



## **CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL**

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 4.30pm**

### **Present:**

Councillor Silvester (in the Chair)  
Councillors Boyd, Cairns, Downes, Farren, Lindley, Patrick and K. Swinburn

Co-opted Members: Canon Ian Robinson (Church of England)

### **Officers in attendance:**

- Jane Broderick (Practice Supervisor Social Work)
- Liz Brummer (Strategic Lead – Finance)
- Queenie Carrie (Deputy Service Director – Regulated Services)
- Paul Cowling (Service Director – Regulated Services)
- Drew Hughes (Head of Strategy Policy and Performance)
- Bev O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Suzanne Pinder (Service Manager One Adoption, North and Humber)
- Julie Poole (Head of Service, Practice, Performance, Quality and Assurance)
- Jennifer Steel (Service Director – Education, Inclusion and Integration)
- Joseph White (Deputy Service Director – Inclusion)

### **Others in attendance:**

- Councillor Cracknell (Portfolio Holder for Children and Education)
- Councillor Beasant
- Councillor Aisthorpe

There were three members of the public present for this meeting.

## **SPCLL.30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Clough and Wheatley for this meeting.

## **SPCLL.31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

## **SPCLL.32 MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025, the special joint meeting of the Communities and Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and the special joint meeting of the Children and Lifelong Learning and Economy, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Panel on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025 be approved as a correct record.

## **SPCLL.33 QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

## **SPCLL.34 FORWARD PLAN**

The panel received the current forward plan with a view to identifying any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

Mrs O'Brien mentioned the new framework for School Transport and noted to the panel that their next meeting was after this report had been received by Cabinet in January 2026. She explained that if Members felt it needed to come to scrutiny before it went to Cabinet, then a special meeting would need to be arranged. Members welcomed the open framework for providers of school transport and felt that they would be happy for it to come afterwards so they could find out more about what it entailed.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

## **SPCLL.35 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY**

The panel considered a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.

Members were content that SPCLL.24 had been completed and agreed that it could be taken off the tracking report.

RESOLVED - That SPCLL.24 be removed and the remaining items on the tracking report be noted.

## **SPCLL.36 2025/26 QUARTER TWO COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing information and analysis of the Council's financial performance during the second quarter of 2025/26.

One Member asked if the reported number of referrals were in line with expected targets. They wondered how these were set and how Officers were benchmarking them. Mr Cowling explained that they did not have a target, if it needed to be referred then it needed to be done.

Another Member questioned the substantial increase in referrals to the Front Door, particularly because Officers had identified that their ambition was to get these down. Mr Cowling explained that sometimes this could be down to the time of year. He assured the member that the referrals were coming through for the right reasons and they were currently working with partners to make sure they were getting the referrals right. The Member then went on to ask about the mainstream of foster carers, as figures looked like they had plateaued. Mr Cowling confirmed that this was still a core priority area for them. Unfortunately, an experienced number of foster carers had recently left.

One Member questioned the forecast overspend for this financial year and whether Officers thought they had underestimated the budget. Officers explained that expected expenditure was coming down but they were challenging themselves to bring it down even more. They believed they were still going to experience challenges, so they needed to take a realistic approach. One Member wondered whether the overspend was still down to agency staffing, particularly around the roles of education psychologist and youth justice pressures. Ms Steel explained that they were doing everything they could to retain members of staff but still facing challenges for these particular roles.

Panel Members also asked for clarification around Key Stage two expected outcomes and the metrics of Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS) going down. Officers present were able to clarify their queries.

**RESOLVED** – That the quarter two finance plan resources and finance performance report be noted.

## **SPCLL.37 MAINTAINED NURSERIES AND DAY CARE PROVISION**

The panel received a briefing note from the Director of Children Services on the Maintained Nurseries and Day Care Provision.

The panel thought it was fantastic achievement for all three settings, and it was clear that they were all clearly viable.

RESOLVED – That the maintained nurseries and day care provision update be noted.

## **SPCLL.38 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE ADOPTION**

The panel considered a report from the Director of Children Services on the adoption service, including the performance and membership of the regional adoption agency One Adoption North and Humber.

Members sought further information on the number of children that were adopted in the area and clarification on whether these children were adopted within the Borough. Ms Pinder explained that the children in North East Lincolnshire that were up for adoption, they would initially look to adopt locally, but in certain circumstances they sometimes had to be placed further afield, but she confirmed that first and foremost they looked to place with One Adoption North and Humber.

RESOLVED – That the North East Lincolnshire Adoption report be noted.

## **SPCLL.39 CHILDREN IN CARE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The panel considered a report from the Director of Children's Services on the ongoing progress that continued to be made with regard to children in our care.

One Member asked when the two new children's homes would be complete and ready to be used. Mr Cowling confirmed that the paperwork was currently with Ofsted and they were waiting for them to visit. They were hoping that placings would start in January 2026, with a view to start bringing children back into the area.

One Member explained that they requested a report on this subject to get a flavour of how the children in care were doing. He felt that this report didn't include that. He wondered if a further report could come to the panel detailing the voice of the child in care.

RESOLVED –

1. That a further report be submitted to this panel detailing how the children in care were doing, focusing more on the children's views.
2. That the Children in Care performance update be noted.

## **SPCLL.40 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION STRATEGY**

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Children and Education on the North East Lincolnshire Elective Home Education Strategy.

Members had some concerns that the enclosed strategy did not include reasons why individuals were choosing to home educate. It didn't state how these issues would get dealt with, and it was thought that this strategy would be an opportunity to be smarter with the way that we work. As it stood, a panel member had concerns that it lacked understanding on what we were trying to do. Officers explained that the strategy was not a council policy, it would be shared borough wide for every organisation that interacted with children and young people who were home educated.

Another Member asked for reassurance that this cohort were not being excluded from services that were available to them if they were attending mainstream education. Officers explained that this strategy was to help breakdown the misconception on what this cohort can receive.

Councillor Downes agreed with the recommendations stated in the report but thought that they needed to put forward a further recommendation to Cabinet. Therefore, she proposed that they acknowledge that the two-year strategy, recognise and bring forward anticipated outcomes and metrics, so as to assure performance of partnership working. Councillor Patrick seconded this. The proposal was supported unanimously by all panel members.

#### **RECOMMENDED THE CABINET –**

That the recommendations stated within the Cabinet report be supported, but that a further recommendation be considered that they acknowledge the two-year strategy, recognise and bring forward anticipated outcomes and metrics, so as to assure performance of partnership working.

#### **SPCLL.41 CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL 2025/26 – WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW**

The panel considered a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer providing panel members with the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the panel's work programme at the half-year stage and provide a formal opportunity for the panel to update its work programme.

Members welcomed the following topics:

- SEND – All Member briefing
- Family Enterprise

**RESOLVED – That the report and members comments be noted.**

#### **SPCLL.42 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no formal requests from Members of this panel to call in decisions of recent Cabinet and Portfolio Holder meetings.

**SPCLL.43 URGENT BUSINESS - DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION  
FREE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL  
HEALTH NEEDS REQUIRED COUNCIL CAPITAL BUDGET  
APPROVAL**

The Chair agreed that this report be taken urgently so that it received pre-Cabinet consultation with scrutiny.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Beasant as a Ward Councillor for where the free school was located. He explained that it had been a long journey to get to where they were now with the free school. He understood that the estimated extra costs were quite substantial but asked that the panel recognised the need for this free school and the need to not cause any more delays.

Although Members of the panel supported the recommendations within the report, they showed some concerns over the need for extra resources. Therefore, Councillor Downes proposed that they recommended to Cabinet that they explore safeguards around exposure to risk of increasing costs and for the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel to retain oversight. Councillor K. Swinburn seconded this. The panel were all in favour of this proposal.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET –**

That the recommendations stated in the Cabinet report be supported, but that a further recommendation be considered by Cabinet to explore safeguards around exposure to risk of increasing costs and for the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel to retain oversight.

**SPCLL.44 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** - That the public and press be excluded for the following item on the grounds that discussion of the following business was likely to disclose confidential information within paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 172 (as amended).

**SPCLL.45 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT**

The panel were provided with an opportunity to discuss any confidential matters of concern with the Director of Children's Services.

The panel asked for reassurance around some concerns raised with the placements that the children in care were currently in. Officers present were able to clear up panel Members concerns.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.03 p.m.

NO RESTRICTIONS

# CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

Item 6

<b>DATE</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Joanne Robinson (Statutory Scrutiny Officer)
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Tracking the recommendations of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel
<b>STATUS</b>	Open

## CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The scrutiny panels act as a reviewing mechanism for decisions made relating to the strategic policy, performance and resources required to deliver the ambitions of the council and the strategic partnership. The aim of the scrutiny process is to make sure decision making is robust by providing constructive challenge. This contributes to the Council being effective and efficient, and therefore it is integral to the delivery of the Council Plan.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each scrutiny panel monitors the progress made on their recommendations through a tracking table, which is included as an appendix of this report.

## MATTER(S) FOR CONSIDERATION

Members are asked to look at the progress against the recommendations and agree to sign off any recommendations that have been completed or are no longer considered to be an efficient use of resources or where priorities have changed.

### 1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 Each scrutiny panel has a standard agenda item to check progress against the recommendations they have previously made.
- 1.2 Members are asked to look at the progress against the recommendations and agree to sign off any recommendations that have been completed, so that they can be removed from the table. It would also be effective to sign off any recommendations that have not been completed but which are no longer considered to be an efficient use of resources, or where priorities have changed.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 of this report lists the recommendations previously made by and which fall within the terms of reference of this panel (and its predecessor).

### 2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 Risk assessments will already have been carried out on the reports that these recommendations have come from.

2.2 Any actions which the council may undertake as a result of recommendations made by scrutiny will be the subject of further reports, which will include risk assessment(s) by the author(s) concerned.

### **3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 The panel's tracking report demonstrates that the panel monitors progress on its recommendations and required actions. This report further demonstrates the breadth of matters considered by scrutiny.

### **4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial considerations included within this report, beyond scrutiny's enhanced future role in monitoring delivery of the council's budget and medium-term financial plan.

### **5. IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

5.1 There are no impacts on children and young people as a direct result of this report. The reports that these tracked items have come from will have been assessed for any such impact.

5.2 Any actions which the council may undertake as a result of recommendations made by scrutiny will be the subject of further reports, which will include children and young people implications by the author(s) concerned.

### **6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no impacts on climate change and the environment as a direct result of this report. The reports that these tracked items have come from will have been assessed for impact.

6.2 Any actions which the council may undertake as a result of recommendations made by scrutiny will be the subject of further reports, which will include climate change and environmental implications by the author(s) concerned.

### **7. MONITORING COMMENTS**

7.1 In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

### **8. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Potentially impacts on all wards.

### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 None

## **10. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

10.1 Beverly O'Brien – Scrutiny and Committee Advisor  
01472 326132

**Joanne Robinson**  
**(Statutory Scrutiny Officer)**

## TRACKING OF RECOMMENDATIONS – CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS/COMMENTS
5 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	<p><b>RECOMMENDED TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CHILDREN AND EDUCATION - <i>That a letter be sent to the Secretary of State to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ask them to compensate local authorities for children who are not full-time pupils at any school and provide more resources to enable local authorities to support the families of home educated children.</li> <li>b. Ask for the proposed local authority powers of consent to electively home educate, be extended to children who are Child In Need, and to stipulate a responsibility on statutory and non-statutory partner agencies to report cases of electively home educated children to the local authority for the purposes of the central register of children not in receipt of education.</li> </ul>	Portfolio Holder for Children and Education	<p>The Portfolio Holder accepted these recommendations and sent them on to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>A response was received back on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025, which was sent out to all panel members.</p>
13 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	<p><b>SPCLL.40 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION STRATEGY</b></p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED THE CABINET –</b></p> <p>That the recommendations stated within the Cabinet report be supported, but that a further recommendation be considered that they acknowledge the two-year strategy, recognise and bring forward anticipated outcomes and metrics, so as to assure performance of partnership working.</p>	Democratic Services	<p>The recommendation was approved by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025.</p>

13 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	<p><b>SPCLL.43 URGENT BUSINESS - DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION FREE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS REQUIRED COUNCIL CAPITAL BUDGET APPROVAL</b></p> <p>RECOMMENDED TO CABINET –</p> <p>That the recommendations stated in the Cabinet report be supported, but that a further recommendation be considered by Cabinet to explore safeguards around exposure to risk of increasing costs and for the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel to retain oversight.</p>	Democratic Services	
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NO RESTRICTIONS

<b>DATE</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Councillor Philip Jackson, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Regeneration, Devolution and Skills
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	Sharon Wroot, Interim Chief Executive
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Council Plan Refresh
<b>STATUS</b>	Open
<b>FORWARD PLAN REF NO.</b>	CB 12/25/07

### **CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS**

The Council Plan 2025-2028 sets out the Council's vision, aspiration and actions that underpin the priorities of 'Stronger Economy, Stronger Communities'.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Council Plan is the key policy framework document that underpins the delivery of our aims. The current plan for 2025-2028 was approved by Council in December 2024. It is good practice to refresh the plan on an annual basis so that it continues to reflect current priorities.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Agrees the content of the refreshed Council Plan which is attached to this document.
2. Refers the refreshed Council Plan to all Scrutiny Panels for oversight and feedback.
3. Following Scrutiny, Cabinet to receive a further report capturing feedback, prior to onward transmission to Full Council.

### **REASONS FOR DECISION**

The Council Plan is a North East Lincolnshire Council policy framework document. Amendments to the Plan may only be approved by Full Council following consultation with Scrutiny.

#### **1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES**

- 1.1 The Council Plan is a high level strategic document that explains the Council's priorities and aspiration for North East Lincolnshire. It includes links to other key plans and strategies that are already in place. The plan is structured by 4 themes:
  - Stronger Economy
  - Stronger Communities
  - Greener Future
  - Effective and enabling council
- 1.2 The content of the plan is refreshed annually to ensure that it reflects new and

emerging priorities and strategies.

- 1.3 In July 2025, Cabinet agreed to support the full implementation of the Marmot framework. This approach provides a structured, evidence-based method to tackle health inequalities, align with national priorities, and embed fairness and prevention across all council activity. It will strengthen community outcomes, attract external investment, and enhance the borough's reputation as a leader in health equity.
- 1.4 Whilst formal implementation of the framework is still at an early stage, this is an important step for the Council, and the refresh has focussed on ensuring that the Marmot principles are woven through the plan. This is also reflected in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that is recommended to Cabinet for adoption as a separate item.
- 1.5 Since the adoption of the Council Plan in December 2024, the council has strengthened its statutory compliance and is seeking to enhance outcomes for care leavers through targeted investment, the Family Enterprise scheme, and co-produced strategies, ensuring alignment with corporate and community parenting principles. The refreshed Council Plan reflects our commitment, working with our partners, to deliver the best outcomes for our children and young people.

## **2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES**

- 2.1 The Council Plan provides us with the opportunity to clearly state our intended aims and to be held to account to deliver against those aims.
- 2.2 There is a risk that external factors such as changes in national government policy, or responses to emergencies, may hinder our ability to deliver the plan. If this happens, we will explain the issues affecting delivery through our performance reporting arrangements.

## **3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The Council Plan 2025-28 is already adopted by Council, and therefore Cabinet has an option not to review at this time. However, good practice suggests that an annual review is prudent to ensure that the plan remains active and relevant.

## **4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

The refresh of the Council Plan ensures transparency about the Council's aspiration and priorities for our communities, businesses and partners.

## **5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1. The priorities identified within the plan underpins the development of budget proposals and the service budget envelopes.
- 5.2. The financial environment in which the Council is operating remains challenging and this may impact on our capacity to deliver the change we need to achieve our aspirations.

## **6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

The Plan adopted in 2024 is focussed on aspiration, innovation and ambition that will create better opportunities and outcomes for our children and young people to thrive and achieve their potential within North East Lincolnshire, and the refresh continues to maintain that focus.

## **7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is a section in the Plan that is focussed on a Greener Future. Environmental impact assessments are undertaken for individual programmes and projects where required.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY**

Consultation with all Scrutiny panels in relation to the refreshed plan is planned during January 2026. Scrutiny comments and agreed recommendations will be reflected in a further report to Cabinet prior to seeking adoption of the updated plan by Council in February 2026.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Constitutionally the Council Plan forms an element of the Policy Framework which sets the overarching tone for decision making and Cabinet activity. The adoption of the Policy Framework is reserved to Full Council and the development of the Policy Framework is subject to constitutional process as reflected in the recommendations sought.

## **11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct Human Resources implications as a result of this report.

## **12. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

All wards.

## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

## **14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

Joanne Robinson, Assistant Director Policy Strategy & Resources,  
[joanne.robinson@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.robinson@nelincs.gov.uk)

**COUNCILLOR PHILIP JACKSON**  
**LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ECONOMY, REGENERATION,**  
**DEVOLUTION & SKILLS.**





# Stronger economy and stronger communities

## Our plan for North East Lincolnshire: 2025 to 2028

[www.nelincs.gov.uk](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk)

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## Stronger economy and stronger communities



# Foreword

by Cllr Philip Jackson, Leader, North East Lincolnshire Council.



We will strive to ensure our challenges become opportunities and those opportunities generate the growth the area needs.

Across North East Lincolnshire we want to work with our businesses and our people to effect positive and lasting change.

This is not something that we as a council can do alone, but together we can achieve our ambitions for the area.

We will strive to ensure our challenges become opportunities and those opportunities generate the growth this area needs. Our ambition is to build an economy that supports its community and a community that is skilled and engaged to support a buoyant economy in return.

Investment in our people to create healthy communities is also key. Healthy people contribute to a healthy vibrant economy – the two go hand in hand.

That is why we have shaped our Council Plan for 2025 to 2028 to reflect the work we are leading and achieving with our partners and colleagues, to develop our place and improve lives.

Such work is already having a positive impact with significant grant monies supporting the redevelopment of Grimsby Town Centre and central and resort areas of Cleethorpes.

More recently, there has been great news for Immingham and Haborough with up to £20m Pride in Place funding awarded for investment over the next decade – this adds to similar monies already secured for Grimsby. Community involvement will be key in deciding how this funding is used.

This plan also reflects how our work within the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) will make a positive difference in our key priority areas.

As we embark on our journey with the combined authority, we are already ensuring that North East Lincolnshire has a strong voice and can contribute positively to supporting growth for our people and our businesses both here and across the Greater Lincolnshire area.

Together we can be stronger and deliver our ambitions.



# Introduction

Our Council Plan for 2025 to 2028 sets out the aims of the authority as it supports the continued regeneration of the borough and the growth of its people. It puts an ambition for a

Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities at its heart and details the progress that all the council services are making to realise that ambition.



## STRONGER ECONOMY

- Supporting Industry, Business & Housing
- Growing Skills
- Attractive & Vibrant Town Centres
- Improving our Journeys
- Happy Visitors & Great Leisure
- Preserving our Heritage



## STRONGER COMMUNITIES

- Nurturing our Children and Building their Future
- Supporting our Adults
- Living a Healthy Life
- Good & Sustainable Homes
- Telling our story of Culture and Heritage
- Clean & Safe Streets & Open Spaces



## GREENER FUTURE

- Our Waste and Recycling
- Looking After and Protecting our Parks and Public Spaces
- Our Coastline
- Our Green Ambition



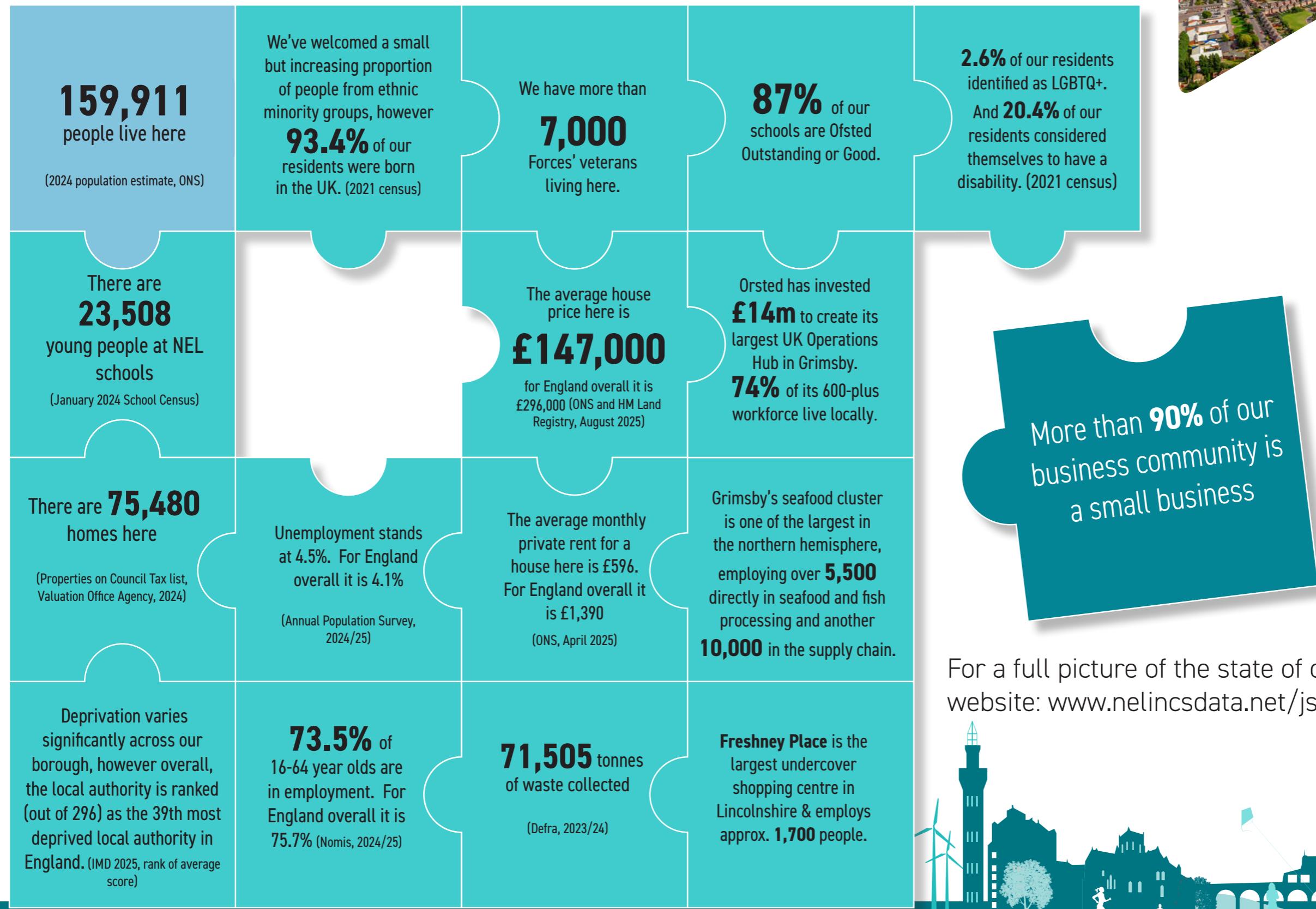
## ENGAGING AND EFFECTIVE COUNCIL

- A Great Place to Work and Develop
- Financially Stable
- Effective Management of Assets
- Accessible and Engaging
- Digitally Smart



# About Us:

## North East Lincolnshire



For a full picture of the state of our borough go to our website: [www.nelincsdata.net/jsna-state-of-the-borough](http://www.nelincsdata.net/jsna-state-of-the-borough)



# Stronger Economy: Stronger Communities.

## “Your Voice”

In 2024, more than 1,000 people told us what they wanted in the next 10 years:

“Grimsby Town Centre is a safe, thriving destination where small businesses are celebrated, and local talent supported. People would like more attractive seating and more shops to bring people in. (Attractive & Vibrant Town Centres)”

“A home for creative arts, where stories that look back and forward are told by the storytellers of our town. (Looking after and protecting our Parks and Public Spaces & Telling our Story of Culture & Heritage)”

“Reliable bus and cycle routes for getting to work on time, every time. For the kids to get to the youth club and back safely. (Improving our Journeys)”



The people who live and work in North East Lincolnshire know how they want their borough to grow.

In recent months we've asked you, our residents, to share those views. Here's a flavour of what's been said:

“Landlords who support and listen. (Supporting Housing & Good Homes)”

“Old buildings with new stories, restored and managed in Grimsby, for Grimsby. Responsibility in the hands of the local community. (Preserving our Heritage)”

“A town renowned for renewable energy. (Supporting Industry & Business)”

“Growing up in Grimsby, means growing up knowing you have opportunities. A relationship centred and built on trust. (Nurturing our children and building their future”

“People of every age can learn new skills so that they can take advantage of the green economy and improve their lives. (Growing Skills)”

*\*Thanks to Our Future who compiled the above following the engagement and survey work.*

In our most recent Adolescent Lifestyle Survey, Young People said they wanted; better places to go, more access to skills, safe spaces, better things to do outside, better travel, free creative spaces & public art, to feel safe, cleaner open spaces. (Nurturing our children and building their future)

“Actively encourage and provide things to keep our young people here.”

“I like the trees, plants and greenery.”

“We need more places that people can go and do social stuff.”

“The people are friendly.”

“It's home.”

“I like the peaceful views.”





## Section 1

# North East Lincolnshire: Stronger Economy

As you read of our ambition to create a place where we attract and sustain businesses of all kinds, you will see how this vision runs alongside a determination to work within our communities and with all our partners. We aim to ensure that the residents of North East Lincolnshire have the skills and inspiration to support, work and enjoy all that we have here.

## Stronger Economy: Supporting business and industry

**North East Lincolnshire is a place where businesses are encouraged to locate and grow. Industrial development and the support of business growth is a key priority.**

- The Humber estuary is a renewable energy powerhouse. Global offshore wind companies are here, and there's opportunity for industrial decarbonisation, and developments for hydrogen products, combined carbon capture and storage. Our relationships with these businesses will continue, along with our work with national organisations.
- The Humber Freeport is an opportunity to see better industrial business infrastructure and supply chain opportunities supported by £15m of seed capital funding. The expansion of the major training facility CATCH has been supported through this.



- The seafood processing sector provides thousands of local jobs. Our busy Border Control Post at Immingham continues to support the wider supply chain.
- Marmot principles support a stronger economy by tackling the root causes of economic inactivity and poor health. By promoting fair employment, early intervention, and inclusive growth, we aim to improve productivity, reduce inequalities, and ensure all residents can contribute to and benefit from economic success.
- Our South Humber Industrial Investment Programme (SHIIP) is achieving. The link road from Grimsby to Immingham has opened up development land, and provides better links between the ports for workers and industry. Our two ecological mitigation sites are complete. Development at Pioneer Business Park continues as ABP and DFDS extend their port-related activity there.
- The Development and Growth Board will continue to lead the economic strategy, support new enterprise, encourage and enable growth opportunities and sustainability.
- We will continue to help town centre businesses to grow through use of Government and other grant funding.
- With the diversification of Grimsby Town Centre, new and alternative businesses are attracted to the town.

This will all be underpinned by the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority, (GLCCA) and the Humber Economic Strategy, with business growth and investment a priority. The newly established Humber Estuary Growth Board provides a powerful platform for collaboration between Local Authorities, Mayoral Combined Authorities, the Humber Freeport, the Humber Energy Board, and key industry stakeholders.

Go to [www.investnel.co.uk](http://www.investnel.co.uk) for information on how to develop a business in North East Lincolnshire or email [enquiries@investnel.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@investnel.co.uk)





## Stronger Economy: Housing

Everyone should have the right to a safe place to call home, and in our Stronger Communities section we make clear the vital link between good homes and good health.

Good homes also have a big part to play in a strong economy as well as a fairer, healthier borough. Marmot principles remind us that housing is a key building block of health. More homes, built in the right environment, create jobs, encourage relocation, and support wellbeing. If people are working here, we want them to live well here too.

We are currently updating our Local Plan, which is due to be submitted for examination by Government in late 2026. This requires us to identify areas suitable for development and look at key services and infrastructure

needed to support our growth across the borough.

We'll continue working with partners in the social housing and private sector, along with Government and their agencies, to see more development in Grimsby Town Centre, ensuring a mix of homes that meet diverse needs and support its transformation. By embedding Marmot principles into planning and regeneration, we aim to reduce health inequalities and create healthy, sustainable communities where everyone can thrive.

Our housing strategy can be found at:  
[www.nelincs.gov.uk/homes-and-property](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/homes-and-property)

Information on the Local Plan can be found at:  
[www.nelincs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/localplan)





## Stronger Economy: Growing skills

Our ambition is for our people of all ages to be equipped with the skills they need to grasp opportunities both now and in the future.

Marmot principles guide us to create fair employment and good work for all, ensuring that people of all ages have access to meaningful job opportunities, fair wages, and healthy working conditions.

We know there's already a demand for workers in our key economic sectors – and there's more jobs set to come as decarbonisation and green energy grows. We want local people to get those jobs.

Our Skills Strategy and Action Plan outlines how partners will work together to close our skills gap and meet industry needs. The delivery of the Action Plan is monitored by the NEL Skills Board. Led by industry, it sees schools, colleges, The Careers Hub, the community, corporate parenting and the Department of Work and Pensions come together.

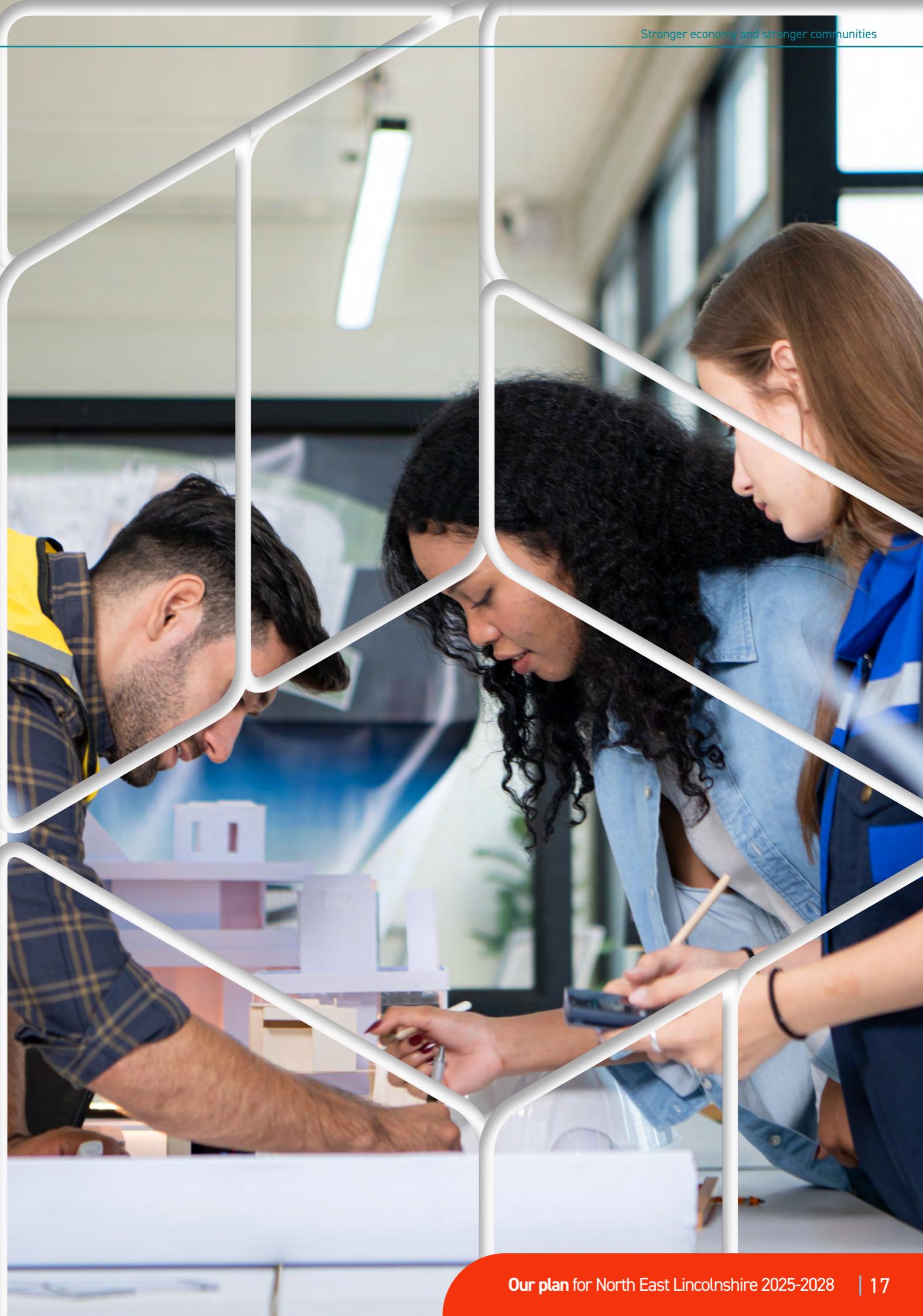
Government funding has helped us and our partners to launch lots of activity for young people and adults, and we will look for more funding to continue this work. We want to hold more skills and careers events and grow our work within communities, supporting training provision within our Family Hubs, outreach and community centres as well as supporting businesses to access training opportunities to upskill their workforce.

The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority, (GLCCA) also brings a great opportunity with a key priority being adult skills across the whole Greater Lincolnshire footprint.



We know that people are happy and healthier if they have the confidence to achieve and earn their own money. That is why we want to see local people gain the skills they need through training, upskilling and reskilling, to get jobs and progress – giving them a better quality of life. Helping provide employment opportunities for people can help them stay active for longer.

More information, including the Skills Strategy, is available on [www.nelincs.gov.uk/adult-education-and-learning](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/adult-education-and-learning)





## Stronger Economy: Attractive & vibrant town centres: Grimsby

Our ambition is to create an attractive and safe town centre where people want to spend time.

To effect this change, our current shops and facilities must be supported with other reasons to visit – leisure, good food outlets and cafes, different businesses, and community facilities. Along with partners, we have attracted significant Government grants to support this ambition, and we are delivering change.

Local people are helping to shape the future town centre working with organisations like 2025 Group and Our Future, and feeding into the next Grimsby Masterplan that will help to shape the town's future.

We want to:

See the Freshney Place Market Hall & Leisure Scheme completed. This is set to transform the western end of the centre into a leisure space with a cinema, and a modern market.

Continue to develop Freshney Place. Our purchase of the centre was a bold move, but the right one in ensuring a successful future for Lincolnshire's largest covered shopping centre. With the expertise of partners, we have taken big strides in developing projects that will benefit the community, such as the Community Diagnostic Centre, (CDC).

Share in the success of partner-led schemes, such as the Horizon Youth Zone, in the town centre.

See the new homes built and occupied at Alexandra Dock. As highlighted in the Grimsby Masterplan we want to see this whole dock area redeveloped.

Ensure people have access to good public transport. We are seeking to develop a new transport hub on the site of former disused buildings which were demolished in 2025.





## Stronger Economy: Attractive & vibrant town centres: Cleethorpes

Cleethorpes is growing as a lovely seaside town, and there's much more to come in the next three years.

With our 2021 resort Masterplan behind a successful £18.4m Government funding bid, investment in our central resort area is happening, which will provide a springboard for more visitors and new businesses, growing the local economy.

Market Place and Pier Gardens will be places for people to relax, be entertained, and enjoy family time and quiet space. The redevelopment of the demolished Waves building on Sea Road is also underway.

Cleethorpes has a rich Victorian heritage, and we want to ensure more of that history is preserved. The restoration of properties

along Alexandra Road, Sea View Street and the Mermaid on North Prom are examples of what can be achieved – with support from the Cleethorpes Townscape Heritage Project. Further support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund will allow us to look at continuing that work into other areas of the town centre.

The change we see taking place has been shaped by local people – more than 2,700 of you took part in the consultation that was organised by Hemingway Design as part of our Masterplan work. Hundreds more contributed to further consultation on our Pier Gardens and Market Place plans.

**"You have an amazing coastline here. There's so much natural beauty, alongside the traditional seaside offering and opportunities to capitalise even more on the staycation boom and the desire to live by the sea."**

Wayne Hemingway MBE.





# Stronger Economy: Immingham - the beating heart of our industrial future

Immingham is a growing, successful town and has a vital role to play in the future of North East Lincolnshire.

More people are choosing to make their homes in Immingham and the surrounding villages, mirroring its industrial development and growth - the 2021 census showed the population of Immingham as 11,683, up from 9,765 in 2011. With new house building, that figure will increase in the next decade.



Those who choose to live in this area of North East Lincolnshire will find a wealth of career opportunities on their doorsteps as it sits at the very centre of this borough's successful economic future.

Government has earmarked £20million for Immingham and Habrough to be spent over

the next 10 years, and local people will help shape what that will be spent on.

The town sits alongside the Humber Freeport, which is injecting £650m into the Humber - providing a catalyst for future investment, jobs growth, regeneration, decarbonisation, and innovation. North East Lincolnshire Council is an integral part of the Freeport. Meanwhile SHIIP (the South Humber Industrial Investment Programme) is our council-led project. As outlined in our business section, the SHIIP projects sit just next to Immingham and provide more reasons to be hugely optimistic for the future of the area.

The Port of Immingham is the UK's largest port by tonnage, handling around 46 million tonnes of cargo every year. Together with ABP's other ports on the Humber at Grimsby, Hull and Goole, Immingham is part of the UK's leading port complex, an unparalleled gateway for the trade connecting businesses across the UK, Europe, and beyond. The port is a critical part of the supply chain for sustainable electricity generation and other energy production, helping power the nation and helping to cement the Humber as 'the UK's Energy Estuary.'

ABP (Associated British Ports)





# Stronger Economy: Improving our journeys

We all need to move around our borough with safe and easy routes across North East Lincolnshire.

Marmot principles guide us to create healthy and sustainable places by ensuring transport systems are accessible, affordable, and safe for all. Equitable transport supports access to education, employment, and services, reducing health inequalities and enabling residents to live active, connected lives.

As local people we travel to and from our homes, our work, and go to learn, to shop or to enjoy ourselves. Our visitors want easy access into Cleethorpes, and our industry wants well-connected routes through our borough.



That is why we are focusing on:

- Improved bus services and facilities, such as our new Town Centre Transport Hub. There is also support to use the buses for people who most need it.
- Better rail links in and out of North East Lincolnshire.

To read the Local Transport Plan, including information about electric vehicles, visit: [www.nelincs.gov.uk/streets-travel-and-parking](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/streets-travel-and-parking)

- Encouraging people to use cycles or walk with more dedicated routes and shared use of things like bikes and e-scooters.
- Greener journeys. Zero emission buses, more walking and cycling, and EV charging points will all help to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and protect our environment.
- The use of technology to make getting around easier for everyone.
- Working with our colleagues across Lincolnshire with public transport, and green and rural transport, being key priorities of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority, (GLCCA).
- Planning future roads and improvements around the building of new homes.
- Keeping our roads safe.
- Being better connected. Again, our work with the GLCCA will look at how we can work across Greater Lincolnshire to improve our road networks and trade corridors.

Together with partners we are working today to keep North East Lincolnshire moving tomorrow.





# Stronger Economy: Happy visitors & great leisure

## For our visitors

We have it all – beautiful natural coastline and beaches, wonderful views, good shops and cafés, a fascinating heritage and, importantly, around 8.6m visitors to North East Lincolnshire each year.

These visits boost our economy and bring with them thousands of job opportunities for local people. We will continue to support development that offers great tourism, leisure and entertainment opportunities for everyone.

## For our local people

Having fun and living healthy, happy and fulfilled lives. This is what we want for our residents, and our aim is to grow North East Lincolnshire as a healthier place where activity becomes 'the norm'.

There's lots to do but with hard work and the support of partners, we have enjoyed some big successes in recent years. This work will continue.

## We want to

- Make sure that our Grimsby Town Centre and Cleethorpes regeneration schemes attract more visitors and local people to our towns by offering a wider range of leisure activities for everyone.
- Look at how our 'place' can change to encourage all local people to enjoy activity such as walking and cycling. We know that some of our communities need support, and we are working with partners in health, and with community organisations and schools, to offer that - and to explore how we use our buildings and open spaces.

- Continue to develop our partnership work with organisations such as the Football Foundation, Active Humber, Sport England including its Place Partnership expansion, and the Lawn Tennis Association. Clee Fields and the new tennis courts at Sussex and Barretts Recreation Grounds, and Haverstoe Park, are great examples of what we've done so far.
- Promote the Meridian Showground as a great venue, and offer an exciting and varied events programme so that everyone can enjoy events and activities there, making sure the economic benefits are felt by local tourism and hospitality businesses.
- Make sure that the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre, as North East Lincolnshire's only Arts Council accredited museum, continues to provide a relevant offer to schools, our local community and visitors about Grimsby's rich maritime history.
- Grow our Discover North East Lincolnshire visitor destination brand as a one-stop shop for locals and visitors.
- Work in collaboration with Greater Lincolnshire tourism teams to ensure that North East Lincolnshire is aligned with strategic tourism ambitions across the region.

For more go to:

[www.discovernortheastlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.discovernortheastlincolnshire.co.uk)





# Stronger Economy: Preserving our heritage

**“North East Lincolnshire has a rich and varied history, and one we should be proud of and celebrate.”**

Research shows that preserving and enhancing physical heritage improves a local area's economy, strengthens pride of place and improves wellbeing. Working with our heritage and community groups to preserve, protect and promote the borough's heritage through supporting heritage-based projects is therefore a key part of creating a stronger economy and stronger communities.

Corporation Road Bridge is a key part of Grimsby's recent history. Its renovation has taken longer than expected, and it's not an easy project, working on a historic bridge, but once it reopens, it will be a project we'll be proud of.

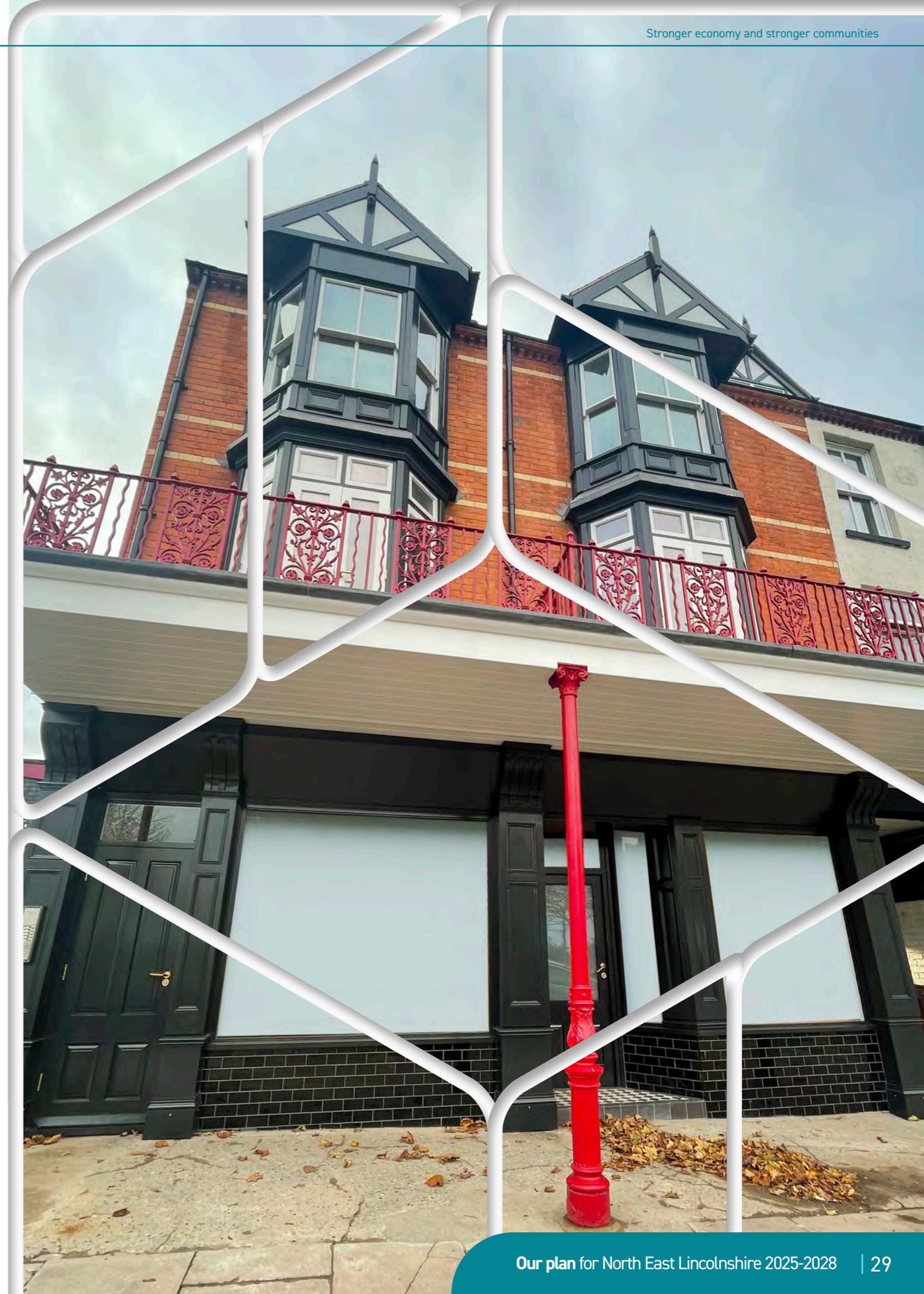


Work to properties at the Port of Grimsby has been supported through money from Historic England and us. This has enabled 19 renovation projects on the docks, with new



and existing businesses putting down firm roots there. We will continue this project in the 2025-28 period, work with our partners, Associated British Ports, and building tenants to explore what is possible and how the buildings can be rejuvenated as part of the development of the port area.

Meanwhile, the work to Cleethorpes' historic buildings will continue. The first round of National Lottery Heritage Fund money secured by the Council for the Cleethorpes Townscape Heritage Project has seen many properties restored to their former Victorian splendour. It has also seen a successful community engagement programme, and work to record oral histories. Thanks to a successful bid to the NLHF, we are now looking at how this work can be continued in other areas of Cleethorpes. We will also continue to support our existing attractions of the Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre and the Time Trap in Grimsby Town Hall, seeking funding to support growth.





## Section 2

# North East Lincolnshire: Stronger Communities

This section of our Council Plan reflects our desire to take people on a journey of support, learning and aspiration. If we are to create a better place, we must ensure we work with our partners to take those who live and work here with us. Supporting those around us to live their best lives is our aim.

## Stronger Communities: Nurturing our children and building their future

In the spirit of '**Our Children Our Future**', children, young people and families are at the centre of all we do.

We want our children to grow up happy and healthy – safe from harm and enjoying caring homes in communities where people love them. This will mean they have the best start in life – healthy, happy and having fun.

A focus on learning and aspiration is key. Starting school ready to learn and achieving will give our children the skills and opportunities for a bright future. We want them to be part of an inclusive, compassionate, and thriving community – to be listened to, involved in decisions on their future and respected.

To achieve our vision, families and young people need to be supported by a workforce that is passionate, compassionate, motivated,

and proud. Our staff, in turn, will be equally supported by caring and knowledgeable leaders and colleagues – enabling them to learn and reflect on practice whilst feeling valued, and respected.

We will ensure the workforce has the tools and resources they need to make a difference with everyone taking responsibility for their own learning, development and practice.

In 2025, our services that support children and families was graded 'Good' by Ofsted. We continue to work closely with Ofsted, the Department for Education, and partners, to ensure that children and families get the best possible support.

In North East Lincolnshire, relationships unite us and we are committed to growing those relationships with each other and with our children, young people and families – by building on peoples' strengths, their own solutions will be found.

The right support, at the right time by the right people, including our partners, will also ensure everyone's needs are met at the earliest point- giving them positive experiences.

Working together, our strategic objectives are to:

- Embed our empowering leadership and management approach.
- Help, support and protect our children, young people and families.
- Deliver a high-quality offer for children in our care.
- Deliver a high-quality offer for care leavers.
- Develop the quality of our learning and education landscape for all children.
- Deliver a high-quality offer for our children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Ambition and aspiration for those we support and for our teams is central to creating positive lasting change and we are making strong progress in our transformation journey. We know there is more to do, and by working together, we are creating something special.





## Stronger Communities: Supporting our adults

We have read about our journey to care for, and nurture, our children and young people. Remember, those young people will grow, and we need to prepare them for their young adult life – ensuring that adults of all ages live independent, healthy and fulfilling lives in North East Lincolnshire.

This year, (2025), there are 36,100 people living in our borough who are 65 or older – and this is set to grow to almost 40,000 by 2030 – and further to 42,900 by 2035.

How we support a growing number of older people is a key consideration for us. We recognise that people value their own space and it's an ambition – shared with our health and wellbeing partners - to ensure older people can live independently for as long as possible.



Younger adults may also need support to live independently. Those with mobility or sight problems, or issues with mental health or

learning disabilities, can live happy lives in their own homes with help.

These people are at the heart of what we do within our health and adult and social care teams – and those of our partners and colleagues. We need to understand more about what individuals can do for themselves and what support they need – for example, in some cases, informal support may be the answer.



As we do this, we must continue to build on the unique and extensive integration arrangements with partners within our place to ensure that when people require support, they have access to the right expertise as soon as people require it.

Technology will have a big part to play and if used in the right way can make a huge difference to making people feel safe and supported. The possibilities are endless, and we must work together to explore those.





# Stronger Communities: Living a healthy life

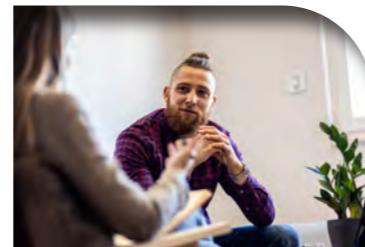
**"In North East Lincolnshire we are all working together to understand how we can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing in our community, and to make a difference to the lives and living standards of all of our residents, particularly those suffering from inequality and deprivation."**

North East Lincolnshire is a place where people can live a good life and are able to enjoy our coastline, our green open spaces and parks, the Lincolnshire Wolds (a National Landscape), good schools & colleges, and good employment opportunities.



However not all our communities reflect that, with five of our inner-town wards suffering social deprivation and health inequality. This leads to significantly lower life expectancy and healthy life expectancy for residents who live in these areas, compared to the rest of our borough. Amongst adults in these wards,

there are many health issues including alcohol and substance misuse, smoking rates, obesity, and mental wellbeing with health priorities being cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and cancer.



Against this backdrop, we are determined to put our people at the centre as we start to turn these issues around and work with partners to give everyone better life chances.

There are various ways we wish to do this, and as we continue our work it is vital that we take our residents and partners with us on our journey - creating public health leaders at every level and in every part of the community.

In 2025, we committed to becoming a Marmot Place, abiding by the 8-principles laid out by Professor Sir Michael Marmot, threading public health throughout everything that we do and working to reduce health inequalities.

When we think about what makes us all healthy, we often think about health care. However, it is the other factors in all our lives

that shape how we grow, and how healthy and fulfilled we are. It is evident that improvements in our place promote healthy living and when you consider this, you understand just how vital our ambition to create a stronger economy is and how such growth will encourage and inspire healthier communities. The opportunity to take up good work, our surroundings, the money and resources we have, our housing, education and skills, the food we eat, access to good transport and enjoying time with friends, family and others in our communities – all of these things make us feel good, happy and therefore healthier.

Our ambition is therefore to make the health and wellbeing of our people everyone's business as we aim to ensure we:

- Give every child the best start in life.
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.
- Create fair employment and good work for all.
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.
- Strengthening the impact of intervention to prevent ill health by working with our health partners. An example of this is the development of the Community Diagnostic Centre in Freshney Place.

For support go to [www.nelincs.gov.uk/wellbeing-service](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/wellbeing-service).

That's also where you can read our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

For our Director of Public Health's annual report go to: [www.nelincs.gov.uk/public-health](http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/public-health)





# Stronger Communities: Good & sustainable homes

Living a healthy life is what we want for our residents and ensuring access to good quality and affordable homes in the borough will contribute hugely towards that ambition.

Our efforts to keep families together, to offer young adults good quality accommodation, and to see older people living in their own homes for longer are clear. We want to make sure that everyone who wants a home, has one – and importantly has access to the support they need to remain in their homes.

Marmot principles guide us to create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities. By ensuring access to safe, affordable, and energy-efficient homes, we support physical and mental wellbeing, reduce health inequalities, and build stronger, fairer neighbourhoods across North East Lincolnshire.

Some people need more support than others - mental health problems, addiction, relationship breakdowns, disability and a lack of access to the right financial guidance are often reasons for crisis situations, and we want people who are going through this to contact us. By working together with local mental wellbeing, financial and health services, they can have more stable futures and remain in their homes.

We also pledge to grow our relationship with housing providers, the private sector, and Government departments such as

Homes England. By doing this we will be able to address our challenges and create opportunities.

To achieve our aims, it is vital that we look at the private rented sector, especially within our inner-town areas. We aim to continue building relationships with landlords – working with them to improve homes for all.

In the years ahead our aim is to see:

- The delivery of new and affordable homes built in places that support sustainable growth of our communities and the ongoing regeneration of our town centres.
- Less homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Improvements to the quality of existing homes within the Private Rented Sector and reduce the number of empty homes.
- Improved accessibility to appropriate housing for all residents including those aged 16-25 years.
- Support people to create greener and more energy efficient homes.
- Make sure that disabled people can live safely in their homes through the effective use of the Disabled Facilities Grant.





# Stronger Communities: Telling our story of culture and heritage

**Every borough has a past – a story that tells the people of today how those of yesterday laid our area's foundations.**

For North East Lincolnshire, our heritage is one of pride – from the birth of Grimsby, and the area's growth as the most successful fishing port in the world, to Cleethorpes' popularity as a Victorian seaside town and important coastal landscape, and Immingham's links to the Pilgrim Fathers and the sail of the Mayflower from the town's shores in 1608.



In the last few years, we have made huge strides in our efforts to bring our heritage to life – ensuring this generation learns, understands and takes forward our history with interest.

Our relationships with organisations including Arts Council England, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage

Fund continue to grow as does our work with our partners. This has opened-up funding streams to support local, regional, and national creatives and heritage practitioners to develop fun, interactive and unique ways to share and tell our borough's story.

That work will continue as we aim to get more local people involved enjoying and participating in arts and culture.

We want to:

- Inspire our children. We want to listen to children and make sure they tell us what they want and how we can use culture to enrich their time in schools, in the community and throughout their lives.
- Encourage and support events to happen such as Our Future Starts Here, Heritage Open Days, the Gathering and Docks Fest to engage audiences with high quality creative and heritage experiences.
- Enhance and animate our streets through the delivery of programmes such as Cleethorpes Townscape Heritage programme, Kasbah regeneration and supporting galleries and promoting visual arts.
- Grow our story-telling on Create North East Lincolnshire, the local Heritage Channel and beyond to highlight creative

work, which enriches the lives of others. We also want to look at other ways we can share what we do digitally.

- Showcase career opportunities, create opportunity, and develop strong leaders to drive creativity in our communities such as Franklin College's Creative Conference.

...and importantly, we want people to have fun, to enjoy, and to remember where they came from and where we are going!

Visit: <https://createnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk> to read the Creativity Strategy





# Stronger Communities: Safe and clean streets & open spaces

**Let's be proud of where we live and work and let's see 'our place' looking clean and feeling safe. We are doing lots of work and supporting others to take pride in their local areas. We value those people, community groups, partners and businesses who help us achieve this – and we must keep going.**

Growing safer towns and communities is all about working together – supporting those affected and creating opportunities to change peoples' lives. We want to have safe town and resort centres where businesses thrive, where culture and heritage is embraced and where people can enjoy themselves. Here's what we're doing.



## Working together

Along with Humberside Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside, we have used 'Safer Streets' money to support lots of activity in Grimsby Town Centre and key areas of our community.

CCTV has improved, and town centre 'days of action' have tackled anti-social behaviour. There's also regular passive drugs dog patrols and evening patrols with the police – focused on keeping women and girls safer. And there's new activities for young people.



We are now looking to sustain and grow that work in the future, with our Town Centre manager and partners continuing to make a positive difference.

## Firm but fair

Our officers deal with almost everything that affects public health and wellbeing. Noise pollution, food safety and housing affecting the safety of our residents. Then there's town centre cycling, drinking in our parks, disrespecting our coastline, illegal fly-tipping and littering, actions that risk others' health, tackling illegal sales in shops, ensuring licensing and gambling rules are followed,

protecting people from financial harm, supporting legitimate businesses and events to ensure safety, and facilitating the import/export of safe goods through our ports.

This is just a snapshot of how we work with those around us to help keep our people safe. We continue to look at how we can use new technology and improved CCTV to help us in the future.

## Cleaning up

Daily town centre and key area litter patrols: beach raking: river clearance: emptying litter bins, verge and grass cutting, weed control, and getting rid of all sorts of rubbish and animal mess.

It's never an easy task but with the help of our communities, differences are being made and we thank all those who get involved. We want to look at more ways to bring residents on board – supporting us all to enjoy clean open spaces.

## Marmot in Action: Safe, Inclusive and Equitable Spaces

Creating safe and clean streets and open spaces is about more than physical infrastructure, it's about belonging. As a Marmot Place, North East Lincolnshire is committed to tackling racism, discrimination and their outcomes by designing public spaces that are inclusive, welcoming and accessible to all. We are working with communities to ensure that every resident feels safe, respected and connected in their neighbourhood. By embedding equity into environmental planning, crime prevention, and community engagement, we aim to reduce health inequalities and increase pride in place for everyone regardless of background, identity or postcode.





## Section 3

# North East Lincolnshire: Greener Future

Never has there been a more important time to look at our plans for a greener future for all. As we have read in our Stronger Economy section, North East Lincolnshire is benefitting from the renewable energy sector and that is great. But we must also consider how we develop greener hearts and minds across our borough.

## Greener Future: Waste and recycling

**Everyone has a part to play in making sure that we limit the waste we produce and reuse and recycle where we can.**

We want our waste and recycling services to be resilient and customer friendly whether that be the waste and recycling wheeled bins, our garden waste and bulky items collections, or the Community Recycling Centres.



Our aim is to continue to design services and influence sustainable behaviour to minimise waste that is sent for disposal and increase recycling. To do this, we will be working with our residents to understand the barriers that may prevent them recycling and rolling out food waste collection from 2027 and beyond.

The council's priority is for residents to have access to an effective service that is easy to use and delivered right first time.

Residents can help us achieve this, by making sure they use the waste and recycling services we provide across the borough.

We will continue to work with our residents to tackle persistent fly-tipping, and take enforcement action where we have the evidence to do so.





# Greener Future: Looking after our parks and public spaces

Across North East Lincolnshire, there are 2,938,000 square metres of green spaces. This includes everything from the borough's parks to the grass verges on the side of the road.

This equates to around 374 Blundell Parks or 73,450 averagesized gardens. Over the next few years, we will continue to ensure these areas are looked after and welcoming, encouraging people to use the parks and public open spaces for hubs of activities.



There is already evidence of that with the new 'PlayZone' in Grant Thorold Park. Part of one of the eight major parks in the borough, this multi-use facility includes basketball hoops, benches, goals, fencing and LED floodlighting.

Going forward, it's integral to keep the community benefits at the heart of our plans for green spaces, with our vision including:

- Making sure they are inclusive for all ages and disabilities. Whether that be installing wheelchair friendly swings or other accessible features, everyone deserves the right to enjoy our parks however they wish.
- Ensuring we are providing a clean, green and safe environment for residents and visitors to enjoy.
- Creating an environment to encourage fitness, health and wellbeing. Health is important, no matter your age, gender or ability. With the right equipment and opportunities, we can ensure all residents have the chance to improve their health whilst visiting our green spaces.

These parks are the jewels in North East Lincolnshire's crown and, to make sure this continues, teams are committed to making them comfortable and welcoming areas for the public to spend time in and enjoy.





# Greener Future: Our natural assets and coastline

North East Lincolnshire is a place of rich nature and heritage and we recognise the importance of protecting and enhancing the environment, alongside our responsibilities to ensure economic and social benefits. Decisions involve a careful balance.

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The Natural Assets Plan sets out how we, and our partners, can improve the area's unique natural environment. This is now more urgent than ever as climate change impacts our lives. Many of the ways we can help tackle climate change rely on nature for reducing carbon emissions.

We know that Cleethorpes and the Humber Estuary is an internationally important

place for wetland birds, and is designated a Special Protection Area, Special Area for Conservation, a European Marine Site, and is recognised by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.



To meet legislation, we must protect and manage potential damage and disturbance to this Site of Special Scientific Interest. As we focus on increasing industrial development and creating a stronger economy, we must also balance that with our responsibility to protect wildlife and the natural habitat. See <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/keeping-our-area-clean-and-safe/naturalassets-plan/>

A number of projects are already helping us to tackle these issues, and these will continue in the years ahead:

- Our unique mitigation sites, Cress Marsh and Novartis Ings, both protect the natural environment and mitigate climate change while offering a major incentive for new businesses to move here.

- In January 2024, we launched the council's Tree Strategy, setting out our approach for managing and protecting the existing tree population, increasing the number of trees and promoting their benefits.
- We have introduced flood mitigating rain gardens as an innovative way to see water from heavy downpours drain back into the sewers.
- We have worked with Natural England and our partners to create the first of the King's series of national nature reserves in Lincolnshire, unlocking more opportunities for local people to access and experience the coastline.
- North East Lincolnshire Council has been awarded £250,000 by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to support the Dynamic Understanding of the Natural Environment (DUNE) project to explore options to save and better protect the fragile coastline. It will also support opportunities to increase access, inclusion and participation for local communities and visitors through an activities and education programme.
- We now have a Cleethorpes Coastal Ranger, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, whose role is to engage with the community in celebrating and protecting the unique beauty of our coastline.
- We created an interactive and immersive story map 'Life on the Saltmarsh' outlining the vital role the saltmarsh plays.





# Greener Future: Our green ambition

We want everyone in North East Lincolnshire to benefit from a green economy and high-quality environment, and we're committed to cutting our organisation's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. We will also support North East Lincolnshire to hit the target of carbon net zero by 2050.

It's impossible to reduce our carbon emissions completely. Net zero means we will reduce our emissions as much as possible. Any remaining carbon emissions will be offset by investing in programmes that increase carbon storage, such as planting trees.



Our Net Zero Carbon Roadmap explains how we will achieve our targets and mitigate the impact of climate change. We adopted the roadmap and set our net zero targets in December 2021.

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/keeping-our-area-clean-and-safe/net-zero-carbon-roadmap/>

In recent years we have worked hard towards realising our ambition and there are strong foundations on which we can now build.

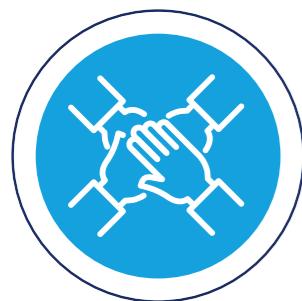
- We have secured Government funding to help deliver carbon emission reductions to nine council buildings, and technical design and building audits for a further eight.
- We have embarked on an ambitious property rationalisation programme to deliver efficiency savings, reduce the carbon footprint, drive footfall, and generate capital receipts.
- The refurbishment of the Doughty Road Depot is bringing 300 council and partner staff together at one location.
- Since April 2020, 100% of our electricity has been purchased from a renewable source and this will continue.

- We are supporting Grimsby Community Energy with the installation of decarbonisation schemes across the borough.
- Through the South Humber Industrial Investment Programme (SHIIP), we are delivering major infrastructure investments.
- We have upgraded our street lighting to Light Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs and this will continue.
- We've successfully secured grant funding to support our 'Greening up our Place' Project, working with partner organisations, community groups and local schools and colleges to increase our tree canopy cover across the borough. Look out for more tree planting schemes in the years ahead.

## Marmot in Action: A Greener Future for Health Equity

Our green ambition is about more than climate, it's about fairness. Marmot principles call for environmental sustainability and health equity to go hand in hand. By improving air quality, expanding access to green spaces, and investing in active travel and sustainable housing, we reduce health inequalities and support wellbeing, especially in communities most affected by pollution and poor living conditions. A greener future is a healthier future, and our Council Plan embeds this vision across every service and partnership.





## Section 4

# North East Lincolnshire: Effective and Engaging Council

As we work with our partners, our people and our colleagues, we must ensure that we provide services that are effective, value for money and deliver what our residents want, and what is best for our borough. We can only do this if we get the very best from our employees and use all that is available to us to take North East Lincolnshire forward.

## Engaging and Effective Council: A great place to work and develop

With just over 2,000 people working at North East Lincolnshire Council, we are one of the largest employers in our borough.

As such the opportunities to have rewarding careers with the Council are vast and varied with so much potential for people who live here to join us, and to grow with us. We want to give local people those life-chances and you will find us at skills and careers fairs across the area, promoting the opportunities that we offer.

Providing opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships, interns, graduates and, importantly, young care leavers, are integral to us as a local authority.

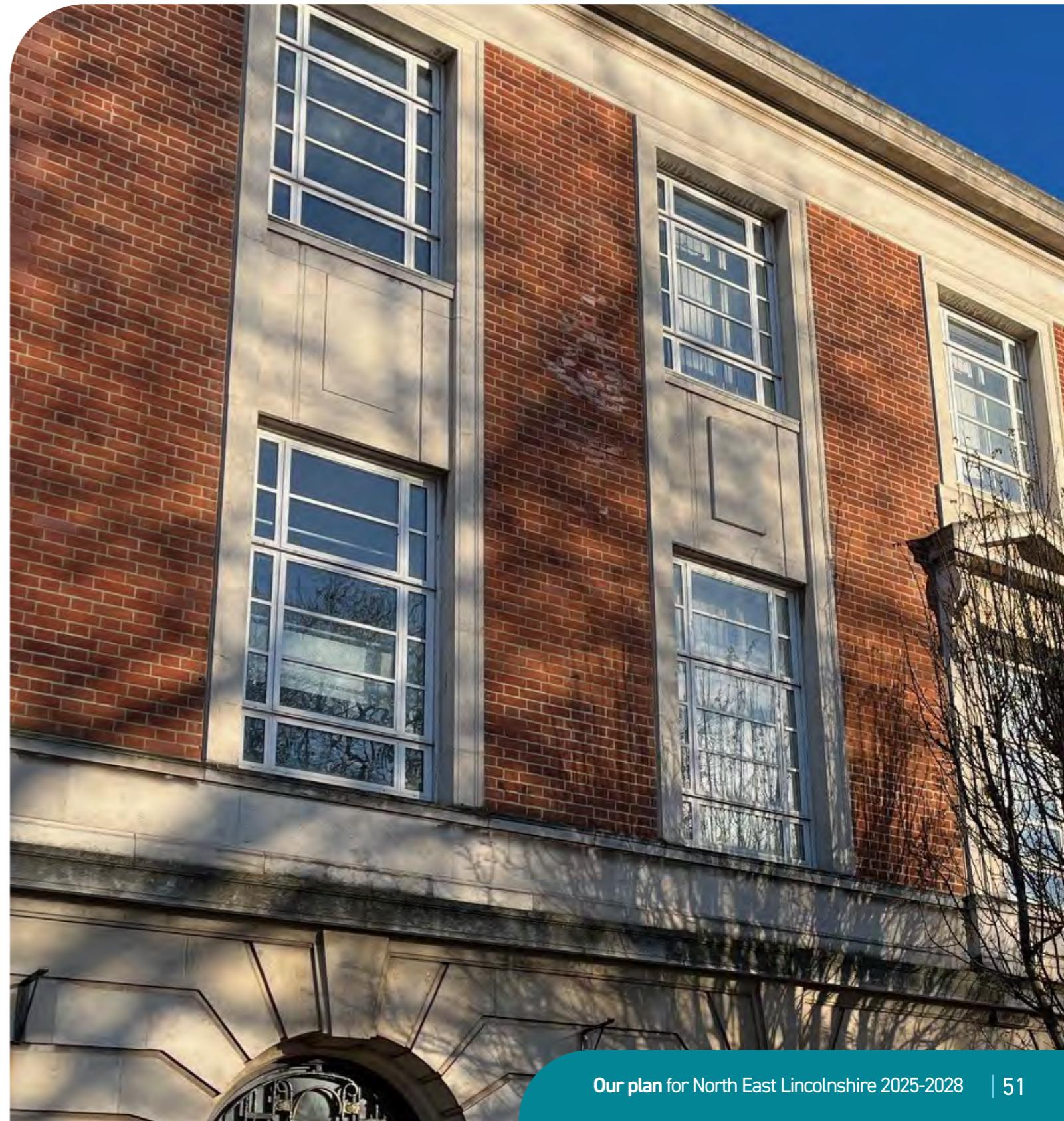
There is also a need to bring in expertise from outside. We want people with the skills

we need to join us by living and working in North East Lincolnshire. There's so many benefits to doing so, and we will continue to push campaigns and promotions to highlight the positives of relocation and what our area has to offer.

The work of our People and Culture service does not stop once we have the right people in the right roles – that is just the start. Development and retention are vital if we are to be an effective council. AcademyNEL is continuing to grow – working with our people to give them the experience and skills to advance their careers.

Creating a work environment where people feel appreciated/ valued, able to reach their potential and know they belong, is important to us – and we can create this by listening and encouraging people to tell us what we do well and how we can improve.

In the years ahead we will continue to work on these key priorities as we aim to create a positive, motivated and determined and progressive workforce.



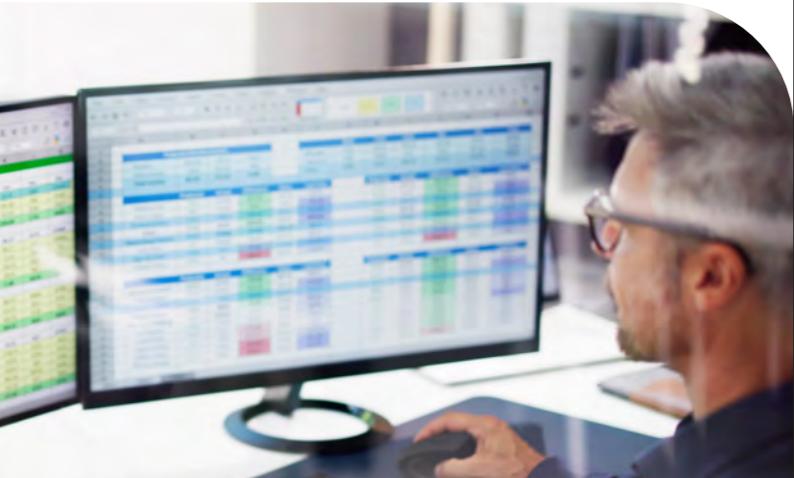


## Engaging and effective Council Financially stable

The financial and economic challenges faced by all Local Authorities, in the wake of the growing cost of social care and wider economic challenges are well documented.

This council is committed to working towards long-term financial sustainability. By embracing the area's economic potential and growing the local tax base, we want to:

- Work with Government on a long-term plan to fund local services and support wider devolution. The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority gives local leaders the chance of sustainable funding and greater freedom to take decisions on how to provide vital services in our communities.



- Ensure the council's Financial Strategy is closely aligned to other key strategies such as the Council Plan, Local Plan,

Economic Strategy and Housing Delivery plan. This approach helps to ensure that scarce financial resources are closely aligned to our stated priorities.

- Where opportunities present themselves, deliver services differently, responding to demand and driving improved value for money.
- Through the Capital Investment Programme, we will continue to take a more commercial approach. This means investing wisely if we believe that investment will contribute to the growth of a strong and sustainable local economy. Importantly though, we will continue to operate within our approved Treasury Management Strategy over the short to medium term and ensure that any external borrowing remains affordable, sustainable and prudent.
- Respond quickly to risk and uncertainty - and do so by holding a range of reserves specifically for that purpose.





# Engaging and effective Council Effective management of assets

The buildings, vehicles and equipment that we own and lease at North East Lincolnshire Council are our 'assets'. They all have a value, and as a council we have a responsibility to manage those assets well – for the benefit of everyone in the borough.

## For our staff

We employ just over 2,000 people. They work in our buildings, and use our vehicles, and equipment. We have a duty to make sure they have good, safe and clean facilities, and that the equipment we provide enables them to carry out their roles safely and efficiently.

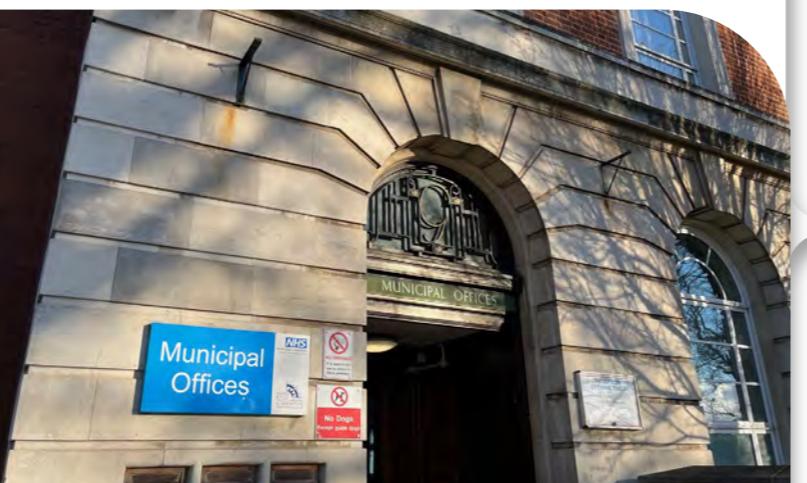
## For our occupants and the users of our buildings

The buildings that we rent out or that are open to our residents and visitors need to be well maintained and safe. We must ensure that we get best value for money and work with our tenants and service users to resolve issues at the earliest. Through the One Public Estate programme, we will continue to work with our partners to make the best use of buildings owned across the public sector.

Reviewing how many buildings we own, vehicles we drive and equipment we use is important. Making the right choices means we can reduce costs and be kinder to the environment. How we use IT and new tech helps to keep the information we hold safe and free from attack, and helps our residents to interact with us more easily.

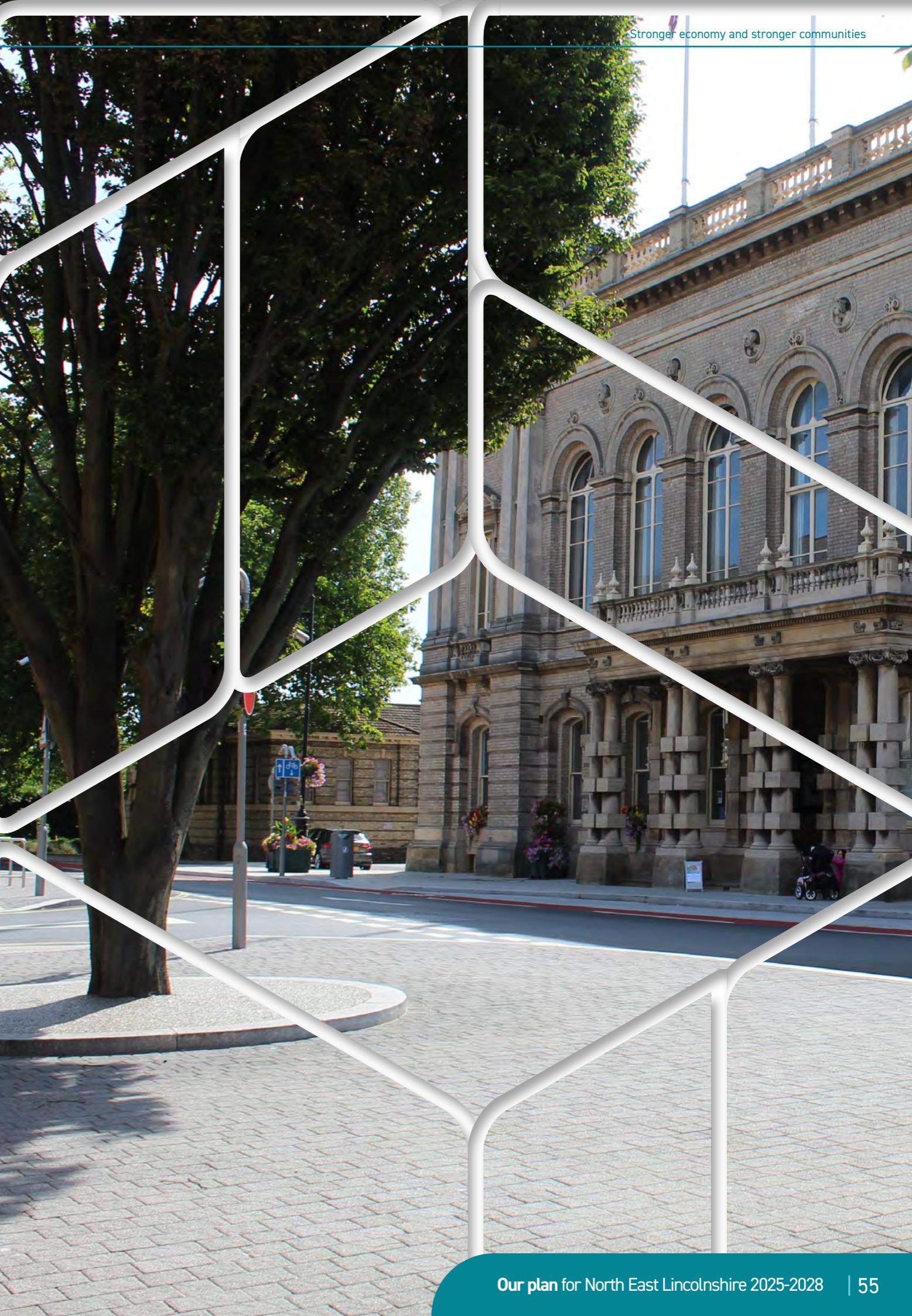
## For our communities

We work best when we work with our communities – and in some cases this means others taking over our buildings and outdoor spaces. There are some real success stories here – community groups, and town and parish councils, have transformed



some of our 'assets' into great spaces and facilities that are busy and productive. Where appropriate, we want to continue this partnership working.

The things we do to shape our estate now and in the future will help to improve our 'place' for everyone.





# Engaging and effective Council Accessible and engaging

To make changes that will take our borough forward, we need to hear your thoughts.

- If you live in North East Lincolnshire – how do you feel about your borough?
- If you work here – what do you think about the opportunities here?
- If you or your family and friends use our services – do you feel that your thoughts about those services are listened to?

The way we connect with communities and businesses has changed and will continue to do so. We want to listen, and we want everyone connected with North East Lincolnshire to have a voice.

To do this, we are always looking at how we can make things easier...

- When you contact the council, do you get the information you want in the right way?
- When we want to talk to communities and business about changing things, do you take part in our consultations to have your say? If so, great but if not, what stops you?

We, along with our other partners in health and the voluntary and community sector, have agreed a way of working that is our Talking, Listening and Working Together commitment and strategy.

This explains how we want to reach as many people as we can when looking at changing things that impact on you.

We have this because we know that working with our communities, local businesses, public sector partners and voluntary and community organisations can build a 'Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities'.

These relationships are growing, and we need that to continue. We also want you – our people, businesses and other partners – to know that your views matter to us, whether you contact us via our website, our social media channels or through a community group or business.

Working with community organisations and residents to support community led change is also important to us as it helps us to listen, understand and collaborate with our communities. We are already doing this – from tree planting events and activities to improve peoples' mental health and intend to do more.

In recent years thousands of you have attended public events and completed surveys online with suggestions of how we change our borough and the services we deliver. And we want more of that as we look to improve the future for our people and our place.





# Engaging and effective Council A digitally smart borough

Technology is advancing all the time and as it does, it's essential that we keep up with these changing times – finding new ways to connect quickly and easily with our residents, our colleagues and our partners.

There's big opportunities to do this, and here's our snapshot:

- Exploring and adopting new technologies in a safe and ethical way to improve services. By keeping up with the technology available to us, we will be able to support better delivery of services that benefit our communities, local businesses and partners.

- Improving our digital connectivity to benefit residents and businesses. Working with the Government, we want to make sure that the borough has improved digital telecoms infrastructure, so everyone has good digital access. This will help residents and attract businesses to invest here.

We've all heard about super-fast broadband and 5G mobile – how can we be connected? Our work with the other councils across Greater Lincolnshire will support all of this.

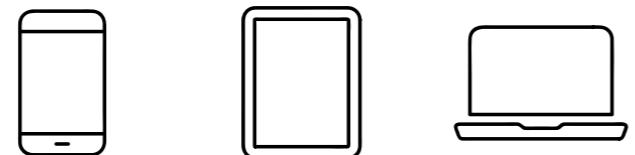
- How can digital technology help us provide up-to-date information to our residents when they want it? For example, we are looking at whether we could use digital assistants to tell people about bin collections or changes to service.

We don't want to tell people the same thing multiple times either – information, shared once, and in the best way is what we are aiming for.

- Safely sharing information, with everyone's consent of course, will improve working with our partner organisations – again improving things for everyone.



We recognise the importance of everyone having access to digital services and technology and are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital age. This means working with our partners and the voluntary and community sector to provide support and resources to help people get online, offering training to improve digital skills, and making our services accessible to all. By doing this, we aim to create an inclusive digital environment where everyone can benefit from the opportunities that technology offers.



# **Stronger economy and stronger communities**

**Our plan for North East Lincolnshire:  
2025 to 2028**

## **Accessibility**

This document is available in plain text format

Please contact: [communications@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:communications@nelincs.gov.uk)

NO RESTRICTIONS

## CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

Item 8

<b>DATE</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Ben Dent / Charlene Sykes
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Local Offer for Care Leavers - update
<b>STATUS</b>	Open

### CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Safeguarding children, promoting better outcomes for children in our care, and providing opportunities and improved health outcomes for our care leavers are key elements of the Council plan, and the continuous improvement and transformation plan within Children Services

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The experience and outcomes for care leavers in North East Lincolnshire is a key priority for this Council. Over the past 18 months, we have made significant progress in raising the profile of our young people, and helping wider corporate parents and our partner agencies to recognise the unique skill set and aspirations of our young people with care experience. However, we have also continued to highlight the significant barriers that our young people face, not least due to the individual experiences of care that the current cohort of care leavers experienced. This report combines insights from the Leaving Care Team, alongside recent care leaver consultation activity in relation to our leaving care offer. This report highlights the voice of young people in relation to the support they feel they would benefit from, and further highlights how we are working to break the cycle of generational disadvantage caused by historic inadequacies in services for care leavers.

### MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

This report seeks to update scrutiny panel members on the ongoing progress that we continue to make with regards to our care leavers, and the development of our local offer.

#### 1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

Care leavers face significant challenges transitioning into adulthood, often without the support networks available to their peers. Previous services to Care Leavers in NEL have been inadequate, leaving many young people vulnerable to poverty, social exclusion, limited opportunities and aspirations, and without the love and care they need and deserve to help them thrive and develop successfully. The Leaving Care Team currently supports approximately 200 care leavers aged 18-21, and approximately 150 young people informally between the ages of 21-25. The Leaving Care Team also support an additional approximate 75 young people aged 16 and

17 who will leave our care over the next 18 months. Alongside this, the council has committed to a life long offer of support to care leavers. In 2024, a review of the local offer to care leavers was undertaken, with a number of new support elements and financial support provided. This was in the context of no significant review of the offer for the previous 5 years, which had left our local offer stagnant. Through the review process in 2024, we made a commitment to reviewing and updating our offer every year.

A recent consultation with 11 care-experienced young people took place as part of our review of the local offer, ensuring that young people's voices were at the centre of our work. The consultation highlighted areas of strength, such as supportive relationships with personal advisors and access to education and employment opportunities. However, they identified some critical gaps, including how the council could better financially support them in context of their limited wider family and social support networks, citing the support that some young people may traditionally receive from their own parents that they often miss out on. They also shared their views around how increased support for the children of our care leavers (our corporate grandchildren) could benefit them, as well as increased support with social mobility.

Through the consultation with young people, and with our leaving care workforce who are directly supporting our young people, we have factored in the feedback and are currently producing a draft of the updated offer that considers some of these changes, with the intention of enhancing and improving our local offer to young people. This will ultimately improve their life chances and outcomes.

Once this updated offer is in a final draft, it will be submitted for the usual cabinet approval processes.

## 2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

Investment in the wellbeing and future of our care leavers is not optional. Our corporate parenting responsibility is enshrined in legislation and also forms a significant part of the inspectorates analysis of our overall effectiveness. Alongside this, NELC made a commitment in 2024 to treat care experience as a protected characteristic, meaning we will consider the unique quality needs of care leavers in our decision making.

But above all of this, it is a moral responsibility that we promote the best possible outcomes for those young people who we have assumed the parental role for. These enhancements and revisions to the leaving care offer will provide our care leavers with enhanced life opportunities and provide the best possible foundation for them to be successful. It will support to reduce the barriers they face to independence and inclusion and reduce perpetuating cycles of poverty and disadvantage. By addressing historic inadequacies, we can create a fairer system that promotes dignity, independence, and opportunity.

Without continuing to develop our offer to our young people, our young people will face continued barriers, reinforcing cycles of disadvantage and increasing reliance on emergency interventions. The financial impact on the Local Authority is

acknowledged, but the long-term social and economic benefits outweigh the financial impact.

### **3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

There are a number of positive reputational considerations that are linked to updating the local offer to care leavers regularly, and ensuring that this is aligned to current barriers faced, and the voice of young people. It represents a strategic and compassionate investment in the future of care leavers, which would enable NELC to continue to be a progressive local authority, that values the outcomes and experiences of our young people, and supporting them to navigate a difficult time in their childhoods. Implement these changes will ensure that care-experienced young people have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive in our community. Reputationally, this will be significant. There is significant national attention and consideration given to the outcomes of care leavers, including the new dedicated grading within the ILACS framework.

Communication of an update offer, in early 2026, will need to be aimed directly at informing the young people impacted upon.

### **4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As part of the review, we have engaged with our finance partners to consider whether the financial implications of the updated offer, based on the estimated projections, can be met within the existing budgetary requirements. Whilst some of the investment can, it is not wholly possible. Therefore, this has been taken into consideration within budget setting planning for 26/27

### **5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

Please see above body of this report. The Local Offer for Care Leavers is directly linked to the outcomes and experiences of our children and young people. There are no disadvantages to children linked to providing an updated local offer to care leavers.

### **6. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No impact

### **7. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS**

No impact

### **8. MONITORING COMMENTS**

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal

Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

**9. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

All wards impacted, as the local offer applies to all care leavers who have previously been in the care of NELC, regardless of where they now reside.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Existing care leaver offer published in 2024.

**11. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

Ben Dent (Deputy Service Director)  
Charlene Sykes (Service Director)

ANN MARIE MATSON  
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN SERVICES



## **Briefing Note for Children's Scrutiny Meeting**

### **Family Hubs**

This briefing note provides summary information on the latest position in relation to The Family hubs across North East Lincolnshire. This will focus upon the impact and reach of the hubs, including the footfall and new registrations (memberships) within the last Quarter.

Overall the use of the Hubs continues to increase, this is aligned to community engagement, specific events, continued strengthened links with the voluntary sector, partnerships being based within the hubs, making them the heart of the community. The updates below provide the current position, with the understanding that the new Best Start guidance has been issued and will increase the offer further within the Hubs and community, with the Hubs being rebranded to Best Start Family Hubs and in consideration of the government reforms as we continue to further enhance the preventative and integration agenda.

#### **Overall populations and summary:**

In Q3 into Q4 (Q4 full data not yet available) there have been a total of 775 new registrations across the 7 Family Hubs, 1428 sessions ran from the Hubs with 8326 attendees to these sessions. The Primary demographics for those accessing the Hubs are adults aged between 30-34 years, closely following by those aged 25-29 years, of these adults they are predominantly white British, and female, however the number of males accessing the Hubs is continuing to increase compared to previous Quarters. The primary child age is under 1 years, followed by children aged 2 years, however the age range includes those up to 9 years of age. We are continuing to review how to enhance our 0-19 offer.

In addition to the offer within the Hubs, the outreach support continues, to ensure families can be supported where they feel unable to attend a Hub or require support to build their confidence to attend.

The summer activities events were a success across the Hubs, ensuring further visibility of the offer and reaching new families, who had not previously accessed the Hubs. Summer 2025 activities engaged double the amount of families of the previous year and led to increased registrations at all hubs

Learning Through Play, Stay and Play Rhyme Time, Baby Rhyme Time and Baby Massage are the highest accessed sessions closely followed by Drop in support for weighing and the Infant feeding peer support sessions.

### **Overall impact:**

The overall impact of the Hubs continues to ensure support and community engagement at the earliest and lowest level, this in turn also ensures families in the community know where to access if they are in need of support. Additionally the workforce know their communities and families and therefore can identify increasing need and respond appropriately.

In line with the Social Care reforms, the integrated offer of family help will be further strengthened and Family Hubs will be central to this. The Government have confirmed the funding for Best Start Family Hubs will continue from 2026–29 and have introduced Best Start in Life: Healthy Babies to strengthen the health offer in the first 1,001 days. Locally, we have transformed our seven hubs into accessible “one-stop” holistic support venues for families (0–19, or up to 25 with SEND), we have refreshed our Early Help Strategy, and continue to review our targeted Family Help offer aligned to national guidance, ensuring the right support at the right time and at the lowest level. Future updates on developments, delivery and performance of the family hubs will be brought through the wider transformation agenda within the Social Care Reforms briefings, giving Members clear visibility of progress, outcomes and next steps.

### **Contact Officers**

Harriet Malkin, Deputy Service Director

Charlene Sykes, Service Director

Ann-Marie Matson Director of Children's Services

# Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny panel Item 10

<b>DATE</b>	15/01/2026
<b>REPORT OF</b>	Jenni Steel, Service Director for Education, Inclusion & Integration.
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Education Transport including finance
<b>STATUS</b>	Open

## CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Our ambition for North East Lincolnshire is that all of our children are healthy, resilient, safe and are supported to achieve their full potential. The Council Plan caters for this directly in three of its priorities. The matter outlined in this report (provision of education transport, third priority):

- To deliver high quality statutory, targeted and universal services for children and young people in our borough
- To ensure all children and young people in our community have access to high quality, safe and effective health services when they need it, so they enjoy good health and wellbeing throughout their life
- To ensure our children and young people attain the right skills and learning which enables them to contribute as future citizens, to the continued economic and social development of North East Lincolnshire

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school. For most parents this includes making their own arrangements for their child, who is of compulsory school age, to travel to and from school. In some cases, children are entitled to transport support and local authorities must make the travel arrangements, free of charge, for eligible children. (this includes statutory walking distance and/or unsafe walking routes and extended rights such as receipt of free school meals.) This report focusses on the current activity associated with the provision of transport for education purposes, including cost. This includes all children of statutory school age and post 16.

## MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

This report is being presented as an update as requested by the panel.

### 1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

The vast majority of children who we provide transport for have SEND.

There is a statutory requirement in the SEND Code of Practice to provide fully funded transport to eligible children who are in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) up to the age of 16.

The number of children with an EHCP has increased steadily in NEL over the last 5 years. These numbers have a direct impact on the SEN Transport budget meaning further cost increases are forecast for the service in future years.

Complexity of need has also increased – finding suitable travel solutions with appropriately trained staff is becoming more difficult and becomes more expensive with the level of complexity.

The number and variety of placements has also increased over the last 5 years and the number of education placements outside of NEL has increased significantly, some of which are located a significant distance from NEL and the child's home.

A recent report by the National Audit Office, on behalf of the Department for Education, estimated that 520,000 children and young people aged 0-25 were receiving home to school transport as at February 2025, total spending in 2023-24 was £2.3bn with an estimate of £1.5bn for children aged 0-16 with SEND.

The provision of education transport for children with an EHCP post 16 is non-statutory. In NEL, we continue to fund all children up to the age of 19 when this is requested.

It is acknowledged that for some young people who are 16+, it would still be appropriate to review their transport arrangements, but this may result in the same provision being maintained.

Current activity:

- 907 Children/Young Adults are currently accessing transport – Includes Post 16 numbers up to the age of 25.
- 196 different journeys are made each day, travelling to 71 provisions.

Team:

- 1 FTE – Education Transport Manager
- 2 FTE – Education Transport Supervisors
- 1 – Business Support Officer, 20 hours per week, term time only.
- 8-drivers
- 50 (Part-Time) + 6 (casual) Passenger Assistants (directly employed by NELC with a further 54 employed by our contractors, with an additional 19 parents acting as PA's (unpaid) = 123 Passenger Assts in total. This is an increasing trend due to age of child and complexity of need.
- We have 8 NELC vehicles (6 Mercedes Trekka buses specifically built for accessibility, used on Humberston Park runs and 2 Electric Transit minibuses used for Cambridge Park runs)

## 2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

Risks:

- Increase in Solo travellers
- Saturation of the current market to meet demand
- Continued increase in EHCP's
- Increase in the number of children accessing bespoke Education other than at school (EOTAS) packages
- Funding – continued pressure on the budget.

Opportunities & Equality:

- Whilst DfE policy and strategy in relation to home to school transport is unlikely to change, the forthcoming SEND Reforms, which will overhaul the SEND system in England through earlier intervention, better inclusion in

mainstream schools, should result in clearer support and reduced financial strain on Councils. The Schools White Paper is due to be published in 2026.

- Increasing local capacity for children with SEMH will reduce the numbers of children travelling out of Borough and who are most costly
- Developing Resource Specialist Provision (RSP) within our current educational establishments enabling children to remain within setting and Borough and not require (EOTAS) packages
- Increasing capacity within one of our local specialist schools through capital funding to extend the size of the building

### 3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The positive benefit to the Council's reputation will be the provision of sufficient and suitable pupil places for the children and young people with EHCP's to be educated within their own locality therefore reducing the need, where appropriate, for the costly provision of transport.

### 4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Below is the current quarter 2 position related to the provision of education transport.

Education Transport area	2025/26 Q2 Budget Pressure £'000
SEN – Post 16	£(22)
SEN – School Age	£595
Excluded and Alternative Provision Transport	£(57)
Primary School Transport – over 2 miles	£10
Secondary School Transport - over 3 miles	£55
Other	£37
<b>Total Budget Pressure</b>	<b>£618</b>

The current Dynamic Purchasing System that is used to purchase bus and taxi routes from independent organisations ends in June 2026 so a new contract arrangement is required to be put in place for June 2026 in order to ensure that all provision can be purchased from companies that have been appropriately vetted. We will be seeking permission from Cabinet later this month to agree to undertake an open competitive tender process to establish a new contract arrangement with a number of suppliers for eligible children, in line with the Home to School Transport policy. Individual competition for each route will ensure that the best price is achieved for Council spend.

We have seen significant increases in both cost of provision and pupil volumes which impact on education transport budgets. Cost of provision being impacted by an increase in National Insurance and National Minimum Wage as well as other

inflationary factors (the majority of transport routes being delivered by external contracts), and pupil volumes being impacted by rises in EHCP numbers and complexity of cases.

## **5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS**

Any increase in capacity for school places locally will improve outcomes for children with SEND in North East Lincolnshire enabling less children to require provision out of the area and therefore reducing the need to travel long distances which will be far more beneficial for those children.

Enabling children to attend school within their local community, also supports outcomes for adulthood, and promotes a sense of belonging. Our children who are in schools today, become our adults of tomorrow and need to feel part of the local community, developing skills to access shops, leisure activities and community centres effectively. This is much more difficult to do when young people are educated outside of the borough.

## **6. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Contribution to traffic congestion and emissions.

## **7. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS**

Improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), by ensuring transport is in place to ensure access to high-quality, safe, and appropriate education provision.

## **8. MONITORING COMMENTS**

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

## **9. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

All wards affected.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None at this time.

## **11. CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

Karen Linton  
Deputy Service Director - Skills, Employability & Education Transport

**Jenni Steel, Service Director for Education, Inclusion & Integration.**