Connected Coast Board Meeting Minutes
Date: 12th October 2026
Time: 2:00pm
Chair: Chris Baron
Location: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and introduced Hayley Crawford, who has joined the Connected Coast programme team to support programme delivery. Members also welcomed Hayley Toyne, attending on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council.

- Present: Chris Baron, Emma Tatlow, Freddie Chambers, James Brindle, Robert Caudwell, Tim Allen, Julie Cordon, Steve Kirk, Ron Zaunbrecher, Claire Draper, Carl Tebbutt, Michelle Gant, Bonnie Mitchell, Hayley Crawford, Jon Burgess, Maria Cotton, Hayley Toyne (deputising for Samantha Harrison), Adrian Benjamin, Cllr Adrian Findley, Jacqui Bunce, Deborah Higton, Ann Hardy.

- Apologies: Richard Tice, Robert Parker, Sandra Williamson, Paul McCooey, Samantha Harrison, Tracey Stringfellow and Cllr Rueben Robinson.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

Jon Burgess provided an update on outstanding actions from the previous meeting.

Progress had been made on several actions, including responses from East Midlands Railway and additional information relating to the UK Town of Culture bid. Work on Connected Coast branding and signage will now progress with additional programme support in place.

An update remains outstanding regarding the operation and outcomes of the Police Training Academy. Members discussed reports indicating that a further 21 officers may

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be trained through the facility and requested additional clarity on recruitment outcomes and wider use of the academy.

The Board noted that proposals associated with lodge development adjacent to the Colonnade remain a long-term opportunity but are not currently progressing as a funded project.

Members welcomed the positive response received from East Midlands Railway and discussed the importance of securing ongoing improvements to rail services ahead of the completion of Skegness Railway Station.

A discussion took place regarding opportunities to improve cycling provision along the coast, including secure cycle storage at Skegness Railway Station and enhanced links between cycling routes, rail travel and visitor infrastructure. Members recognised the growing importance of active travel and cycling tourism across the Connected Coast area.

5. Environment Agency and Planning

The Board received an update on Environment Agency review work and associated planning implications for the Lincolnshire Coast.

Members were advised that further consultation activity is unlikely to take place until early 2027, allowing time for East Lindsey District Council and partners to complete supporting work through the 2100+ Partnership.

The Chair highlighted the importance of providing certainty and clarity for businesses, developers and investors along the coast. Members agreed that clear communication remains essential in order to counter speculation and maintain confidence in future investment opportunities.

Deborah Higton advised that East Lindsey District Council has already published a statement outlining its current planning position and explaining how individual planning applications are being considered during this period of uncertainty.

The ELDC statement, *Determining planning applications in East Lindsey's Coastal Zone*, can be viewed here.

The Board agreed to retain this item as a standing agenda item.

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6. Towns Deal Update

a. Programme Update

Jon Burgess thanked project leads and officers for supporting the preparation of project updates.

Members welcomed the official opening of the National Trust Sandilands facility and recognised the project as a significant milestone for the Connected Coast programme. The Board noted that opportunities would be explored a future face-to-face meeting at the venue.

Programme delivery remains in a positive position following the extension of programme timescales to March 2028. Several projects across both Mablethorpe and Skegness have now reached completion, with approximately £4 million of programme funding still being managed through ongoing and remaining projects.

The Chair requested that the risk columns for completed projects be updated and that the outputs spreadsheet be revised to reflect the new indicators. It was agreed that future reporting would show performance against both the original and the revised indicators.

b. Project Updates

The Board discussed ongoing conversations with Arts Council England regarding project variation requests linked to theatre and foreshore improvements. Members expressed concern regarding continuing delays and the effect this could have on delivery timescales.

It was noted that works associated with pedestrianisation infrastructure for pop-up outlets proposals are currently anticipated during winter 2027 in order to minimise impacts on businesses during the main visitor season.

Members also discussed reporting arrangements and risk management. The Chair requested that risk ratings be reviewed for completed projects and that project outputs continue to be tracked against both original business case commitments and revised government reporting frameworks.

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c. **Project Closure Template**

Members noted proposals for a strengthened project closure process. This will involve direct engagement with project sponsors to assess project outcomes against original objectives and newer government performance measures.

Mablethorpe Subgroup

The future role of the Mablethorpe Subgroup was discussed at length. Members agreed that there remains a valuable role for the group in monitoring completed projects, reviewing legacy impacts and supporting the delivery of remaining initiatives such as the MobiHub project.

The importance of maintaining communication with subgroup members and providing clarity on future arrangements was emphasised.

MobiHub

Members requested clarity regarding the demolition timetable associated with the MobiHub project.

7. Pride in Place Programme Update

Skegness Programme

Members received a verbal update on Skegness Pride in Place activity. Early projects continue to progress through contractual arrangements and implementation. Community engagement remains a key focus, with further consultation activities being undertaken ahead of future funding rounds. The Board also noted the positive feedback being received regarding the Street Operative initiative.

Mablethorpe Programme

The Board noted continuing progress towards completion of the Mablethorpe Regeneration Plan. Whilst Government has extended submission timescales, the Mablethorpe Neighbourhood Board remains committed to submitting the plan by the end of November 2026 to allow delivery activity to commence as early as possible.

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Members discussed the successful implementation of the Skegness Street Operative initiative and acknowledged the value of visible, community-focused interventions that provide early evidence of investment and improvement. The importance of delivering tangible outcomes that build confidence and maintain community engagement was recognised.

8. Other Programme and Project Funds Update

Members noted progress updates relating to a range of wider programmes and initiatives.

Particular attention was drawn to:

- Completion and opening of Alford Manor House.
- Progress towards completion of Spilsby Sessions House.
- Continued delivery through the East Lindsey Investment Fund.
- Ongoing Sport England Place Expansion Programme activity.

Sport England Programme

Emma Tatlow provided an update on Sport England activity and emphasised the importance of partnership working in tackling wider challenges around health, wellbeing, physical activity and community safety.

The Board welcomed the opportunity to receive a detailed presentation at the next meeting.

The Board discussed the proposed PlayZone for Sutton-on-Sea and requested that the feasibility of installing it on the existing tennis court adjacent to the Colonnade be explored.

Active Travel and Cycling

Members discussed opportunities to encourage cycling and active travel, including improved cycling infrastructure, cycling tourism opportunities, enhanced wayfinding and better integration with public transport networks.

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Tour of Britain Legacy

The Board welcomed early findings from evaluation work following the Tour of Britain, which demonstrated high visitor satisfaction levels and strong perceptions of Lincolnshire as a visitor destination. A more detailed impact report is expected in November.

9. Communications

Michelle Gant presented the communications update.

Strong performance across social media channels was noted, alongside extensive local and national media coverage generated by the opening of the Sandilands facility.

Members discussed opportunities to tell a more cohesive Connected Coast story through case studies, project success stories and promotion of the wider benefits delivered through investment. Particular emphasis was placed on promoting accessibility improvements, including beach accessibility projects and Changing Places facilities.

The Board agreed there is a strong opportunity to promote the Connected Coast as an inclusive and accessible visitor destination.

10. Local Government Reorganisation

Members were advised that current expectations remain that local elections will proceed in 2027 and that any significant local government reorganisation is unlikely to affect Connected Coast programme delivery in the immediate future.

The Board agreed that this item could be removed from future agendas unless significant developments arise.

11. Summary of Meeting and Actions

The Chair summarised the key actions arising from the meeting, including:

Ref	Action	Owner
1.	Secure cycle parking and rail cycle capacity update.	Jon Burgess
2.	Whalebone lighting update.	Jon Burgess
3.	Explore PlayZone opportunity on the tennis court site.	Jon Burgess / Partners

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4.	Update outputs reporting sheet to reflect both original and revised indicators.	Jon Burgess
5.	Review future arrangements for the Mablethorpe Subgroup.	Jon Burgess
6.	Confirm Grayscroft/MobiHub demolition timetable.	Jon Burgess
7.	Sport England presentation at next meeting.	Emma Tatlow
8.	Update portfolio risk ratings.	Jon Burgess
9.	Arrange the next Connected Coast Board meeting for the week commencing 17 January 2027.	Jon Burgess
10.	Circulate a programme update to Board members prior to the January meeting.	Jon Burgess
11.	Convene a Mablethorpe Subgroup meeting before the next Board meeting.	Jon Burgess

12. Any Other Business

Members discussed opportunities to celebrate the success of the Connected Coast programme through future opening events and wider promotional activity. Suggestions included exploring opportunities for a high-profile or royal visit to showcase the collective impact of investment along the coast.

The Board also discussed opportunities to further market accessibility improvements and strengthen the area's reputation as an inclusive tourism destination.
Additional discussion took place regarding opportunities to engage infrastructure companies and external partners in supporting heritage and community initiatives in Mablethorpe.

13. Date of Future Meetings

Members agreed that, given the current programme position and with most major projects nearing completion, the next Connected Coast Board meeting would be moved to January 2027, provisionally in the week commencing 17th January 2027. Jon Burgess agreed to provide a detailed programme update to members ahead of the meeting during his period of absence. It was also agreed that a meeting of the Mablethorpe Subgroup should take place beforehand.

The Chair thanked attendees for contributions and closed the meeting at 3:21pm.

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