Connected Coast Board Meeting Minutes
Date: 7th August 2026
Time: 10:30am
Chair: Chris Baron
Location: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

Attendance

Present:

- Chris Baron, Cllr. Adrian Findley, Cllr. Carl Tebbutt, Richard Tice MP, Cllr. Rueben Robinson, Deborah Higton, Leigh Edlin, Nicola Craven (attended on behalf of National Trust for Ron Zaunbrecher), James Meadowcroft, Adrian Benjamin, Clare Draper, Maria Cotton, Jon Burgess, Bonnie Mitchell, and Saskia Zablockyj.

Apologies:

- James Brindle, Paul McCooey, Tracy Richardson, Jacqui Bunce, Samantha Harrison, Ron Zaunbrecher, Georgia Thompson, Sandra Williamson, Sarah Munton and Michelle Gant.

Declarations of Interest

None reported.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes from 29 May 2026 were approved without amendments.

Matters Arising

- Board members raised concerns about key communications being shared informally or via social media before official updates.
- Recruitment to the vacant programme support post is underway, with interviews scheduled for 20 August.
- The Board asked to continue monitoring project performance against original full business case targets, alongside government reporting requirements. Additional programme resource will support output collection, project closure and lessons learned reporting.

- Project signage and Connected Coast branding need to be improved, particularly for smaller completed schemes.
- The Board noted there is no realistic contractual route to pursue clawback for the Lincolnshire Police Training Academy but requested clearer updates on current use.
- Rail capacity to Skegness remains a major concern, especially two-carriage services during busy periods. Further data will be sought on rail service capacity, failures and emergency bus use to support lobbying of rail operators. A joint approach involving Connected Coast, Skegness Town Council, the MP and the district council will be explored.
- It was noted that a new operator is due to take on the franchise from October 2026 and further lobbying efforts should be targeted towards Great British Rail to seek improvements to service capacity and provision.
- ELDC asked to pursue a Freedom of Information request with East Midlands Railway to assess recent carriage provision – i.e. how may times two and four carriages have been available over the last 12 months.

Environment Agency and Planning

- The Chair introduced concerns from businesses and stakeholders about Environment Agency planning advice and its implications for future coastal development.
- Deborah Higton clarified that the Environment Agency advises the local planning authority on flood risk but does not determine planning applications.
- Recent evidence on coastal flood defence condition has changed the Environment Agency's advice, including how far it can rely on "hold the line" policy being delivered. It was noted that Greater Lincolnshire were the first area in the country to implement these recommendations, linked to new evidence but that other areas nationally are facing similar pressures.
- The 2040 date reflects when some hard defences may become unreliable, assuming beach nourishment and maintenance continue until then.
- Members raised concerns about impacts on investor confidence, house values, development, the visitor economy, food security and the wider strategic importance of the coast.

- Richard Tice MP stated that the strategic position should be to hold the line and that the issue should be escalated regionally and nationally.
- The Lincolnshire Coast 2100+ partnership will need to present a credible and viable investment case to government and Treasury.
- Members discussed Lincolnshire Coast 2100+ governance, including an officer programme board and elected representatives forum.
- A statement of intent is expected by March 2027, but members asked for engagement with elected representatives to be accelerated.
- A £320 million business case is progressing to support beach nourishment and maintenance to 2040, although funding is not yet confirmed.
- The Board agreed that Environment Agency, coastal defence and planning implications should become a standing agenda item.
- A local Skegness meeting with the Environment Agency, East Lindsey planning officers, Richard Tice and local businesses will be explored, with mid-September suggested as a possible timing.

Towns Deal Update

- The Towns Deal programme remains in a positive financial position, with six of thirteen projects still to reach practical completion.
- Sandilands is close to practical completion, with significant claims expected shortly.
- Skegness Foreshore includes £600,000 for Esplanade works, subject to formal Arts Council England variation.
- High Street transformation spend is committed, and Skegness Station is expected to claim remaining investment by January.
- Foreshore and multi-user trail underspends remain to be allocated, with no Mablethorpe underspend expected.
- Work is underway to make vacant and underused Skegness Foreshore sites more investmentready.
- Members requested TEC campus retention data be compared with previous years and national benchmarks. It was also requested that the College provide any more information on the 20% of students not being retained, as this may help identify some barriers for future targeted intervention – e.g. around accessibility of transport provision.

- Health-related activity was welcomed, including neighbourhood health centres and potential clinical diagnostic centre expansion.
- Arts Council funding for the Culture House and amphitheatre is secured, though formal contract variation is still awaited.
- The Colonnade image and lodge update will be attached to the minutes

Pride in Place Programme Update

- The Skegness Pride in Place Board has assessed open call submissions, with five or six projects selected to progress.
- Awards for BeachAbility, Links Digital and East Coast Pride are close to contract.
- Two provisional Skegness Town Council awards for Tower Gardens require further assurance before contracts can be agreed.
- A community grants pot for smaller grassroots awards will be established using capacity funding.
- The position on beach safety work and possible replication of the Mablethorpe Atlantis Alliance model in Skegness will be clarified.
- Positive feedback has been received on Skegness street scene operatives, and Pride in Placebranded high-visibility bibs have been produced.
- For Mablethorpe, Jacqui Robinson has been appointed Chair, and the remaining Board membership is close to confirmation.
- Members noted the need to move quickly on the Mablethorpe regeneration plan.

Other Programme and Project Funds Update

- The Board noted updates on wider programme funds, including LUF Round 2, CDF, ELIF, NPO Arts Council funding and UK Town of Culture 2028.
- Sessions House has developed an operational business plan, with running and operational costs being sense-checked.
- The UK Town of Culture 2028 submission was not shortlisted, but the process helped develop a stronger cultural narrative.
- Maria Cotton will circulate the Skegness submission narrative, key ideas, shortlisted towns and judging arrangements.
- Ideas from the submission should be considered for future funding opportunities, including Pride in Place.

Communications

The communications update provided by Michelle Gant was noted. No questions were raised on the report.

Local Government Reorganisation

- Local authorities are awaiting further detail on the proposed local government reorganisation model, process and timelines.
- Members noted ongoing uncertainty for councils, staff and partner groups.
- The Board agreed to monitor the issue and revisit it when more information is available.

Actions Agreed

- Progress project signage and Connected Coast branding for completed and smaller projects, including Tower Esplanade, Lumley Road and High Street interventions. and timelines.
- Invite or seek an update from Lincolnshire Police on current use of the Police Training Academy facility.
- Explore rail service data, including carriage numbers, failures, emergency bus use and capacity issues, and pursue joint lobbying with relevant partners.
- Make Environment Agency, coastal defence and planning implications a standing Board agenda item.
- Attach Colonnade image and lodge update to the minutes. ***(Enc).***
- Clarify beach safety project position and whether the Mablethorpe Atlantis Alliance approach can be replicated in Skegness.
- Follow up TEC campus retention data, including comparison with previous years and national benchmarks.
- Circulate a concise narrative summary of the UK Town of Culture submission, shortlisted towns and judging arrangements.

Any Other Business

- Laura Jackson has been appointed to the East Lindsey coastal officer role and is expected to transition into post this month.
- Laura is already known to local businesses and has been positively received through her Skegness work.
- The Chair suggested linking Laura into Pride in Place Boards or the Connected Coast Board, where appropriate.

- The Tower Esplanade whalebone lighting will be reviewed against the original specification.
- Woodhead Enterprise has taken a ten-year lease on the former Skegness College building for managed workspace.
- TEC campus applicant numbers are increasing, though further evening use and classes may still need consideration.

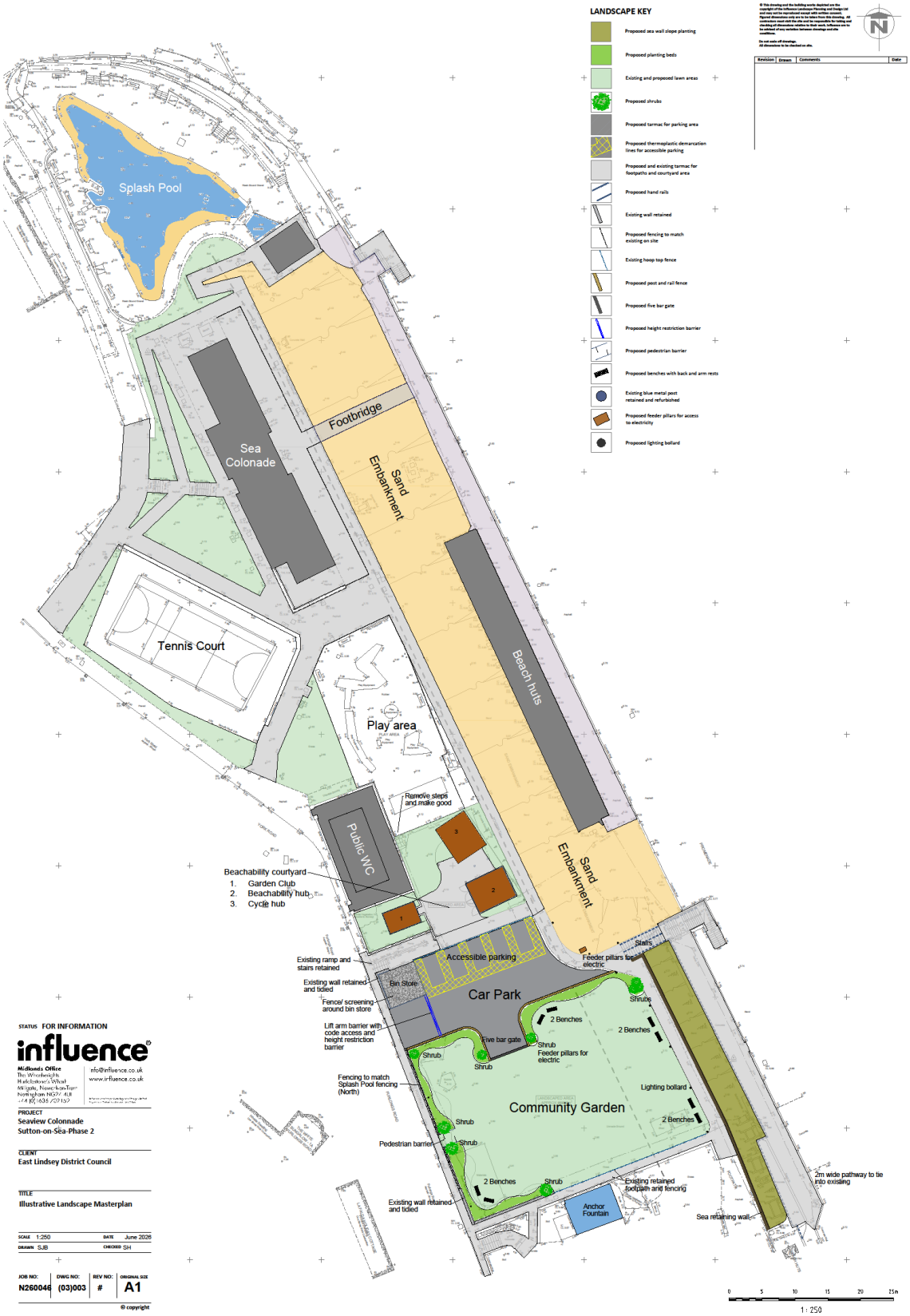
Dates of Future Meetings

The Chair proposed whether the next meeting could be held at Sandilands on 24 September to coincide with the opening event. Maria Cotton advised that she and Jon Burgess had a mandatory internal meeting that day, linked to service planning and local government reorganisation, and would be unable to attend.

It was agreed that a future date would be explored offline, with a preference for a face-to-face meeting if practical, potentially at Sandilands after the opening.

Meeting closed at 13:36.

CONNECTED COAST
BUILDING TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES



STATUS FOR INFORMATION

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PROJECT
Seaview Colonnade
Sutton-on-Sea-Phase 2

CLIENT
East Lindsey District Council

TITLE
Illustrative Landscape Masterplan

SCALE	1:250	DATE	June 2026
DRAWN	SJB	CHECKED	SH

JOB NO:	DWG NO:	REV NO:	ORIGINAL SIZE
N260046	(03)003	#	A1

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