

Minutes

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 10 March 2026, 10.00 am

Council Chamber – South Kesteven
House, St. Peter's Hill, Grantham, NG31
6PZ

Committee Members present

Councillor Bridget Ley (Chairman)
Councillor Gareth Knight (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Murray Turner

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Richard Cleaver (Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement)

Officers

Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer)
Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning and Growth)
Gyles Teasdale (Head of Service – Property and ICT)
Simon Jackson (Economic Development Inward Investment Manager)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

65. Public Speaking

There were none.

66. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lee Steptoe.

67. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor Matt Bailey and Max Sawyer declared an interest on agenda item 8 'SKDC Car Parking Review' as they had relatives who were blue badge holders.

The Monitoring Officer had confirmed prior to the meeting they were able to participate on this item.

68. Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on 24 February 2026 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as an accurate record.

69. Updates from previous meeting

There were none.

70. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service

The Leader of the Council informed the Committee that the Council had been shortlisted for the Customer Service Awards. It was hoped the excellent customer service at the Council would be recognised.

71. Update on Economic Development Strategy

The Leader of the Council presented the report.

The report outlined several key changes of circumstances since the Economic Strategy was adopted in 2025. These included:

- A reduction in the level of resources the Council has available to support economic development.
- Local Government Review.
- The publication of the UK's modern industrial strategy by the Department of Business and Trade.
- Creation of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority and the election for a Mayor in May 2025.

It was important the strategy aligned with the Combined Authority growth strategies. Consequently, the Council were aligning their strategies to maximise impact and attract funding resources into the District.

In light of these ongoing developments, it is appropriate for the Council to review the existing strategy and action plan to ensure it remained deliverable and aligned with the Council's priorities and local/national ambitions.

The Economic Development and Inward Investment Manager was appointed in September 2025. The refreshed strategy would be brought to the Committee in May 2026 and to Cabinet for approval in July 2026.

Since September 2025, the Economic Development Team has continued to deliver actions in the strategy:

- Working with Grantham Museum in the application for a grant from National Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Supporting Stamford and Grantham in submitted expressions of interest to DCMS for the UK Town of Culture competition.
- Facilitating a large skills summit attended by over 40 exhibitors and 1,000 Year 10 students from across the District.

One Member queried whether there were any indications on financial implications of Local Government Reorganisation on economic development within the District.

It was clarified that several Local Government Reorganisation briefings had taken place for Councillors. It was noted the new organisation following LGR would work with colleagues from GLCCA to establish plans for economic development, at that time.

Members praised the work of Claire Saunders, an Officer who had worked hard to assist Grantham Museum on a funding bid.

Clarification was sought around the overall aims of the strategy. How much funding was allocated to economic development or whether the Council received funding from other organisations was queried.

The Leader of the Council confirmed there was a budget for economic development to pay for work carried out. There was a team of 3 colleagues in economic development. In the 2026/27 budget, £100,000 had been added to the Community Fund and £100,000 had been allocated for events.

The Assistant Director for Planning and Growth clarified the budget allowed certain events to take place within the action plan. The Team also facilitates conversations with other organisations in terms of learning and development to leverage economic benefits.

Further information was requested on whether there were any challenges with local stakeholder involvement.

The Assistant Director for Planning and Growth highlighted the local economic forum was set up as part of the UKSPF funding process. The forum fed into how bids were analysed. The Council struggled with stakeholder engagement towards the end of the process.

The Leader of the Council noted the local economic forum was a requirement for the UKSPF funding and therefore, meetings had to take place. It was felt forums around networking and conversations could take place in a different way.

One Member requested feedback on the local economic forum be taken back to Government to provide reasoning on how the forum was not successful.

The Committee:

1. Noted the update on the Action Plan and refresh of the Economic Development Strategy (2024-2028).

2. Request a refreshed Economic Development Strategy be presented to the Committee in May.

72. SKDC Car Parking Review

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement presented the report.

The report outlined further changes to the parking order which were brought in, during January 2025 alongside the addition of more parking spaces at Cattlemarket carpark in Stamford, the increase in footfall at Grantham Market and some changes to on-street parking in the centre of Stamford.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement drew the Committee's attention to the recommendations within the report and provided the following issues:

- Disabled parking – The Council allowed free unlimited parking all day for all blue badge holders in all Council car parks, in all spaces. The location of disabled spaces within the car parks was being reviewed.
- Season tickets – Both Cattlemarket car park in Stamford and Wharf Road car park in Grantham were located close to their town's railway stations and both had spare capacities on weekdays. The Council were looking to reduce the tariff on season tickets.
- Bourne, Deepings and Billingborough – Car parking was currently free, however, a review was undergoing.
- Underutilised capacity – Most prevalent in Cattlemarket, Stamford (Monday-Thursday) and Wharf Road in Grantham (all week). It was intended to reduce charges at these car parks for during these periods, in order to stimulate demand.
- Higher turnover of spaces in the busiest short stay car parks – the Council could either put higher charges in for longer stays or have an absolute limit on the length of stay.

It was highlighted the Council would be conducting a feasibility study into adding additional capacity in Stamford given that car parks were operating at full capacity on Fridays and Saturdays.

Disabled Parking

One Member noted 3 hours free parking was sufficient for a blue badge holder.

It was clarified blue badge holders would not be restricted on time spent in the car park. The issue was the combination of the time limit and charging, alongside how long it was fair to give blue badge holders free parking, before charging them.

Concern was raised that this initiative was to generate more money and not necessarily because there was a shortage of spaces. Members were worried about how a blue badge holder may perceive this change.

Clarification was sought on what would happen if a blue badge holder parked in an unmarked bay. This would then leave marked bays empty, and other members of the public cannot park. The Member had seen this occur at Guildhall Street carpark, Grantham.

The Council is to ensure the marked bays are the most conveniently located spaces in terms of the exit and closest to amenities.

A query was raised on how many people the disabled parking would impact and if an impact analysis had been undertaken where the Committee could scrutinise the metrics.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement highlighted no decisions had been made on the parking review, this was a pre-decision scrutiny. It would then be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer confirmed a direction of travel proposal for the parking review. The Tetra Tech report outlined an overdemand on disabled parking across most locations. There were four variations of the proposed outcome and the Committee were requested to provide a steer on their preferred option.

One Member noted that some blue badge holders may require wheelchair access, and therefore, may struggle to park in a standard parking space.

Figures were requested on usage of blue badge holders and whether this could be implemented within the ticketed system.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement clarified this data was not collected at present, due to blue badge holder parking being free and unlimited. Going forward, the technology would be reviewed on how blue badge holders can register their badge alongside their vehicle registration.

At present, the current system did not require a blue badge holder to register to receive the free parking. If a 3-hour free parking limit is implemented, there would be a requirement for the individual to register their arrival to monitor the duration of stay.

A suggestion was made for the Cattlemarket car park in Stamford to provide free blue badge holder parking all day to increase the demand of the car park and to stop blue badge holders using standard spaces in other car parks.

A query was raised on what the rate blue badge holders would be charged after their 3-hour free parking.

It was confirmed they would be charged the standard rate and would be charged as if they had just arrived at the car park.

The Committee reviewed the criteria and proposed and seconded to suggested to limit the 3-hour free parking in any bay for blue badge holders. Blue badge holders would then be charged at the standard rate.

Season tickets and underused capacity issues

One Member highlighted that the impact of changes assessment should have been undertaken once Grantham car parks were fully operational, following their maintenance works to ensure the assessments are accurate.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer clarified the works being undertaken in several car parks was ongoing and there was no definitive date when all works would be complete. Consultants were booked months in advance for their observational studies and the Council could not predict with accuracy that there would not be works destabilising the offer.

In terms of season tickets, the Council were establishing a marginal gain to utilising capacity in the system.

It was outlined that season tickets historically had always been targeted at long-stay car parks, where people are encouraged to stay longer as the turnover of spaces is much lower. As a result of the findings it was recommended the season ticketing criteria be reviewed to enhance utilisation of spaces across car parks, in particular the consistent underutilisation of space at the Wharf Road Multi Story car park in Grantham and the Cattlemarket car park at Stamford.

One Member noted charges should be lowered in car parks which are underutilised and increase charges of car parks that are close to full capacity.

Within the report, there was a request for a further capacity for Stamford in response to the future expansion of the Town. A feasibility study would cover additional capacity and all possible solutions.

One Member felt that Cattlemarket in Stamford was not well signposted for visitors.

A query was raised on how much a season ticket was for Wharf Road car park. It was suggested that there be more advertisement of season tickets.

It was confirmed the season ticket was £21 weekly, £75 monthly and £200 per quarter of the year. Within the report, there were 350 quarterly season tickets, which was the most popular ticket.

A suggestion was made to provide incentives for Cattlemarket car park in Stamford to encourage people to utilise the car park.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement confirmed the tariffs were the same in Wharf Road and Cattlemarket car park. Wharf Road car park was more popular due to its location. Cattlemarket car park was most underutilised Mondays – Thursdays.

Controlled parking arrangements in Bourne, Deepings and Billingborough

It was noted that Billingborough is a large village and not a Town. It was felt the assessment had been undertaken incorrectly for Billingborough. It was further queried whether the report had been proof-read.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer clarified there was no business case to introduce any charging or limited parking in Billingborough and Market Deeping. Putting any parking controls into the locations would incur costs from the Council as any parking restrictions would still need to be enforced.

It was noted that Billingborough or Market Deeping did not justify any kind of controlled parking arrangements.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Protection clarified the two car parks in Bourne were uncontrolled at present. The Committee were requested to consider time limits and charging policies in order to provide more availability at these car parks.

One Member suggested that views be shared with District Ward Councillors for Bourne on this matter.

Another Member was in favour of the car parks at Bourne being time restricted in enable a higher turnover of spaces.

One Member queried limited controls in Market Deeping and what current parking situations were like.

Within the report, it stated there was evidence of pressure. There are commercial car parks, a County Council car park and the SKDC car park (Halfleet). The County Council car park was currently under-capacity due to flooding. It was noted that if people were using the Halfleet car park as a park and ride, the time limits and charges would need to be reviewed on usefulness to the car parking capacity.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer noted that there would be a significant cost in patrolling Billingborough and Market Deeping car parks, alongside resurfacing and ticket machines.

The Committee were satisfied with review car parking in Bourne and that Billingborough and Market Deeping would remain the same.

Achieving higher turnover of spaces in the busiest short stay car parks enabling more utilisation

One Member highlighted savings which could be brought forward in charging Councillors and Employees of the Council for parking in Welham Street car park, Grantham.

It was highlighted there was no particular demand on Welham Street car parks during the working day or when Full Council meetings were being held. A preference would be to put Councillor parking to the top stories of the car park, where the demand was less.

Another suggestion was to relocate Councillor and staff parking to Wharf Road car park in Grantham, where there was a greater capacity.

One Member suggested a possible 'pay on exit' style parking system due to pay and display putting time restrictions on visitors.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement referred members to the 'parking app' where parking could be extended using a mobile phone, anywhere away from the car park. More than 50% of car park users in Stamford were utilising the 'parking app'.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 had explored the use of 'pay on exit' parking schemes, however, they were extremely costly to implement.

The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- **Considered the findings of the Car Parking Study including analysis of payment methods.**
- **Reviewed the current criteria for Disabled Parking.**
- **Reviewed the criteria for use of Season Tickets.**
- **Considered the case for introducing controlled parking arrangements in Bourne, Deepings and Billingborough.**
- **Considered options to further increase the utilisation of car parks where capacity remains unused.**
- **Considered options to achieve higher turnover of spaces in the busiest short stay car parks enabling more utilisation.**

73. Work Programme 2025/26

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2025/26.

7 May 2026 meeting:

- Housing Revenue Account Plan
- Future High Street Fund (Closure report)
- Economic Development Strategy
- LeisureSK Ltd Finance update report

September 2026 meeting:

- UKPSF (Closure report)

74. Any other business, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstance decides is urgent

There were none.

75. Presentation and Update on St Martins Park, Stamford

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to go into private session and close the meeting.

‘Under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public may be excluded from the meeting during any listed items of business, on the grounds that if they were to be present, exempt information could be disclosed to them as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Act.’

76. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12:28.