed. It was requested that the review incorporated clear data regarding value for money for residents, as well as an understanding of services offered.

With regard to the figures proposed within the report and recommendation, a Member of the Committee detailed the work undertaken by Citizens Advice and, based on the breadth of support provided to residents, proposed an amendment to increase funding to Citizens Advice Lincoln and Lindsey to £70,000.

Further debate ensued, during which the services provided by named organisations were discussed, as well as identifying options for gathering relevant data, such as use of the State of the District report. During the course of debate, and with a view to ensuring the review of funding progressed in a timely manner, it was proposed that the timeframe contained within the second recommendation be amended for the Committee to receive the report by July 2026, as opposed to the printed December 2026. Following advice from Officers, and clarification from the Democratic Services Officer, the subsequent amendment was for the report to be received by the Committee by September 2026.

With both amendments having been proposed and seconded, the Chairman took the vote on each amendment.

The proposed to increase funding to Citizens Advice Lincoln and Lindsey to £70,000 was **lost** by majority vote.

The proposed amendment regarding the timescale for the review of funding to be presented to the Committee by September 2026 was **carried**.

Members of the Committee revisited the debate regarding gathering additional data, and it was proposed that an additional recommendation be put forward, that Officers provide a scope, fee proposal, and timeline, for an external review of Voluntary and Community Sector Funding for consideration by the Committee. The proposal was duly seconded and voted upon, and **lost** by majority vote.

With the Chairman drawing the debate to a close, the recommendations, as amended through the course of discussions, were put to the Committee. On being proposed, seconded, and voted upon, it was

RESOLVED that

a) the Voluntary & Community Sector funding for 2026/27 be approved as follows:

- Call Connect - £30,000
- Citizens Advice Lincoln & Lindsey - £60,200
- Gainsborough Adventure Playground Association - £15,000
- Lincoln Area Dial-a-Ride - £13,000

- Live & Local - £3,500
- The Conservation Volunteers - £30,000
- Voluntary Centre Services - £25,000
- West Lindsey Churches Festival - £8,000

- b) a review of Voluntary & Community Sector funding be undertaken as set out in Section 5 of this report and presented the relevant policy committee by September 2026.

47 SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

Members heard again from the Communities Manager regarding the draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. It was highlighted that the Prosperous Communities Committee previously approved a recommendation to develop and present a Sport & Physical Activity Strategy for West Lindsey. The Council did not have a strategy focussed on this area of delivery, and adopting a strategy would ensure a clear focus was established, including associated actions the Council would take in the future.

It was highlighted that the draft strategy provided a direction of travel for how the Council could play an important role in supporting the development of sport and physical activity provision across the district. Additionally, the introduction of the strategy would support the delivery of other strategies such as the Lincolnshire District Councils' Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Members heard the objective and action plan recognised the role of the Council in supporting delivery, whilst also looking further ahead towards the future, post Local Government Reorganisation and refreshed national policy on sport.

The Chairman thanked the Officer and highlighted several areas around which the strategy could make further mention, including communications and engagement plans, such as putting on regular events, the need for increased external funding, expansion of cross sector collaboration and partnership networks, and accessibility challenges, particularly for rural areas with poor transport links.

Members discussed in detail the difficulties faced locally, and nationally, with encouraging people to be more active, and the importance of the strategy for West Lindsey. Members commented on the societal changes over a number of years which impacted this, such as reduced funding for sports facilities, and in the education system, as well as generational differences having trended towards online gaming rather than outdoors activities.

It was highlighted that physical activity was not simply involvement in sports, and that greater emphasis could be placed on, for example, encouraging people to enjoy the Lincolnshire Wolds and the Viking Way as gentle walks or longer hikes. The importance of building the habit of physical activity from a young age was particularly discussed, with Members wishing to see increased collaboration with schools and leisure providers aimed at school children and young adults.

In relation to the provision of sports activities, reference was made to the two leisure centres, particularly looking at options for improving the space and facilities for becoming a social

hub as well as a sports location. Examples were given of similar provision in other districts, where the leisure centres were a meeting place for users both before, after, and separate to, the use of the facilities.

There was significant discussion regarding the decline of sport, and the limited options in West Lindsey. Members were advised of the strong working relationships between the Council and, for example, Lincolnshire Cricket and Lincolnshire FA, whilst recognising that a number of sporting bodies were East Midlands based rather than Lincolnshire. Additionally, it was recognised there were sports which had no representation in the district, such as hockey, meaning those players had to travel out of district to play. The importance of working with local schools and encouraging involvement from a young age was again highlighted.

There was further discussion regarding the two leisure centres, with Members highlighting a desire to engage the teams based on both sites to work with their users as to how to improve and extend their offerings, with a view to increasing user numbers.

Members also expressed significant concerns regarding financial constrictions, not only for providers but particularly for members of the public, for whom the costs of involvement may be prohibitive. The interactions between leisure and tourism, and sport and physical activity were highlighted, with reference to improving accessibility to open spaces for cost-free activities.

Further discussion raised questions regarding the implementation of the action plan, with Members seeking assurance that action was underway and success could be documented with key deliverables. Officers provided assurance of ongoing work streams, and recognised the importance of being ambitious with district-wide approaches, whilst also being mindful to not over-promise on what was realistically achievable.

With discussions drawing to a conclusion, Officers summarised the key points of the discussion, assuring Members that the draft strategy would be reviewed in line with the feedback from the Committee, however work continued to progress as indicated in the action plan.

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

RESOLVED that

- a) the draft Sport & Physical Activity Strategy and the Active Together Action Plan be approved; and
- b) authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities, following consultation with the Chair of this committee, to complete and finalise the strategy and action plan, taking into consideration committee's comments.

48 WORKPLAN

The Committee heard that the timetable for the coming year would be presented to the

Prosperous Communities Committee – 17 March 2026
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in April, after which point the work plan would be populated with future meetings.

In response to a question regarding the planned presentation of the parking strategy, it was explained that the October date on the work plan reflected when the item had been added to the work plan, and it was confirmed that the strategy was being prepared for the April meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee.

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

The meeting concluded at 8.44 pm.

Chairman