PRIDE IN PLACE
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BIRCHWOOD WEST

Pride In Place 10 Year Vision



November 2026

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Section 1: Our 10-Year Vision

What will Birchwood West look and feel like?



In ten years' time, we want Birchwood West to remain a place where people feel part of a community, know their neighbours and value the neighbourhood around them, while offering more opportunities for people of all ages to thrive. The parks, woodland and green spaces that residents value today will remain one of the neighbourhood's defining strengths. Community facilities will be welcoming, well used and accessible, and public spaces will feel cared for and maintained.

Children and young people will have more opportunities close to home, with places where they can spend time, take part in activities and feel supported. Residents of all ages will have more opportunities to be active, improve their health and wellbeing and connect with others within their community. Most importantly, Birchwood will continue to be a place where people know one another, look out for one another and feel part of a wider community.

How will life be different?

Residents want the neighbourhood's strengths to be protected while addressing the issues that affect everyday life. Children and young people will have more opportunities to take part in activities, develop skills and influence decisions that affect them. Families will have access to a wider range of activities and facilities within their own community. Parks and green spaces will be easier to access, better maintained and used more often by residents of all ages.

People will find it easier to move around the neighbourhood, access facilities and participate in community life. Residents who want to volunteer, join local groups or become involved in community activities will have more opportunities to do so. Local organisations will have greater capacity to support residents and deliver activities that respond to local needs. Residents will also have better access to skills, training and employment opportunities, helping more people benefit from the opportunities available within Birchwood and across the wider city.

What will success look like?

We will know we are making progress when residents can see and feel change in their everyday lives.

Children and young people will be taking part in more activities and will feel that Birchwood offers opportunities and support. Parks and green spaces will be busy, welcoming and well cared for. Residents will feel safer using public spaces and more confident moving around the neighbourhood. Community events and activities will be better attended and more people will feel involved in shaping local decisions.

Success will also be reflected in stronger community connections. More people will know what is happening locally, more residents will take part in community life, and local organisations and volunteers will feel supported to continue making a difference. Above all, success will mean that residents continue to value Birchwood as a place to live, while being able to see tangible improvements in the places, opportunities and activities that matter most to them. The Pride in Place programme will not deliver all of these changes on its own, but it can help residents, community organisations and partners work together towards a shared future for Birchwood West.

Section 2: Place and People

Birchwood West sits on the south-western edge of Lincoln, within the wider Birchwood estate. Its parks, schools and community facilities are important parts of local life, and residents who took part in our engagement spoke positively about the people and places that make the area feel like home. It is home to around 7,300 residents, with approximately 14,700 people living across the wider Birchwood area.



Pride in Place Boundary

Although Birchwood West experiences some significant social and economic challenges, it is not a place defined by deprivation alone. Throughout our engagement, residents repeatedly spoke about the things they value most: the community, the parks and green spaces, local schools and facilities, and the feeling that Birchwood is somewhere people support one another. These qualities continue to shape both the identity of the neighbourhood and its ambitions for the future.

Geography and Setting

Birchwood West developed during the late twentieth century as one of Lincoln's major residential neighbourhoods. Its character is shaped by a combination of housing, green spaces and community facilities, creating an environment that has long appealed to families.

The neighbourhood sits within the wider Birchwood area, bordered by Skellingthorpe Road to the north and Doddington Road to the south. Woodland, parks, informal green spaces and walking routes run through the area and connect residents to the wider city. These spaces are not simply environmental assets. Residents regularly described them as places where children play, neighbours meet, families spend time together and people enjoy being outdoors.

Birchwood West is well connected to the rest of Lincoln through local bus services, walking routes and road connections. At the same time, residents told us about concerns relating to traffic, parking, crossings, accessibility and some walking routes. These issues may appear small in isolation, but they affect how people move around the neighbourhood and access parks, schools, local facilities and services.

People and Community



Birchwood West is home to a diverse community of families, working-age adults and older residents. Census data indicates that around 14% of residents are aged 65 and over, while more than a quarter of households do not have access to a car. These characteristics help explain why residents place such importance on accessible local services, safe walking routes, community facilities and public transport connections.

One of the strongest messages from both the engagement and wider evidence was the importance of community. Residents frequently described Birchwood as friendly, welcoming and supportive. Across surveys, school engagement, conversations and community events, residents highlighted the importance of local relationships. They described Birchwood as a friendly place where neighbours look out for one another.

> *"People know each other and look out for each other."*

> *"This still feels like a small community, where people stick up for one another."*

Alongside this, Birchwood benefits from a range of established community assets. Schools, the Children's Centre, Birchwood Leisure Centre, community venues, faith organisations and local groups all play an important role in everyday life. They provide places where people meet, access services, volunteer, learn new skills and participate in community activities.

Birchwood's Story So Far

The recent history of Birchwood West has been shaped in part by its involvement in the national Big Local programme between 2012 and 2026. The programme provided long-term funding intended to support community-led change and delivered a number of visible local improvements, including investment in Diamond Park and support for community groups and activities.

The independent evaluation also provided useful lessons for the future. It highlighted the commitment and achievements of local volunteers while recognising the challenges involved in sustaining community-led delivery over a long period of time. The evaluation noted that a relatively small number of people carried much of the responsibility for delivery and that significant effort was devoted to a complex capital project.

For the Neighbourhood Board, these lessons are important. They reinforce the value of broad community participation, realistic delivery arrangements, strong governance and ensuring that volunteers and community leaders are supported by appropriate expertise and capacity. These experiences have influenced how the Pride in Place programme is being developed in Birchwood West.

Challenges and Strengths

Birchwood West has many strengths, but residents were also clear about the challenges facing the neighbourhood.

Parts of the area experience significant deprivation, with evidence highlighting challenges relating to income, employment, education and health. Around 47% of pupils in the wider Birchwood West area are eligible for free school meals, while neighbourhood data points to higher levels of income and employment deprivation than the Lincoln average.

These wider challenges were reflected in the conversations we had with residents. Concerns about the cost of living, access to opportunities, community safety and support for children and young people appeared repeatedly throughout the engagement process. Residents also spoke about the need for more activities, improved facilities, better-maintained public spaces and stronger opportunities for community participation.

Residents identified assets the programme can build on, including the area's green spaces, schools and community facilities. Their comments also highlighted practical priorities: improving public spaces, expanding activities for young people and making neighbourhood facilities easier to access. Many of the conversations were not about transforming Birchwood into something different, but about protecting what is already valued while addressing the issues that affect everyday life.

Looking Ahead

The engagement highlighted the importance of opportunities for children and young people, safer and better-maintained public spaces, stronger community activity and improved access to local support. The following sections explain how residents shaped these themes and how they have informed the Board's priorities for the next decade

The next sections set out how those messages have shaped our understanding of Birchwood West and informed the priorities that will guide investment and activity over the coming decade.

Section 3: Community Engagement

Our Approach

As the Birchwood West Neighbourhood Board, we believe that the future of our neighbourhood should be shaped by the people who live, work, learn and spend time here. Our vision has therefore been shaped by listening to residents and understanding what matters most to them.

Since the launch of the Pride in Place programme, we have recorded more than 1,000 engagement interactions across surveys, events, outreach activities, school engagement, youth provision, coffee mornings and stakeholder discussions. This has provided a substantial evidence base and helped us develop a strong understanding of the strengths, challenges and aspirations that exist across Birchwood West.

We have used several ways to gather views because we recognise no single method would reach everyone. Residents have been able to respond to surveys, speak to us at local events, take part in school and youth activities, or contribute through creative sessions and discussions with community organisations.

Importantly, this engagement is not a one-off exercise. The Board is committed to continuing engagement throughout the life of the programme, ensuring that residents remain involved in shaping priorities, testing ideas and influencing delivery over the next decade.

Who We Engaged



Throughout our engagement programme, we have wanted to understand how different residents experience the neighbourhood, the opportunities they value and the changes they would like to see in the future.

We heard from residents of all ages, including families, working-age adults and older people. We engaged with long-term residents who have seen the neighbourhood evolve over many years, alongside people who have more recently moved to the area. We also heard from people who work, volunteer or regularly use facilities in Birchwood and have an important stake in its future.

Children and young people played a particularly important role in shaping our Vision. Through school-based activities, youth engagement, creative exercises and dedicated surveys, hundreds of children and young people have shared their experiences, aspirations and ideas for the future so far. Their views have been central to our understanding of what it means to grow up in Birchwood West today.

Alongside residents, we have engaged with community organisations, faith groups, schools, wellbeing organisations, healthcare providers, volunteers, community leaders and delivery partners. These conversations have provided valuable insight into local strengths, existing provision, unmet needs and opportunities for future partnership working.

How We Engaged

Our engagement programme has used a variety of methods designed to make participation as accessible and inclusive as possible.

The Birchwood Pride in Place Community Survey has provided residents with an opportunity to share their experiences of living in Birchwood, identify local priorities and suggest how future investment should be directed. Face-to-face engagement has taken place through community events, family activities, coffee mornings, leisure facilities, faith venues and community organisations across the neighbourhood.

We used Love Letters to Birchwood, Birchwood in Three Words and LEGO® Serious Play to give residents different ways to share their views. These activities invited people to identify what they value locally and describe the changes they would like to see.

Children and young people were engaged through a dedicated programme of activity. Children's Voice and associated schools engagement generated 540 responses, while further insight was gathered through Pupil Voice, Zone Go, schools' engagement and creative activities.

Stakeholder discussions with community organisations, local services and delivery partners complemented resident engagement and helped us understand local assets, delivery challenges and partnership opportunities.

The capacity of the Neighbourhood Board to engage with residents have been strengthened by the support of community rooted partners. For example, Lincoln City Foundation is delivering a 12-month schools engagement programme, providing continuing opportunities to work with pupils, parents, carers, school staff and education partners. CVS Lincolnshire is delivering a complementary 12-month community engagement programme focused on outreach, stakeholder engagement, underrepresented groups and consultation. Alongside this, a dedicated Birchwood Pride in Place Community Connector, employed by City of Lincoln Council, provides a visible local presence, supports relationships with residents and community organisations and creates additional routes into the programme.

Overall, the programme has generated approximately 1,000 recorded engagement interactions. This includes 327 engagements through the initial CVS Lincolnshire community engagement programme, 95 Community Survey responses, an estimated 52 participants through Zone Go, and 540 responses through Children's Voice and associated schools engagement. Engagement has also taken place through coffee mornings and other community-based activities. As some people may have participated in more than one activity, these figures represent engagement interactions rather than unique individuals. Further detail is provided in the Birchwood Pride in Place Consultation Report.

Reaching Seldom-Heard Groups

A key principle of our approach was ensuring that engagement extended beyond residents who typically participate in formal consultation exercises.

Rather than relying solely on online surveys and public meetings, we took conversations into places where people already spend time. This included schools, youth provision, family events, coffee mornings, leisure facilities, faith venues, wellbeing settings and community organisations. Face-to-face conversations, paper-based activities, free events and creative methods provided different ways to participate and helped reduce barriers associated with digital access, confidence, cost, caring responsibilities and mobility.

Children and young people were engaged through methods designed for different ages and interests, including Children's Voice, Pupil Voice, school-based activity, Zone Go and creative engagement.

Older residents and people who may experience isolation were approached through established community settings, including the Broomhill Community Centre coffee morning, the Dementia Hub at Birchwood Leisure Centre, Arise Wellbeing Café and St Luke's Craft Group.

Trusted intermediaries have been central to this approach. Schools, youth workers, community and faith organisations, wellbeing services and local groups have helped us make contact in ways that are familiar, appropriate and sensitive.

Engagement Challenges and Continuing Engagement

While our engagement has generated a substantial evidence base, we recognise that it does not represent every part of the community equally. We have heard much more from primary-aged children than from teenagers, for example, and recognise that further targeted engagement is needed with groups whose views are currently under-represented.

Older and isolated residents, people living in the highest-need parts of Birchwood West, local businesses and employers, health and social-care partners, and residents disengaged from formal civic processes also remain less well represented.

The Children's Voice evidence illustrates why this matters: of the 370 responses received from the initial engagement, 330 were from children aged 7–10 and only 40 were from young people aged 11–17. Lincoln City Foundation will therefore use its relationship with Priory Lincoln Secondary School, alongside youth and community partners, to strengthen the voice of teenagers. It will also work with school SENDCOs and relevant staff, use school support and appropriate communication methods with EAL pupils, and create parent and carer routes through school communications, family drop-ins and parents' evenings. Trusted youth workers, community-safety partners and other partners will be used to develop appropriate routes for young people affected by antisocial behaviour or youth risk and those not in education, employment or training.

Our targeted next steps will include:

- Children, young people and families: targeted engagement with teenagers, SEND learners, parents and carers, and young people affected by youth risk or not in education, employment or training.
- Disabled residents, carers and older or isolated residents: outreach through care settings, carers' networks, wellbeing services and health and social care partners.
- EAL communities and residents requiring adapted communication: engagement through schools, faith groups and community organisations, using adapted approaches where appropriate.
- Highest-need communities: targeted neighbourhood outreach and free local activities in under-represented areas.
- Businesses and employers: business engagement and employer surveys to understand local skills, employment and neighbourhood priorities.
- Residents less engaged in formal decision-making: engagement through trusted organisations and existing community relationships.

Together, community partners such as Lincoln City Foundation, CVS Lincolnshire and the Birchwood Community Connector will help ensure that engagement continues throughout the delivery of the programme. As a Board, we are also committed to maintaining a visible presence within the community and ensuring that local voices remain central to decision-making over the next decade.

Key Themes Emerging



Although residents spoke about Birchwood West in many different ways, several consistent themes emerged throughout the engagement process.

One of the strongest themes concerned children and young people. Parents, schools, youth providers and young people themselves all spoke about the importance of having safe places to go, affordable activities and adults they can turn to for support and encouragement. Many residents saw investment in children and young people as fundamental to the future success of the neighbourhood.

Community safety was another recurring theme. Residents frequently raised concerns about antisocial behaviour, vandalism, nuisance vehicles, drug and alcohol misuse, dark routes and perceptions of crime. These discussions also highlighted the close relationship between safety, neighbourhood maintenance, youth provision and positive community activity.

Parks, play spaces and green areas are widely recognised as some of Birchwood West's greatest assets. Residents consistently highlighted the importance of these spaces for recreation, exercise, relaxation and spending time with family and friends. At the same time, many people felt that improvements to maintenance, accessibility, facilities and safety could help ensure that these assets realise their full potential and ensure residents feel safe using them.

Residents also spoke about the importance of the facilities and services that support everyday life. Community buildings, local amenities, health provision, seating, lighting, cleanliness and the condition of the public realm were all identified as factors that influence quality of life and local pride.

Community spirit emerged as one of Birchwood West's greatest strengths. Residents frequently described a strong sense of belonging and a willingness to support one another. However, many also expressed a desire for more community activities, opportunities to meet people, volunteering opportunities and events that bring residents together.

Movement around the neighbourhood and access to facilities and services was another recurring theme. Residents discussed walking routes, crossings, lighting, parking, traffic and accessibility barriers that affect how confidently people can travel around the neighbourhood and access local opportunities.

Finally, conversations repeatedly highlighted the importance of skills, employment and financial resilience. Residents recognised the impact that deprivation, affordability pressures and barriers to employment can have on everyday life and highlighted the importance of creating opportunities that help people develop skills, improve financial resilience and access employment.

Section 4: What We Learned

Through the engagement programme, we heard directly from residents, children and young people, community organisations and local partners. We considered these views alongside neighbourhood data, the independent evaluation of Birchwood Big Local and research commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Residents describe Birchwood as a place with strong community ties. They speak positively about its parks and green spaces, schools, community facilities and the people who make the neighbourhood what it is. Many are proud to call Birchwood home.

At the same time, people were open about the issues that affect everyday life. Concerns about safety, opportunities for young people, the condition of some public spaces, affordability and access to facilities emerged repeatedly. These issues were rarely discussed in isolation. Conversations about youth activities often led to discussions about community safety. Concerns about transport and accessibility influence how residents use parks, community facilities and local services. Financial pressures affect participation in activities as well as access to employment and training opportunities.

The engagement also needs to be understood within the wider context of deprivation and inequality. Conditions vary across Birchwood West, but parts of the neighbourhood experience significant challenges relating to income, employment, education and health. These wider challenges help explain why residents regularly raise the cost of activities and services, difficulties getting around and the need for more local opportunities.

Children and Young People



Children and young people came through more strongly than any other theme in our engagement. Children's Voice and associated schools engagement generated 540 responses, alongside further engagement through schools, creative activities and Zone Go. Activities for children and young people were also the highest-ranked investment priority in the Community Survey.

Parents, carers and community organisations often linked the lack of affordable activities and youth provision to wider concerns about boredom, antisocial behaviour and wellbeing. However, young people themselves spoke about more than facilities. They talked about feeling welcome, having trusted adults around them and being able to spend time in places that felt safe and well cared for.

The experience of Zone Go was particularly interesting. Over five days, it attracted 115 attendances. Of the Birchwood participants surveyed, 83% felt welcome and included, and 92% said that having the activity within their own community was important. Staff also saw participants begin to organise activities themselves as relationships developed over repeated visits.

Safety and Confidence

Safety featured throughout the engagement, although people often described it in different ways.

Only around half of Community Survey respondents agreed that they felt safe locally. Conversations referred to antisocial behaviour, vandalism, nuisance vehicles, drug and alcohol misuse, dark routes and limited visible presence. Children and young people also identified places where they felt uncomfortable or unsafe.

Residents did not tend to discuss these issues as isolated problems. Conversations about antisocial behaviour often included comments about youth activities, lighting, maintenance, litter and neglected spaces.

At the Broomhill Community Centre coffee morning for example, discussions about policing expanded to include road safety, community facilities, local activities and neighbourhood appearance.

One of the clearest messages was that perception matters. Residents often judge whether a place feels safe by its condition and how it was being used. Poorly maintained spaces, vandalism and a lack of activity could discourage people from using a space, while visible community activity and well-maintained facilities often appear to have the opposite effect.

Parks, Play Spaces and Green Areas



Parks, woodland and green spaces are among Birchwood's most valued assets.

Residents value these spaces for many reasons, including walking, exercise, spending time with family and friends, and enjoying the outdoors. References to Birchwood Nature Park, woodland areas, lakes, green spaces and local play facilities appeared throughout the engagement programme.

Residents frequently linked access to green spaces with both physical and mental wellbeing. Parks, walking routes and outdoor activity were seen as important not only for recreation, but also for maintaining health, reducing isolation and creating opportunities for people to spend time together.

Children's Voice reinforced this picture. Many young people asked for better parks and outdoor spaces, more places to play and greater opportunities to be active outdoors. Adults frequently highlight the importance of protecting and improving existing green spaces and ensuring they remain accessible to future generations.

Residents judged these spaces by their overall condition and usability. Cleanliness, maintenance, lighting, footpaths, seating, accessibility and the quality of facilities were all raised during the engagement process. Children participating in LEGO® Serious Play often combined ideas about nature, play, comfort and social interaction within the same model, suggesting that they do not separate these experiences.

Residents want these spaces protected and better maintained, with improvements that make them easier to access and suitable for a wider range of activities.

Community Life and Participation

One of the most interesting findings from the engagement was the contrast between how people feel about Birchwood and the opportunities they have to participate in community life. Residents frequently describe Birchwood as a friendly and supportive place. Community spirit emerged in survey responses, stakeholder discussions, outreach activity and engagement events. More than 64% of Community Survey respondents reported a sense of belonging, while activities such as Love Letters to Birchwood and Birchwood in Three Words produced descriptions including friendly, supportive, welcoming and home.

Despite this strong sense of community, people often told us that there are not enough opportunities to meet others or take part in activities locally. Only 37% of survey respondents agreed that there were enough opportunities to meet others in the neighbourhood.

Calls for more community events, social activities, youth provision, volunteering opportunities and accessible community spaces appeared repeatedly throughout the engagement. The challenge is to make it easier for people to form new connections, particularly those who are not already involved with local groups or organisations.

The experience of Birchwood Big Local also provides an important lesson. Community activity is strongest when volunteers and residents are supported by appropriate infrastructure, coordination and long-term capacity rather than relying on a small number of individuals.

Everyday Amenities and Neighbourhood Infrastructure

Residents frequently speak about the practical details that influence everyday life. Community buildings, local shops, lighting, seating, bins, health services, public conveniences and the condition of public spaces were all raised through the engagement. Some residents focused on larger facilities, while others highlighted relatively simple improvements that could make the neighbourhood more welcoming and easier to use.

The conversations often centred on how existing facilities are maintained, managed and accessed. Birchwood already benefits from a range of community assets, including schools, community facilities, faith venues, the Children's Centre and Birchwood Leisure Centre. Residents were often as interested in how these spaces could be improved, adapted or made more accessible as they were in creating entirely new facilities.

Residents want facilities that are accessible and welcoming, with practical arrangements for staffing, maintenance and ongoing use.

Connectivity and Accessibility

Many residents talked about everyday journeys. Issues such as poorly lit routes, difficult crossings, speeding traffic, parking pressures and school congestion appeared throughout the engagement process. These concerns were particularly evident in discussions with older residents and families.

The routes people discussed were often familiar, everyday journeys between homes, schools, parks, services and community facilities. When these routes feel unsafe or inaccessible, they can influence how frequently people use neighbourhood facilities and how connected they feel to the wider community. Residents have raised practical concerns about school traffic, speeding and lighting.

Skills, Jobs and Financial Resilience

Economic pressures featured throughout the engagement, particularly concerns about jobs, training, the cost of activities and day-to-day household expenses. These concerns reflect wider inequalities across Birchwood West. A population-weighted neighbourhood profile records an income deprivation rate of 37.3% and an employment deprivation rate of 22.5%. The Ofsted neighbourhood profile reports that 47% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, while Census 2021 data indicates that around one in five residents in the relevant qualifications dataset had no formal qualifications.

Residents' comments reflected these wider pressures. The cost of activities, transport and household bills can affect whether people are able to take part in community life or access training and employment opportunities. Children participating in Pupil Voice also raised concerns about the cost of living.

Schools, community organisations, volunteers and local facilities already provide routes into support, training and other opportunities. Further engagement is needed with employers, businesses and young people who are not in education, employment or training. However, the evidence already points towards the importance of affordability, access to opportunity and the practical barriers that can prevent residents from benefiting from local investment.

Looking Ahead

One of the strongest messages from the engagement is that residents care deeply about Birchwood. People were often critical about particular issues, but those concerns sat alongside appreciation for the community, green spaces, local facilities and neighbourhood identity. Residents frequently talked about what they wanted to improve, while also talking about what they wanted to protect.

The findings also show how closely many of the issues are connected. The findings also show how closely these issues are connected. Safety is influenced by youth provision, lighting and the condition of public spaces; access to parks and facilities depends on the quality of local routes; and the cost of activities affects who can participate.

The priorities in the following section reflect what residents told us and identify where Pride in Place investment can make a practical difference over the coming decade.

Section 5: Priorities for Change

The engagement has given us a clear picture of what people value about Birchwood West and what they would most like to see improve. Across conversations with residents, children and young people, community organisations and local partners, seven priorities have emerged. These are supported by the wider evidence we have considered as a Board. Taken together, these priorities are intended to support a safer, healthier and more connected Birchwood West.

These priorities set the direction for Pride in Place over the next ten years. They are not a fixed list of projects. Some ideas are already emerging, but residents will continue to shape the detail and proposals will need to be tested for feasibility, affordability and how they can be sustained over time. The experience of Birchwood Big Local has given us useful lessons about balancing ambition with what can realistically be delivered.

These priorities set the direction for how we will work towards our vision for Birchwood West over the next ten years. We recognise that Pride in Place alone will not achieve all our ambitions, and we will work with residents, community organisations and partner agencies to align activity and investment wherever possible.

Priority 1: Our Children and Young People Thriving

Why does it matter?

Children and young people came through more strongly than any other theme in our engagement. The Children's Voice questionnaire generated 370 responses, alongside further engagement through schools, creative activities and Zone Go. Activities for children and young people were also the highest-ranked investment priority in the Community Survey.

Young people want more things to do locally. Sport, play, creative activities and safe places to spend time with friends came up repeatedly. Parents and residents made similar points and often connected boredom and limited youth provision with concerns about antisocial behaviour. We also heard how important it is for young people to have trusted adults around them and places that feel safe, supervised and well cared for.

Zone Go offered a useful example. Over five days there were 115 attendances. Of the Birchwood participants surveyed, 83% felt welcome and included and 92% said having the activity within their own community was important.

Young people also talked about what happens after a facility or activity is introduced. They want places that continue to be looked after and activities that are properly supported, rather than provision that gradually disappears or deteriorates.

How did residents shape this priority?

Children have been some of the most active contributors to our engagement. They asked for better places to play, opportunities for sport and physical activity, creative spaces and places where they can meet safely. Parents, schools and youth providers also stressed the importance of affordability and having safe, supervised places.

Our engagement with teenagers needs to go further. Of the 370 Children's Voice responses, 330 were from children aged 7 to 10 and 40 from young people aged 11 to 17. Strengthening the voice of teenagers will therefore be important as provision develops.

What does success look like?

Young people will have safe places to go, visible role models, and opportunities that match their interests and ambitions. Youth spaces will feel cared for, supervised and well-used.

Young people have things to do throughout the year, places where they feel welcome and adults they know and trust. There is a wider choice of affordable activities for different interests and abilities.

They have more chances to try new things, develop skills and think about what they want to do next. Young people continue to have a say in local provision and see Birchwood as somewhere that offers them opportunities as they grow up.

What is our approach?

We will work with young people, families, schools and youth providers to improve and expand the opportunities available to children and young people in Birchwood.

This might include activities such as:

- improvements to community buildings used for youth provision;
- regeneration of parks and outdoor spaces used by young people;
- sport, wellbeing and physical activity programmes;
- creative and social activities;
- support for the places and organisations that bring young people together;
- trusted youth provision and mentoring;
- skills development and routes into training and work;
- inclusive opportunities for young people with SEND and other additional needs.

Priority 2: Our Neighbourhood Feeling Safe and Confident

Why does it matter?

Safety affects how residents experience Birchwood every day. Only around half of Community Survey respondents agreed that they felt safe locally. Antisocial behaviour, vandalism, drug activity, nuisance vehicles, dangerous driving, theft and dark routes were all raised, while children and young people identified parks and routes where they sometimes feel unsafe.

Conversations about safety often moved quickly into other subjects. People talked about lighting, litter, vandalism, youth activities and spaces that feel neglected. Whether a place looks cared for, and whether it is being positively used, can make a real difference to how comfortable people feel there.

How did residents shape this priority?

Some of the suggestions were straightforward: better lighting, CCTV where appropriate, more visible policing and cleaner, better-maintained spaces. Children drew attention to dark routes and parks where they do not always feel safe. Others talked about the role that positive activities for young people could play.

What we heard was as much about confidence as crime. Residents want concerns addressed, but they also want to see that the places around them are looked after.

What does success look like?

People feel comfortable spending time outdoors, children will have safer routes and parks, and residents will see visible signs that Birchwood is valued and cared for.

More residents feel comfortable walking around Birchwood and using its parks and public spaces.

Dark or neglected locations are improved. Streets and public spaces are cleaner and better maintained, and children have safer routes and places to spend time. Residents notice the difference in the places they use regularly.

What is our approach?

We will work with residents, community safety partners and other organisations to address the places and issues that make people feel less safe. Depending on the location and evidence.

This might include:

- lighting improvements;
- CCTV and other safety infrastructure where appropriate;
- designing-out-crime measures;
- cleaning, graffiti removal and improvements to street furniture;
- regeneration of neglected public spaces;
- activities that bring people into these spaces, including positive youth provision;
- joint working with policing, community safety and other organisations.

Residents will help identify the locations where action would make the greatest difference.

Priority 3: Our Parks, Play Spaces and Green Areas Welcoming Everyone

Why does it matter?

Birchwood's parks, woodland and green spaces are some of the neighbourhood's most valued assets. Residents also highlighted the role these spaces play in supporting physical health, mental wellbeing and opportunities for people to stay active throughout their lives. Children want places where they can play, be active and spend time with friends.

People were equally clear about the things that can put them off using these spaces. Outdated play equipment, poor maintenance, lighting, accessibility and the condition of paths and routes were all raised.

How did residents shape this priority?

Children's engagement brought together ideas about play, nature and spending time with other people. Adults talked about protecting the green character of Birchwood while making particular spaces safer and easier to use. People want the parks and natural spaces that are already here to be cared for and enjoyed by more of the community.

What does success look like?

Outdoor spaces will feel welcoming, safe and central to community life. Families will spend more time outside, children will have places to play, and residents will see visible signs that parks are valued and cared for.

More residents use parks and green spaces to walk, exercise, socialise and support their wellbeing.

Parks and play spaces are visibly well cared for and used regularly. Children have good places to play and be active, and families have places where they want to spend time together.

Paths and facilities are easier to use for people with different mobility needs. Green spaces continue to feel like a distinctive part of Birchwood.

What is our approach?

We will work with residents and partners to protect and improve Birchwood's parks and green spaces, making them welcoming and accessible while retaining the green character people value.

This might include:

- regenerating existing parks and play spaces;
- exploring opportunities for community gardens and other new green spaces;
- tree planting and nature-based improvements;
- improving play and recreation facilities;
- improving paths, seating and accessibility;
- improving the maintenance and management of verges and green spaces;
- improving routes into and through parks and green corridors;
- supporting outdoor activities and community involvement in caring for local spaces.

Priority 4: Our Everyday Amenities Working for Us and the Environment

Why does it matter?

People talked about the everyday things they notice: whether there is somewhere to sit, enough bins, decent lighting, clean public spaces and community buildings that are easy to use. Public toilets, access to health services and banking facilities were also raised. Residents recognised that accessible local amenities can play an important role in supporting independence, wellbeing and quality of life. These may not always be large projects, but residents were clear that they make a difference to everyday life.

Birchwood already has important local assets, including schools, the Children's Centre, Birchwood Leisure Centre, the Neighbourhood Centre, faith venues and community facilities. Conversations were often about how these places could be improved and used more effectively, rather than assuming that something new always needs to be built.

How did residents shape this priority?

Residents suggested both larger improvements and relatively simple changes. Better lighting, more bins, improved seating and cleaner public spaces all featured. People also talked about community venues that could accommodate classes, wellbeing sessions, activities and private hire.

The range of suggestions has kept this priority focused on everyday use: what works now, where there are gaps and what would make existing facilities more useful.

What does success look like?

Daily life will feel easier and better supported, with cleaner streets, improved facilities and accessible community spaces.

Residents can see and use the improvements. Public spaces are cleaner and easier to use, basic facilities work well and community buildings host a wider range of activities.

Existing facilities are used more effectively, with accessibility considered as part of any improvement work. Where buildings and infrastructure are upgraded, reducing energy use and running costs is considered too.

What is our approach?

We will focus on the facilities, buildings and public spaces that residents use in their everyday lives, looking first at how existing assets can be improved and made more useful.

This might include:

- public realm improvements, including pavements, cleaning and street furniture;
- public toilets;
- improvements to neighbourhood centres and community buildings;
- better seating, lighting and bins;
- accessibility upgrades;
- energy-efficiency improvements to community buildings and infrastructure;
- making better use of existing community assets.

Priority 5: Our Community Active, Healthy and Proud

Why does it matter?

Community spirit is one of Birchwood's strongest assets. More than 64% of Community Survey respondents reported a sense of belonging, yet only 37% felt there were enough opportunities to meet other people locally.

Residents also highlighted the importance of affordable opportunities to meet others, stay active, reduce isolation and support their wellbeing. Community connections, social activities and access to welcoming spaces were seen as important not only for community life, but also for physical and mental health.

Community events, celebrations, social groups, volunteering and activities involving different generations all came up through the engagement.

How did residents shape this priority?

The ideas people suggested were often very practical. They ranged from community events and volunteering to craft classes, wellbeing sessions, nature gardens, garden competitions and printed information about what is happening locally.

Love Letters to Birchwood, Birchwood in Three Words and conversations at community events also showed how much residents value their neighbourhood and the people around them.

Birchwood Big Local provides useful learning here too. It showed what committed local volunteers can achieve, but also the pressures that can arise when too much responsibility falls on a relatively small number of people.

What does success look like?

There are more opportunities for residents to meet, learn, volunteer, stay active and take part in community life. Community spaces are used more regularly and support a wider range of activities, including wellbeing, social and physical activity programmes.

People who are not currently involved in community life find it easier to join in. More residents participate in activities that help reduce isolation, improve wellbeing and strengthen community connections.

Residents of all ages have access to welcoming, affordable opportunities to stay active, meet others and access support when they need it. Community organisations have the practical support they need to sustain successful activities and continue making a difference locally.

What is our approach?

We will work with residents, community organisations and local partners to create more opportunities for people to meet, take part and contribute to life in Birchwood. This might include:

This might include:

- community events and celebrations;
- volunteering programmes and resident-led activity;
- social and intergenerational activities;
- wellbeing, social, creative and nature-based activities;
- activities that encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce isolation;
- opportunities for residents of different ages to connect and support one another
- improvements to community buildings used for social connection;
- better information about what is happening locally;
- support for community organisations and volunteers to develop and sustain activities.

Priority 6: Our Neighbourhood Connected and Accessible

Why does it matter?

Much of what we heard about connectivity concerned ordinary journeys: getting children to school, walking or cycling to the shops, reaching a park or travelling to a community facility.

Poorly lit footpaths, difficult crossings, speeding traffic, unclear pedestrian routes, parking pressures and school congestion all came up. Children also raised concerns about routes to parks and schools.

For somebody making the same journey every day, a difficult crossing or poorly lit path is not a minor issue. These barriers can influence how easily people reach the places they need and whether they feel comfortable making journeys on foot or by bike.

How did residents shape this priority?

Residents gave us specific examples rather than talking about connectivity in general terms. Poor lighting, unsafe paths, speeding, parking and difficult crossings featured regularly. Conversations at events like the Broomhill Coffee Morning added more detail about school traffic and lighting.

This is why the priority focuses first on the everyday routes people actually use around Birchwood.

What does success look like?

People will move around Birchwood more comfortably and confidently.

Walking and cycling around Birchwood becomes easier and safer. Children have safer routes to school and parks and residents with mobility needs encounter fewer unnecessary barriers.

Improvements are visible on the routes people use regularly, particularly those connecting homes with schools, shops, parks and community facilities.

What is our approach?

We will work with residents and the organisations responsible for local routes and infrastructure to make everyday journeys around Birchwood safer and easier

This might include:

- footpath improvements;
- safer crossings;
- lighting upgrades;
- wayfinding and signage;
- accessibility improvements;
- designing-out-crime measures along key routes;
- improvements to canal paths and green corridors where relevant.

Priority 7: Building Skills, Finding Work and Feeling Financially Secure

Why does it matter?

Whether people were talking about work, training, activities or everyday life in Birchwood, concerns about affordability were regularly raised.

The wider evidence points to significant economic pressures. A population-weighted neighbourhood profile records an income deprivation rate of 37.3% and an employment deprivation rate of 22.5%. The Ofsted neighbourhood profile reports that 47% of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

People also raised the need for skills support and training, alongside clearer routes for young people into employment and accessible places to learn.

How did residents shape this priority?

People generally described the practical issues rather than using terms such as “financial resilience”. They talked about finding work, getting training, household costs, travelling to opportunities and being able to afford activities.

There is also more we need to understand. Local businesses and employers are less well represented in the engagement to date, and targeted employer engagement is one of our identified next steps.

What does success look like?

More residents know where to go for skills and employment support and can access training that is relevant to them.

Young people have clearer routes into education, vocational training and work. Employers are more connected to local skills activity, and residents facing additional barriers can find support close to home. Volunteering, work experience and social action give people additional ways to build skills and experience.

What is our approach?

We will work with residents, schools, training providers, community organisations and employers to improve access to skills, learning and employment opportunities. As our engagement with businesses and employers develops.

This might include:

- skills programmes and vocational training;
- employment and progression support;
- stronger links with local employers;
- community-based learning spaces;
- clearer routes for young people into training and work;
- volunteering, mentoring, work experience and social action;
- targeted support for people facing additional barriers to employment.

Continued engagement with businesses and employers will help us understand which types of support would make the greatest difference locally.

Bringing the Priorities Together

The conversations also showed us that these priorities cannot be treated entirely separately. A discussion about safety could quickly become a conversation about youth provision or lighting. Improving a park means thinking about the routes people use to reach it. We also do not want to create new activities if residents cannot afford to take part.

The seven priorities give us a framework for the next ten years, but they are not seven separate programmes or a fixed list of projects. They will guide where we focus investment while giving us room to keep listening, develop ideas with residents and properly test proposals before committing funding.

Section 6 - Delivering the vision together

Community leadership and continuous improvement



The Birchwood Neighbourhood Board is committed to delivering Pride in Place through strong community leadership, inclusive engagement and continuous learning. The Board recognises that Birchwood's strengths lie in its people, its community spirit and its networks, and that long-term success depends on maintaining trust, visibility and meaningful opportunities for residents to shape decisions. Over the next decade, the Board will ensure that Pride in Place is delivered with residents, not to them.

Engagement will remain a core function of the programme, supported by CVS Lincolnshire's community engagement role and Lincoln City Foundation's schools' engagement programme. These partners bring trusted relationships, local knowledge and specialist expertise, ensuring that engagement is sustained, inclusive and representative.

A key part of Birchwood's long-term engagement model is the newly appointed Birchwood Pride in Place Community Connector, employed by City of Lincoln Council. The Community Connector will act as a consistent, trusted presence in the neighbourhood, building relationships with residents, supporting local groups, and ensuring that Pride in Place activity remains rooted in people's everyday experience of Birchwood. Their role includes day-to-day outreach, informal conversations, support for community events, and targeted engagement with seldom-heard groups. They will also help residents navigate opportunities to participate, ensuring that people who may not engage through formal routes still have meaningful ways to shape the programme.

The Board will maintain a continuous cycle of engagement, using a blend of methods tailored to Birchwood's diverse communities. This could include regular outreach across parks, neighbourhood centres, schools, faith venues and community facilities; school-based engagement to ensure children and young people continue to influence decisions; and targeted engagement with seldom-heard groups such as disabled residents, carers, older residents, secondary-aged young people, families experiencing deprivation, and residents disengaged from formal consultation.

Creative engagement methods, such as LEGO® Serious Play, will continue to be used to reach young people in imaginative and accessible ways. Digital engagement will complement face-to-face activity, following the Neighbourhood Board's social media strategy and using mobile-friendly surveys, social media and simple feedback tools to reach residents who prefer online participation. We will also look to host community events, such as annual Pride in Place gatherings, celebration days and project showcases, to provide opportunities for residents to connect, share ideas and see progress.

Throughout this process, the Board will maintain a visible presence in the community. Members will attend events, visit community spaces and maintain regular contact with residents.

How residents will remain involved and priorities tested

Priorities will be tested regularly with different groups to ensure they remain relevant and reflect changing needs. Examples of the types of activity being considered include annual reviews to assess whether the original themes still reflect local needs, alongside quarterly updates to share progress, emerging issues and opportunities for involvement – inviting feedback from residents. Regular open calls for ideas will allow residents, groups and organisations to propose new activity as needs evolve.

The Community Connector will play a central role in maintaining continuous feedback loops between residents and the Board.

They will gather insight from everyday interactions, support codesign sessions, help test emerging priorities, and ensure that the Board receives regular, grounded intelligence about what is working and what needs to change. Their presence in parks, schools, community facilities and neighbourhood spaces will help the Board stay connected to real-time community sentiment throughout the 10-year programme.

Considering future community-led delivery models

The Birchwood Neighbourhood Board is newly established and in the early stages of shaping how Pride in Place will be delivered over the next decade. While formal decisions have not yet been made, the Board has begun exploring what a future community-led delivery model could look like for Birchwood.

The Board recognises that long-term success will depend on local leadership, trusted community organisations and strong resident involvement, and is beginning to consider what is needed to move in that direction.

These discussions are exploratory and will evolve as the programme develops, but initial areas of focus include building leadership capacity within the Board; working with trusted local organisations such as CVS Lincolnshire and Lincoln City Foundation; mapping community assets; exploring future funding opportunities.

The Community Connector also provides an important foundation for any future community-led delivery model. By building relationships, strengthening local networks, and supporting resident participation, the Connector will help grow the community leadership capacity that Birchwood will need if it chooses to explore models such as community-owned assets, resident-led governance structures, or long-term stewardship arrangements. Their work will help identify emerging leaders, trusted organisations and community assets that could form part of a future delivery model.

The Board is keen to learn more about different models of community leadership and delivery, and will actively engage with national guidance, training and peer networks as these become available.

Monitoring progress, learning and adapting

The Board will adopt a structured approach to monitoring progress, supported by regular reporting, community feedback and transparent decision-making. Annual reviews will assess progress and refine approaches based on evidence and community feedback. Quarterly programme updates will track delivery, spend, risks and milestones. Outcome tracking will use simple, meaningful measures linked to each priority.

Learning from delivery will also be a key part of the Board's strategy, with the Board reviewing what has worked well, what has been challenging and what should change as a result. This will ensure the Board can refine priorities, shift resources or adjust delivery models as new needs emerge. Partner reporting will gather insights from delivery partners to help shape future decisions.

Monitoring will be transparent, with regular communication to residents so they can see how decisions are made and how their input continues to shape the programme. Regular updates will be made available on a Birchwood Pride in Place website which is planned.

Partnership working

Local partners will play a central role in delivering the Pride in Place vision for Birchwood. They bring the insight, capacity and specialist expertise needed to turn long-term ambitions into practical action. The programme will continue to rely on the strong relationships already built through the consultation process – with community groups, schools, health partners, voluntary organisations, local businesses and public sector bodies all playing a distinct role.

Community and voluntary sector partners

Birchwood benefits from a network of community organisations, including youth groups, faith venues, sports clubs, community centres and voluntary organisations. CVS Lincolnshire will continue to play a key role in coordinating community engagement, supporting local organisations and strengthening community infrastructure. Their place-based experience, volunteer development expertise and data insight capacity will support inclusive engagement and community-led delivery.

The Community Connector will work closely with CVS Lincolnshire, Lincoln City Foundation, youth providers, faith organisations, sports clubs and voluntary groups to coordinate engagement activity and strengthen community infrastructure. Their role includes connecting partners to residents, identifying opportunities for collaboration, and ensuring that engagement is not fragmented across organisations but aligned with the Board's priorities. They will also support partners to reach under-represented groups by facilitating introductions, sharing insight and helping design accessible engagement routes.

Schools and education partners



Lincoln City Foundation will lead schools' engagement, ensuring that children, young people, parents, carers and school staff continue to influence priorities and project design. Schools are trusted community anchors and will play a central role in shaping youth provision, safety interventions and community spaces. Engagement will include assemblies, workshops, pupil voice sessions, school-gate conversations and family-friendly drop-ins.

Youth, creative and cultural partners

Partners such as Zest, local arts organisations and sports clubs will support creative engagement, youth activity and community events. These partners bring specialist expertise that helps make engagement accessible, imaginative and inclusive.

Public sector partners

City of Lincoln Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Police, health partners and housing providers will help align Pride in Place activity with wider regeneration programmes, health initiatives, safety priorities and neighbourhood services. This engagement is key to maximising match funding opportunities, avoiding duplication and strengthening the impact of local investment.

Local businesses and employers

Local businesses, particularly those in the neighbourhood centre, will be engaged to shape improvements to public realm, safety and amenities.

Ongoing partner engagement

The Board will maintain regular, structured engagement with partners through quarterly partner updates, themed working groups, open calls for ideas and regular communication updates. This ongoing engagement ensures partners remain active contributors to the programme, help shape delivery and continue to bring forward insight from the communities they work with every day.

Engagement with the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA)

The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority have been and will continue to be consulted on this vision and a copy has been shared with the Authority.

Governance, accountability and decision-making

The governance arrangements for Pride in Place in Birchwood are designed to ensure strong local leadership, transparent decision-making and robust accountability over the 10-year programme. They reflect the requirements set out in the national Pride in Place guidance, the Birchwood Neighbourhood Board Terms of Reference and the Board's Code of Conduct.

The Neighbourhood Board

The Birchwood Neighbourhood Board provides strategic leadership for the programme and is responsible for coproducing the 10-year Vision and 4-year Investment Plan. It is a decision-making Board, distinct from the local authority, with all voting members holding equal voting rights.

The Board is chaired by an independent Chair appointed jointly by City of Lincoln Council (as accountable body) and the MP for Lincoln, in line with national guidance. The Chair cannot be an elected representative and must uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life. The two Deputy Chairs are held to the same standards and deputises when required.

Membership reflects the diversity of Birchwood and includes residents, community organisations, youth providers, voluntary sector partners, local councillors, health partners and the police. At least 51% of members live or work within the neighbourhood, ensuring the Board is resident-led. Members normally serve an initial one-year term, followed by renewable terms of up to three years.

The Board meets four times per year, with additional meetings convened when required. Members are expected to attend regularly, prepare thoroughly and contribute constructively. Substitute members may attend but do not vote. External advisers may be invited to support discussion but do not participate in decision-making.

Ways of working and conduct

Board members are expected to uphold the behaviours set out in the Pride in Place Code of Conduct, including putting Birchwood first, acting independently and with integrity, being prepared and engaged, treating people with respect, being open and honest and protecting confidentiality. The Code also sets out how issues will be addressed if behaviour falls short, including informal conversations, written reminders and, if necessary, replacement of representatives.

Declarations of interest and transparency

All Board members complete a Register of Interests when they join and update it annually or within 28 days of any change. Interests include pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, employment, sponsorship, contracts, land or property, securities, gifts and hospitality and membership of organisations.

Members must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from discussion where appropriate. Members with pecuniary interests may not vote. The Register is maintained by City of Lincoln Council.

Transparency is central to governance. The following are published on the Council's website: Board membership and profiles; agendas and papers at least five working days before meetings; draft minutes within ten working days; final minutes within ten working days of approval; decision logs; conflicts of interest declared; and any remuneration or expenses reimbursed.



The same principles will apply to Community Panel members, officers, independent assessors, advisers and any other person involved in the assessment or recommendation of proposals. Before receiving proposal information or participating in assessment, individuals will be required to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, including any connection with an applicant, delivery organisation, proposed beneficiary or competing proposal.

Conflicts will be recorded and managed proportionately. This may include restricting access to information, requiring the individual to withdraw from the assessment or discussion of the affected proposal, appointing an alternative assessor or Panel member, or taking other steps necessary to preserve the independence and integrity of the process. A person with a relevant conflict will not score, recommend or participate in a decision on the affected proposal.

Community Panel members will also be required to respect the confidentiality of applicant information and to use it only for the purpose of the assessment process.

Quorum and decision-making

A quorum is six voting members, including at least one representative from the Accountable Body and one community-based representative. Decisions are made by simple majority. Where votes are tied, the Chair has a casting vote.

The accountable body

City of Lincoln Council acts as the accountable body, responsible for ensuring that public funds are distributed appropriately, fairly and effectively. The Council oversees financial management and administration; assurance and compliance (including subsidy control and procurement); due diligence and proportional business case development; programme monitoring, risk management and reporting to Government; and secretariat support, including agendas, papers and minutes.

The Council's Section 151 Officer assesses each investment case to confirm deliverability, value for money and compliance. The Neighbourhood Board will decide which proposals it wishes to support, subject to City of Lincoln Council, as Accountable Body, confirming that the proposed commitment of funding is lawful, affordable, compliant with programme requirements and supported by satisfactory assurance. This maintains the Board's role in determining local investment priorities while recognising the Council's statutory responsibilities for the proper administration and control of public funds.

As part of its role as the accountable body, City of Lincoln Council has appointed a Birchwood Pride in Place Community Connector to support delivery, engagement and intelligence gathering. While the Connector does not hold decision-making authority, they provide essential operational insight to the Board, feeding in community feedback, emerging issues, and opportunities for improvement.

Investment and project selection

The Board is committed to ensuring project selection decisions are made in a robust, consistent and transparent way. Building on City of Lincoln's experience of managing grant programmes, a project prioritisation process will be put in place.

This will begin with an initial Expression of Interest (EOI) stage, providing a clear, accessible route for residents and local groups and organisations to bring forward ideas for Pride in Place funding.

The Board will use a structured assessment framework to guide project selection. This framework will be published as part of the guidance for applicants and will include criteria such as:

- Alignment with the Pride in Place Vison and Investment Plan
- Need and Impact
- Deliverability and risk

All EOIs will be assessed against the published assessment framework by an appropriately qualified assessor who is independent of the applicant and has not been responsible for developing the proposal. To strengthen community voice within the selection process, the Board intends to establish a Birchwood Community Panel. The Panel will be made up of residents from across the neighbourhood, reflecting a mix of ages, backgrounds and different everyday experiences of living in Birchwood. Its role will be to review a summary of each proposal, and to provide a community-based view on whether the proposal meets a genuine local need and is likely to benefit Birchwood.

The Community Connector will support the project selection process by ensuring that the Board has strong, up-to-date insight into community priorities and local context. Their role includes helping residents and groups understand the EOI process, identifying any barriers to participation, and ensuring that seldom-heard voices are encouraged and supported to bring forward ideas. The Connector will also help the Board interpret how proposals may be experienced locally, providing contextual intelligence that complements the independent assessment and the Community Panel's community-based perspective. They will not score or assess proposals, but their insight will strengthen the inclusivity, accessibility and community relevance of the overall process.

The Community Panel's perspective will be incorporated into the assessment framework as an additional criterion, ensuring that resident insight forms part of the formal scoring process. This will help ensure that proposals not only meet strategic and technical requirements, but also resonate with the priorities, concerns and aspirations of local people.

The independent assessment and the Community Panel's views will be brought together and presented to the Birchwood Neighbourhood Board, alongside initial assurance advice from City of Lincoln Council as Accountable Body. The Board will decide which proposals should be invited to proceed to Stage 2. Selection at this stage will not constitute final approval or a commitment of funding.

This approach ensures that project selection is:

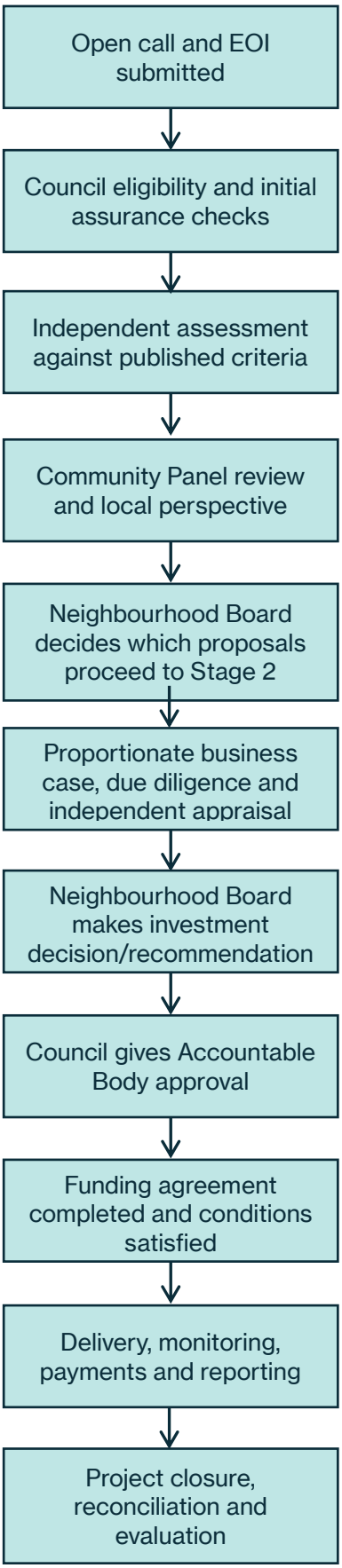
- Transparent, with clear criteria and independent scoring
- Evidence based, drawing on technical appraisal and community insight
- Community led, with resident voice embedded in the decision making process
- Assured, with accountable body oversight to ensure compliance, deliverability and value for money

Projects selected to move to the next stage will be invited to submit a more detailed proposal as part of the assurance process. A proportionality assessment will be applied to determine the level of detail required for the more detailed proposal, ensuring it is appropriate to the scale, complexity and risk of each proposal. This will help determine how much further information, evidence or business-case development will be required before a project can be recommended for funding.

This proportionality approach ensures that smaller, community-led projects are not burdened with disproportionate requirements, while larger or more complex proposals receive the level of scrutiny expected by City of Lincoln Council's Section 151 Officer. It also ensures that Stage 2 submissions are scaled appropriately, enabling a fair, accessible and robust assurance process across the full portfolio of Pride in Place interventions.



The overall project selection, appraisal and approval process is summarised below.



Progression through the early stages does not constitute approval or a commitment of funding. Funding is committed only after the Neighbourhood Board's investment decision, Accountable Body approval and completion of the required funding agreement.

Stage 2 submissions will be independently appraised using a proportionate approach based on the value, complexity and risk of the proposal. Appraisal will be informed by HM Treasury Green Book principles and will consider the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management cases for investment. Smaller or lower-risk projects may use a proportionate application and appraisal process, but will remain subject to the necessary legal, financial, procurement, subsidy control, due diligence and deliverability checks.

The appraisal report will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, any material risks and any conditions that should be satisfied before funding is committed or paid. These conditions may, for example, concern match funding, permissions, procurement, subsidy control, delivery arrangements or evidence of organisational and financial capacity.

The appraisal findings and the Accountable Body's assurance advice will be presented to the Birchwood Neighbourhood Board. The Board will decide whether to recommend the proposal for funding, recommend it subject to specified conditions, request further development or information, or decline the proposal.

A Board decision to support a proposal will be subject to final Accountable Body approval. City of Lincoln Council will confirm, through its authorised decision-making arrangements and on the advice of the Section 151 Officer and other relevant officers, whether the proposed commitment of funding satisfies the Council's legal, financial and governance requirements. No funding will be committed until the Neighbourhood Board's investment decision and the Council's Accountable Body approval have both been recorded.

This process maintains the Board's role in determining local investment priorities while recognising the Council's responsibilities for the proper administration and control of public funds.

Financial control and funding agreements

No funding will be released until the recipient has entered into an appropriate grant agreement, funding agreement, contract or other written arrangement with City of Lincoln Council as Accountable Body.

The agreement will set out, as appropriate:

- the approved purpose and value of the funding;
- eligible and ineligible expenditure;
- the agreed outputs, outcomes and delivery milestones;
- the evidence required to support claims and demonstrate delivery;
- payment arrangements, including whether payments are made in advance, in arrears or against agreed milestones;
- procurement, subsidy control and other compliance requirements;
- monitoring, reporting, record-keeping and audit requirements;
- arrangements for managing changes to scope, cost or delivery timescales;
- requirements relating to assets purchased or improved using programme funding;
- arrangements for the recovery or withholding of funding where expenditure is ineligible, evidence is insufficient, delivery does not take place as agreed or the terms of the agreement are otherwise breached; and project closure, financial reconciliation and evaluation requirements.

Financial controls and monitoring requirements will be proportionate to the value, complexity and risk of each project. The Council will maintain an appropriate audit trail covering appraisal, decisions, agreements, payments, monitoring, changes and project closure. Delivery organisations must retain appropriate records and provide access to information required by the Council, Government, internal audit or external audit.

Where a project varies from its approval, the change must be assessed and authorised through the appropriate change-control arrangements before the revised activity or expenditure is undertaken. Material changes may need to return to the Neighbourhood Board and the Council's authorised decision-maker.

