

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 21 MAY 2026

2.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Ian Selby Chairman
Councillor Anna Kelly Vice Chairman

Councillor Kyle Abel
Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Steven Cunningham
Councillor James Denniston
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Zoe Lane

Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Richard Litchfield
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Habib Rahman
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Rob Shorrock
Councillor Vanessa Smith
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)
Chris Prime, Communications Manager
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer
Mark Fisher, IT Support and Infrastructure Lead
Sam Selby, Cabinet, Member and Development Assistant

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Robins, Peter Stephens and Nick Robins.

2. Election of Chairman

Members were invited to make nominations for the Chairman of the Council for the 2026/2027 municipal year.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Anna Kelly be elected as the Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A vote was taken, and the Council **AGREED:**

To elect Councillor Anna Kelly as the Chairman of the Council for the 2026/2027 municipal year.

The Chairman was invested with the chain of office and members offered their congratulations. Councillor Kelly offered gratitude to the outgoing Chairman, Councillor Ian Selby, and congratulated him on the funds raised for charity, Kesteven Rideability. Councillor Kelly confirmed that her chosen charities for the year would be the Grantham Earlesfield Community Centre Charity, and the Stamford, Bourne and Deepings Carers Sitter Service.

COUNCILLOR ANNA KELLY TOOK TO THE CHAIR

Councillor Ian Selby was offered thanks and appreciation by members for his period as Chairman. It was noted that he had had a busy year as Chairman with regard to the number of meetings he had overseen. Also of note was the money raised for South Kesteven Rideability. Councillor Selby thanked certain members and officers (past and present), speech writers, staff at the venues used for civic events, and finally, his mother and father for their support.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

Members were invited to make nominations for the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2026/2027 municipal year.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Pam Byrd be elected as Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A vote was taken and the Council **AGREED:**

To elect Councillor Pam Byrd as the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2026/2027 municipal year.

The Vice-Chairman was invested with the chain of office.

4. Public Open Forum

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

5. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

6. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2026 on were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

7. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted the outgoing Chairman's engagements.

The Leader of the Council wished Councillor Sarah Trotter well in her recent appointment as Leader of the Opposition.

8. Announcement by the Leader of the Council on the Size and Membership of Cabinet and Cabinet Members' Remits

The Leader of the Council presented a look back at the 2025/2026 municipal year, using Corporate Plan headings:

Communities

- In May 2025, over 700 people enjoyed the 'Whale' exhibition. South Kesteven also enjoyed its first ever 'Bike Night'.
- October 2025 saw 'Thatcherfest' to mark what would have been Lady Thatcher's 100th birthday, and 'Soldiers from the Sky', which aimed to shine a light on the history and activities of the Airborne Forces of the United Kingdom,

United States and Poland during World War 2. This event was celebrated in pubs, stately homes, and Grantham train station.

- Other notable events included the Christmas Market; a visit from Team GB Olympic swimmer Freya Colbert; the opening of a new Skate Park in Grantham; the Walking Festival; and the installation of new play equipment at Harrowby Lane, Grantham.

Sustainability

- New climate friendly gym equipment was installed at the Meres Leisure Centre, Grantham. The Council had pledged to reduce carbon emissions by at least 30% by 2030; in 2026 emissions had already been reduced by 29%.
- The Council informed, educated and enforced against fly tipping.
- Food waste collections had commenced from approximately 70,000 homes across the district. The Waste Service continued to receive complaints about waste and missed bins, but the number of complaints received was miniscule when compared to the number of homes served.
- The Waste team won Waste Authority of the Year at the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards.
- The CCTV team won a national award for its 'outstanding commitment and contribution to helping residents and businesses feel safer' at the National CCTV Conference 2026.

Planning

- Planning Committee had considered many contentious planning matters this year.
- Officers had completed inspections on more than 70 houses of multiple occupation (HMOs). They had identified several concerns that were fed back to landlords.

Finance and Economic Development

- The roof had been fixed at Grantham's Guildhall Arts Centre, and the bell had been put back in position.
- The roof had also been fixed at the Deepings Community Centre.
- There had a great deal of work carried out on the district's car parks, including maintenance; increased income/revenue; extension of the Cattle Market car park, Stamford; and refurbishment at Welham Street and Wharf Road car parks, Grantham.
- The new depot site received an official Civic opening on 21 May 2026.

Housing

- Swinegate in Grantham was recognised with the 'Best Development – up to £5m' award at the Inside Housing Development Awards 2025.
- Larch Close in Grantham was halfway towards completion.

- Contractors had 'broken ground' at Wellington Way, Market Deeping.
- Other key activities included new roofs, energy efficiency improvements, and the completion of 1,659 fire risk actions, with only 230 outstanding.

Effective Council

- The Council's Facebook page had over 20,000 followers.
- Cabinet had approved a high number of policies and contracts over the course of the year.
- The Customer Service team had had a busy year and had been shortlisted for the Customer Focus award.
- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) had been a big focus over the previous year and would continue to be so.

The Leader of the Council finished by announcing that the Cabinet would increase in size to eight members, with Councillor Bridget Ley assuming the portfolio for Finance. The Leader would retain responsibility for HR and Economic Development. He had been grateful for the support of the Chief Executive over the previous year.

Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for HR and Economic Development
Councillor Ashley Baxter

Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture
Councillor Paul Stokes

Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste
Councillor Rhys Baker

Portfolio Holder for Property and Public Engagement
Councillor Richard Cleaver

Portfolio Holder for Planning
Councillor Phil Dilks

Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance and Licensing
Councillor Philip Knowles

Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Bridget Ley

Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Virginia Moran

9. Programme of Meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Committees for 2026/2027

Members were asked to approve a programme of ordinary meetings of Full Council, Cabinet, Overview and Committees and other Committees of the Council for the 2026/2027 municipal year.

Having been proposed and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED:**

DECISION

That Full Council approve the programme of Meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Committees for 2026/2027 as attached at Appendix A to the report, factoring in the minor amendments announced verbally at the meeting:

- **Employment Committee moved from 7 July 2026 to 22 June 2026 (11am)**
- **Rural and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 1 July moved from 10am to 2pm.**

10. Appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council and Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

Members considered the requirements placed on Full Council for the appointment of Members to its Committees and Panels, and the appointment of their Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen. All Political Group Leaders were responsible for nominating Members from within their respective Groups to each of the Committees/Panels, in accordance with the political proportionality of the Authority as appropriate. Full Council were to appoint the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees.

Having been proposed and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED:**

DECISION

That Full Council:

- 1. Note the changes in political proportionality of the Council and the consequent allocation of seats on Committees (Appendix A of the report).**
- 2. Agrees to suspend the rules relating to political proportionality for Licensing Committee.**
- 3. Approves the appointments to Committees and Panels (as contained in an addendum to these minutes) as agreed with the respective political Group Leaders.**
- 4. Approves the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen as follows:**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Murray Turner (Chairman)
Councillor Barry Dobson (Vice-Chairman)

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Elvis Stooke (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Baker (Vice-Chairman)

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Tim Harrison (Chairman)
Councillor Gareth Knight (Vice-Chairman)

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Lee Steptoe (Chairman)
Councillor Zoe Lane (Vice-Chairman)

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Vice-Chairman)

Employment Committee

Councillor Paul Stokes (Chairman)
Councillor Gloria Johnson (Vice-Chairman)

Governance and Audit Committee

Councillor Paul Wood (Chairman)
Councillor Vanessa Smith (Vice-Chairman)

Licensing Committee

Councillor Paul Fellows (Chairman)
Councillor Robert Leadenham (Vice-Chairman)

Planning Committee

Councillor Helen Crawford (Chairman)
Councillor Penny Milnes (Vice-Chairman)

Standards Committee

Councillor Pam Byrd (Chairman)

Councillor Sarah Trotter (Vice-Chairman)

- 5. Delegates to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with relevant Group Leaders the power to appoint to vacant seats on Planning Committee and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

11. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

The Council was presented with a report by the Chief Executive on the appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies.

Note: Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew left the meeting and did not return. The meeting adjourned between 4:05pm to 4:30pm during this item.

There were alternative propositions for the following drainage boards:

Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (1 seat)

Councillor Kyle Abel

Councillor Zoe Lane

Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board (3 seats)

Councillor Emma Baker

Councillor Patsy Ellis

Councillor Ben Green

Councillor Ian Stokes

Councillors Abel and Lane gave short speeches outlining their suitability for the position on the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board.

Councillor Robert Leadenham informed Councillors that there were in fact two positions available on the Grantham Canal Partnership outside body; therefore; there was currently a vacancy.

Councillors Harrish Bisnauthsing and Rhea Rayside were proposed and seconded to take the position on the Health Scrutiny Committee at Lincolnshire County Council, in place of Councillor Charmaine Morgan, the incumbent. Councillor Morgan was also proposed and seconded. However, Councillors Bisnauthsing and Rayside withdrew from the vote after hearing a short speech from Councillor Morgan on why she continued to be suitable for the position.

Councillors were asked to disregard recommendation 5 within the report, as the two appointees to the Joseph Clark Apprenticing Foundation were to remain as trustees for now.

Note: Councillor Sue Woolley left the Council Chamber.

Having been proposed and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED:**

DECISION

That Full Council:

- 1. Appoints Councillor Ashley Baxter, as Leader of the Council, to East Midlands Councils and the Local Government Association General Assembly for one year.**
- 2. Appoints Councillors Ashley Baxter, Pam Byrd, Barry Dobson and Vanessa Smith four to the Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board outside body until May 2027.**
- 3. Appoints Councillors Emma Baker, Patsy Ellis and Ian Stokes to the Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board outside body until May 2027.**
- 4. Appoints Councillor Zoe Lane to the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board outside body until May 2027.**
- 5. Appoints Councillor Paul Martin as the second representative to the Grantham Canal Partnership.**
- 6. Notes those appointments previously made, at Table 2 of the report.**

12. Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2025/2026

Note: Councillors Penny Robins, Nikki Manterfield and Jane Wood left the Council Chamber and did not return.

Members considered the annual report of the Governance and Audit Committee for 2025/2026 and considered the indicative work plan and timetable for 2026/2027.

Councillor Tim Harrison, the outgoing Chairman of the committee introduced the report with a personal statement:

‘Over the past year the Committee had continued to oversee the Council’s governance, risk, and control arrangements, providing both assurance and challenge where required. We have considered a wide range of reports throughout the year, covering internal and external audit, financial management, risk and governance matters. A full summary of that work is set out in this report. In February 2026, the Committee approved the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25, alongside the External Audit Year End Report from KPMG. The Council received an unqualified audit opinion, met the statutory deadline for publication of its accounts, and secured a positive value for money conclusion. Internal Audit had completed its second year with BDO, delivering the full audit plan

for the year. The Committee had continued to monitor progress closely and ensure that actions arising from audit work are being addressed. The role of the Committee is not only to receive assurance, but to scrutinise and challenge where necessary. That work will continue into 2026/27 under Councillor Paul Wood. I would encourage all Members to attend a meeting of the Committee to see that work in practice. Finally, I would like to thank Members and Officers for their contribution to the work of the Committee over the past year, it has been a pleasure to work with you, with special thanks to Councillor Paul Wood as Vice-Chairman, and Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer.'

Members were informed that the audit had been completed on the Stock Control situation, and the internal auditors (BDO) would present a report to Governance and Audit Committee on 25 June 2026.

Members thanked Councillor Tim Harrison for his diligence during his time as Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Note: Councillor Penny Milnes left the Council Chamber and did not return.

Having been proposed and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED:**

DECISION

That Full Council:

1. Note the Annual Report of Governance and Audit Committee for 2025/2026.

2. Approve the indicative work plan for 2026/2027.

13. Decisions Taken Under Urgency

This report set out those decisions that have been made in the 2025/2026 municipal year under urgency provisions set out within the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Constitution.

In 2025/2026 four decisions had been taken under urgency; two related to LGR, and the other two related to property matters.

The report was **NOTED**.

14. Members' Open Questions

Question One – Councillor Max Sawyer to the Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Sawyer questioned whether tenants on the Council's 'Exercise with Caution' list, if guilty of offences such as aggressive behaviour towards Council staff, should have their tenancies terminated and be replaced by more deserving cases.

Councillor Moran resolved to answer this question outside of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the Exercise with Caution list.

Question Two – Councillor Ben Green to the Conservative Group Leader

Councillor Green asked Councillor Trotter whether she wished to rule out any deals with the Green party to lock Reform out of power, as seen recently in Worcestershire.

This question was ruled by the Chairman as out of order, under Council Procedure Rule 12.9 as it was not about a matter for which the District Council had a responsibility, and did not directly affect the district.

Question Three – Councillor Susan Sandall to the Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement

Councillor Sandall asked when the work on St. Martin's Park in Stamford would start, when the dangerous building on the site would be pulled down, how much the delays to the project were costing, and finally, how the delays would be explained to residents of South Kesteven.

Councillor Cleaver outlined that the delays to the project were not caused by SKDC; there was nothing that SKDC was doing to hold up the progress on the site.

Question Four – Councillor Sarah Trotter to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Councillor Trotter highlighted that there had been some teething problems collecting bins in Lincrest ward over the past month.

Councillor Rhys Baker was aware of some teething issues, likely due to adding a significant waste collection service recently (food waste), alongside other longstanding issues that would need further investigation. Councillor Baker would provide a written update as soon as he could to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Trotter.

Question Five – Councillor Gloria Johnson to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Johnson had heard that the Deepings Leisure Centre (DLC) site was up for sale; if this were true, what were the plans for the £850,000 set aside for this project?

Members were informed that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) had declared a surplus list of assets across the County. DLC was on that list, but beyond a listing on the Rightmove website, officers and Cabinet members were not aware a sale had progressed any further.

Councillor Baxter would be astonished if the building was a saleable commercial opportunity. Councillor Baxter, LCC, Councillor Dilks, staff and councillors at LCC, Sir John Hayes MP, the Anthem Trust and the Head of the Deepings School were still meeting and trying to work out how the building could be refurbished and reopened. Unfortunately, whilst there was money available provided from SKDC, LCC, the school, and other potential sources, it did not yet add up to the £8 million required for the site to start afresh.

Question Six – Councillor Murray Turner to the Vice-Chairman of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Turner asked Councillor Knight why he had voted against the programme of meetings earlier in the meeting.

Councillor Knight believed a previous Leader of the Council had had an adverse influence on the dates and timings of meetings. He had also felt that not scheduling meetings on a Friday was a mistake.

Question Seven– Councillor Richard Litchfield to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Litchfield drew attention to a private meeting in April 2026 involving all Councillors about asylum seekers. Councillors were advised that this meeting was confidential and the information was not to be discussed outside of the Council. There was a quote from the Deputy Leader on the BBC website, available from 18 May, with no prior internal announcement. Some Councillors had been caught off guard – was this acceptable and had this confidentiality agreement been removed.

The Monitoring Officer responded; where there are any allegations regarding the conduct of any member, they should be raised with the Monitoring Officer rather than it being a matter for the Council Chamber.

Question Eight– Councillor Kyle Abel to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Abel asked the Leader whether he had sanctioned the reveal of any confidential information from the meeting held about asylum seekers on April 14th,

The Monitoring Officer reminded members that any information disclosed as being confidential during that meeting remained so. If there were any queries around the disclosure of information, they should be directed to the Monitoring Officer in the first instance rather than another member.

Question Nine– Councillor David Bellamy to the Cabinet Member for Planning

Councillor Bellamy asked whether SKDC was on target to meet the July start of the 2nd pre-submission consultation in the Local Plan timetable.

Councillor Dilks acknowledged the huge challenges in meeting the deadlines within the Local Plan, and work was ongoing to try and meet these deadlines. Councillor Bellamy would put any further questions on this topic into writing to Councillor Dilks.

Question Ten– Councillor Paul Fellows to the Leader of the Reform Group

Councillor Fellows wished to know the rationale behind the Reform Group's failure to complete mandatory training.

Councillor Green and members of his group were happy to undertake training at the beginning of the electoral term, but he believed to do it on an annual basis was wasteful to the taxpayer, especially in relation to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion training.

Question Eleven – Councillor Graham Jeal to the Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Jeal highlighted a report about the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget that was considered at a recent Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny meeting, where Councillor Jeal was under the impression that SKDC was spending £11 million over the proposed budget. Councillor Jeal wished to know if there was control of this overspend.

Councillor Moran deferred to the Deputy Chief Executive for a response on this question, who revealed that the £11 million in the highlighted report was a projection of the base budgets built in over the next three years and the updated budgets that had been predicted. There was no overspend this year because of a budget uplift, of £2.7 million, previously approved by Full Council in November 2025. The Deputy Chief Executive had previously committed to provide a progress update at each Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the HRA, with the next update being due in July 2026.

Note: Councillor Vanessa Smith left the Council Chamber and did not return.

Question Twelve – Councillor Charmaine Morgan to the Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Morgan referred to a case the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) was scrutinising on appeal, which had allegedly identified several issues with 'fragmentation of records' within the Housing team; Councillor Morgan asked for any changes that had been made within the Housing team in relation to record keeping.

Note: Councillors Kyle Abel, David Bellamy, Ben Green, Graham Jeal and Richard Litchfield all left the Council Chamber and did not return.

Councillor Moran had never seen or heard the phrase ‘fragmentation of records’. A very low number of cases were referred to the LGO. Councillor Morgan was to write to Councillor Moran with further information on the origin of this phrase.

Question Thirteen – Councillor Robert Leadenham to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Leadenham wished to know whether the £850,000 reserve for the DLC was still available.

Councillor Baxter informed members that the initial steer from LCC at the time was that the money would have been put towards demolition or reopening the building. The cost of demolition had since risen. Councillor Rob Gibson (LCC) had since said that the financial commitment was still there, and he would rather see DLC reopen than be demolished.

Question Fourteen – Councillor Matt Bailey to the Cabinet Member for Finance

Councillor Bailey asked what Councillor Ley was most looking forward to in her new role as Cabinet member.

Councillor Ley was looking forward to answering any financial queries, as well as working with all officers on ensuring a balanced budget.

15. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 5:31pm.