



Thursday, 16 July 2026 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - Council Offices, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Members: Councillor Anna Kelly, Chairman of the Council
Councillor Pam Byrd, Vice-Chairman of the Council

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 Richard Cleaver
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Steven Cunnington
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 Nick Robins

Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Rob Shorrocks
Councillor Vanessa Smith
Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Ian Stokes
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

Agenda

This meeting can be watched as a live stream, or at a later date, [via the SKDC Public-I Channel](#)

For those Councillors who wish to attend, prayers will be held at 1:55pm before the commencement of the meeting. Please be seated by 1:50pm.

1. Public Open Forum

The public open forum will commence at **2.00 p.m.** and the following formal business of the Council will commence at **2.30 p.m.** or whenever the public open forum ends, if earlier.

2. Apologies for absence

3. Disclosure of Interests

Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.

4. Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of the two previous meetings held on 21 May 2026 (Extraordinary and AGM).

(Pages 7 - 32)

5. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

(Page 33)

6. Warm Homes Social Housing Fund Grant

To consider the acceptance of the additional Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (WH-SHF) grant of £999k which the Council has been awarded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), the associated Council match funding requirement and a budget increase to the HRA Capital Programme.

(Pages 35 - 38)

7. Annual Review of Overview and Scrutiny 2025/2026

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees during 2025/2026.

(Pages 39 - 54)

8. Members' Open Questions

A 45-minute period in which members may ask questions of the Leader, Cabinet Members, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and opposition group leaders excluding the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, Licensing and Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committees and Governance and Audit Committee.

9. Notices of Motion

a) Councillor Ben Green

Motion: Local Government Reorganisation and the Name of Any Successor Authority

A. This Council notes that:

- 1. Local Government Reorganisation is being advanced by Central Government with the stated aim of replacing two-tier local government with larger unitary authorities.*
- 2. If reorganisation proceeds, South Kesteven District Council is likely to become part of a much larger unitary authority.*
- 3. Proposals under consideration include a successor authority comprising North Kesteven, South Kesteven and South Holland.*
- 4. Lincolnshire is not merely a compass-point geography, but a county of deep historic identities, including the historic*

Parts of Kesteven, Holland and Lindsey.

5. *Cabinet has already provided the Council's formal response to Government concerning the suggested name for a successor authority as part of its representations on the detailed contents of the Structural Changes Order. This motion does not seek to overturn that decision rather it provides an opportunity for the wider body of Members to express their view on this issue and have that view communicated to Government.*

B. This Council believes that:

1. *Local Government Reorganisation risks weakening local democracy by replacing councils rooted in recognisable communities with larger and more remote institutions.*
2. *The suggested financial savings from reorganisation remain uncertain and must be weighed against transition costs, disruption to hard-working council officers, and the potential loss of local knowledge.*
3. *South Kesteven, North Kesteven and South Holland are not administrative blank spaces to be tidied away by Whitehall. They are places with histories, loyalties, civic inheritance and names which matter.*
4. *Any successor authority should have a name that reflects the historic geography, identity and civic inheritance of the area it serves.*
5. *A generic compass-point name such as "South Lincolnshire Council" would not adequately reflect the historic identities of Kesteven and Holland.*
6. *Should this Council's 'Best4GreaterLincolnshire' LGR proposal be favoured by Government, the name of the successor authority comprising North Kesteven, South Kesteven and South Holland should be "Kesteven and Holland Council."*
7. *Should either of the 'Greater Lincolnshire Local Government Reorganisation - People, Place, Prosperity' or the 'Your Lincolnshire' LGR proposals be favoured by Government, the name of the successor authority of which South Kesteven will form part should be "Kesteven, Holland and Lindsey Council"*

C. This Council therefore resolves to:

1. *Place on record its regret at the direction of travel towards Local Government Reorganisation and the potential abolition of district councils such as South Kesteven.*
2. *Request that the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to make them aware that further to the Council's formal representation on this issue (which remains unchanged), a majority of Members present at this meeting of Full Council have expressed the view that any successor authority should be named as set out in Paras. B(6)-B(7) of this motion.*

3. *Invite other relevant councils to consider making the same representations to Central Government.*

b) Councillor Sarah Trotter

Council notes that:-

- *Public houses are often among the last remaining community facilities in rural settlements, playing a vital role in reducing social isolation, supporting local employment, encouraging tourism and strengthening community cohesion.*
- *The loss of a public house can have a significant adverse impact on the social and economic wellbeing of towns and villages across South Kesteven.*
- *South Kesteven has experienced a number of pub closures in recent years, with some sites subsequently proposed for residential development.*
- *Once a pub is lost, it is often impossible to replace – particularly in villages, where it may be the last remaining meeting place.*
- *Recent losses and closures affecting our communities include the Houblon Arms, Oasby (within my Ward); the Cross Swords, Skillington; the Springfield Arms, Grantham (closed prior to 2024); and the Wheatsheaf Inn, Dry Doddington (closed February 2023).*
- *Since April 2017, public houses have lost their previous permitted development rights: a change of use away from a pub, or its demolition, now requires a full planning application, giving councils and communities a formal opportunity to object. National planning policy and the Localism Act 2011 (via Assets of Community Value) provide further mechanisms to help protect valued community pubs.*

Council believes that:-

- *Public houses which serve as valued community facilities should be retained wherever possible.*

Council therefore resolves to:-

- *Reaffirm its support for the retention and protection of valued public houses and other community facilities throughout South Kesteven.*
- *Request that the Executive considers commissioning Officers to develop and make available guidance for Parish and Town Councils on the options available to help safeguard valued public houses – including planning policy protections, nomination of Assets of Community Value, community ownership opportunities, and relevant grant funding – to support our communities in their fight to save our great British pubs.*
- *Request that the Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the matter as part of its work*

programme and receive a report on progress within three months.

c) Councillor Paul Martin

Three million animals die each year on UK roadsides due to litter. Almost 1,000 people a year are injured on our roads due to animals. In Lincolnshire over 200 call outs a year are due to deer on our roads. There is a link between roadside litter, animal deaths, and some traffic accidents on our rural roads.

In recent months I have been in touch with both South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) and transport officers at Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) to bring the two councils together to work on roadside litter.

Our district council has not been collecting this litter due to issues with lane closures, equipment, health and safety and cost, but also cross council communication. I am very pleased to see that both SKDC and LCC are happy to work together to improve this situation.

This council agrees to use the existing funding in the A1 litter reserve (£45,000) and investigate other funding options to complement a programme of joint council litter collection on our litter strewn A and B road network. This will support motorists, tourism, and the environment by removing some of this never-ending stream of rubbish from our roadsides.

Apart from a win for nature this may ultimately save lives on our roads.

10. Close of meeting

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MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 21 MAY 2026

12.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Ian Selby Chairman
Councillor Anna Kelly Vice-Chairman

Councillor Kyle Abel
Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Helen Crawford
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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
Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection

Chris Prime, Communications Manager
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

122. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:

Emma Baker
Helen Crawford
James Denniston
Nick Robins
Penny Robins
Vanessa Smith
Peter Stephens
Ian Stokes

123. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

124. Public Open Forum

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

125. Notices of Motion

126. Councillor Sue Woolley

Councillor Sue Woolley proposed the following motion:

This Council notes:

- 1. Small HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) of 3-4 occupants can be established without planning permission under permitted development rights, with no requirement for community consultation.*
- 2. In December 2025 across SKDC, Serco managed 45 properties for resettlement purposes. providing 194 bedspaces.*
- 3. By March 2026 that figure had risen to 69 HMOs providing 301 bedspaces. Of those 69 properties, only 3 are occupied by families.*
- 4. The rate of increase of 55%, 107 new bedspaces in four months, represents a significant and accelerating pressure on South Kesteven's housing stock and communities. 5. Many councils have successfully introduced HMO regulation through Article 4 Directions in areas of intensive HMO properties. 6. Current*

permitted development rights mean residents have no right to be consulted on, or informed of, HMO conversions in their street.

This Council believes:

- 1. The current rate of HMO growth in Grantham is unsustainable and demands immediate action.*
- 2. Residents have a right to be consulted on developments that affect the character of their neighbourhood.*
- 3. An Article 4 Direction is a well-established, proportionate planning tool that gives communities a proper voice while ensuring legitimate housing needs continue to be met.*
- 4. Our Council has blocked this measure on two separate occasions, in October and November 2025, which has allowed the situation to worsen. This Council cannot allow further delay.*

This Council resolves:

- 1. To instruct officers to gather evidence to establish whether there are sufficient grounds to justify the implementation of an immediate Article 4 Direction to restrict the permitted development rights to change the use of dwellinghouses (use class C3) to small HMO's (use class C4) pursuant to the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 in respect of a 2km radius centred from the Grantham Market Cross and to bring a report setting out their recommendations to the ordinary meeting of Full Council due to be held in September 2026 (or an earlier ordinary meeting of Full Council, if feasible), for debate and decision.*

In introducing the motion, Councillor Woolley proposed to alter the wording with the consent of Council. However, not all present consented to alter the motion, therefore discussion returned the motion on notice.

The following points were raised during the proposal of the motion:

- Residents of Grantham should be able to give their thoughts on planning applications for small HMOs.
- The motion was raised as a 'quality of life issue' rather than a 'political issue'. This issue affected families, elderly residents and future generations alike.
- Grantham and South Kesteven had proud identities, and were places where people knew their neighbours. Many residents had expressed concerns about HMOs, due to the perceived pressures they created; these pressures included parking and community cohesion.
- When family homes were converted into HMOs, entire streets could change overnight. This motion wished to give power back to the people in the affected

area, as they deserved the right to comment on significant changes proposed in their neighbourhoods. Local decisions should reflect local needs and voices.

- The motion was about protecting the character of towns and villages. It was not about stopping HMO housing, but managing it thoughtfully.
- Local members of Grantham who have had local meetings, discussions, and had put politics to one side were to be applauded.

The motion was seconded. The seconder raised the following points:

- The Council had considered action on HMOs in Grantham on several occasions during the past eight months. The last occasion was November 2025. Since then, the number of HMOs had been rising. The bedspace count under Serco now stood at 301.
- He believed Grantham was suffering due to a failing dispersal policy set at governmental level.
- South Kesteven had supported 215 asylum cases, almost double that of any other neighbouring local authority. The status quo was not acceptable, and something needed to change.
- This motion asked officers to gather the relevant evidence associated with an Article 4 direction.

An amendment to the motion was proposed and seconded, to amend the entire section headed '*This Council resolves...*' to:

1. *To instruct officers to immediately commence all necessary work required for the making of an immediate Article 4 Direction, pursuant to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, removing permitted development rights for the change of use from dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4).*
2. *That the proposed Article 4 Direction shall apply to all Grantham District Council wards together with Belmont Ward.*
3. *That officers bring forward the immediate Article 4 Direction, together with all necessary supporting documentation and evidence, for formal declaration and approval by Full Council no later than the meeting scheduled for 16 July 2026.*
4. *That the necessary officer resource, legal work, consultation requirements, and evidential preparation associated with the proposed Direction be funded from the Council's Local Priorities Reserve and already received Service User Grant Funding.*
5. *That ward-level data relating to HMO concentrations, resettlement accommodation, and associated housing pressures be circulated to all members alongside the report.*

After consulting with the Monitoring Officer, the Chairman ruled that this amendment was invalid. In their view paragraph 1 exposed the Council to legal risk, and there was a concern that paragraph 3 would be unlawful, as the law required statutory notice to be served and for members of the public to submit their views before the making of an Article 4 direction. Paragraph 5 introduced a further aspect to the motion; motions should only consist of one issue.

A further amendment to the substantive motion which removed text, and replaced text in the final paragraph was proposed and seconded:

This Council notes:

- 1. Small HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) of 3-4 occupants can be established without planning permission under permitted development rights, with no requirement for community consultation.*
- 2. In December 2025 across SKDC, Serco managed 45 properties for resettlement purposes. providing 194 bedspaces.*
- 3. By March 2026 that figure had risen to 69 HMOs providing 301 bedspaces. Of those 69 properties, only 3 are occupied by families.*
- 4. The rate of increase of 55%, 107 new bedspaces in four months, represents a significant and accelerating pressure on South Kesteven's housing stock and communities. 5. Many councils have successfully introduced HMO regulation through Article 4 Directions in areas of intensive HMO properties. 6. Current permitted development rights mean residents have no right to be consulted on, or informed of, HMO conversions in their street.*

This Council believes:

- 1. The current rate of HMO growth in Grantham is unsustainable and demands immediate action.*
- 2. Residents have a right to be consulted on developments that affect the character of their neighbourhood.*
- 3. An Article 4 Direction is a well-established, proportionate planning tool that gives communities a proper voice while ensuring legitimate housing needs continue to be met.*

This Council resolves:

- 1. To instruct officers to gather evidence to establish whether there are sufficient grounds to justify the implementation of an appropriate Article 4 Direction to restrict the permitted development rights to change the use of dwellinghouses (use class C3) to small HMO's (use class C4) pursuant to the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 in respect of*

the wards of Grantham (inclusive of Belmont ward) and to bring a report setting out their recommendations to the ordinary meeting of Full Council due to be held in September 2026 (or an earlier ordinary meeting of Full Council, if feasible), for debate and decision.

The proposer and seconded of the substantive motion were happy to accept these amendments and therefore this amended version became the substantive motion.

Debate ensued, with the following information being highlighted:

- A residents' meeting was attended by 70 people. They understood that there was a shortage of housing, which could be due to a failure of successive governments nationally to deliver affordable social housing. This could often leave HMOs as the only option. Residents were concerned about the quality of life of those living in HMOs, with direct concerns over laundry and communal facilities.
- Who lived in a property was not a material consideration of the planning regime.
- Any HMOs already in place would remain.
- Thanks were offered to those who had pushed the government to temporarily halt further applications for HMOs in the Grantham area for asylum seekers.
- This motion was about restoring balance and public confidence and the basic principle that communities should have their say.
- This motion would not impose an Article 4 direction immediately. In September this council could make an informed decision with all the facts.
- HMOs provided an important source of housing for people who were poorer, which included care leavers, working people, and those escaping domestic violence. If you were a young low paid worker they provided an affordable way of trying to make ends meet. HMOs enabled people to stay and contribute to society.
- This was a sanitised version of the motion that had previously been brought to Full Council, and it should be for Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.
- If you stripped away permitted development rights for small 3 or 4 bedroomed properties, you were not stopping those corporate buyers who had deeper pockets. The Council already had the tools to enforce when necessary, it could be preferable to focus on that and locate the bad landlords.
- Smaller HMOs were not required to be considered by the Planning Committee.

A further amendment (addition) was proposed and seconded:

This Council notes the failure of prior Conservative administrations to grasp the issue.

On being put to the vote, this amendment was not carried and therefore was **LOST**.

The debate returned to the substantive motion:

- The cross-party support on this motion was welcomed.
- An Article 4 direction did not necessarily mean that the Council was against HMOs. In the short-term at least it meant that more knowledge of them was required. The legislation attached to Article 4 directions already required officers to gather evidence in the fashion suggested by the motion.
- The source of funding for officers to carry out research was a matter for Full Council. It could be left to the discretion of the Section 151 Officer, or alternative sources of funding, such as the Asylum Dispersal Grant, or the Local Priorities Reserve could be used.
- The geography attached to any Article 4 direction would be determined by the evidence captured. A future report would determine or recommend a proposed area.

In summing up, Councillor Woolley stressed that the motion was not aiming to class HMOs as bad, nor was its intention to say 'no' to future HMOs. It was about putting the residents of Grantham first.

A recorded vote was requested – the results of the recorded vote were as follows:

For: Councillors Kyle Abel, Matt Bailey, Rhys Baker, Ashley Baxter, David Bellamy, Pam Bosworth, Pam Byrd, Steven Cunnington, Phil Dilks, Barry Dobson, Patsy Ellis, Paul Fellows, Ben Green, Tim Harrison, Graham Jeal, Gloria Johnson, Anna Kelly, Jane Kingman, Gareth Knight, Philip Knowles, Zoe Lane, Robert Leadenham, Bridget Ley, Richard Litchfield, Nikki Manterfield, Paul Martin, Penny Milnes, Virginia Moran, Charmaine Morgan, Habib Rahman, Susan Sandall, Max Sawyer, Ian Selby, Paul Stokes, Elvis Stooke, Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, Sarah Trotter, Mark Whittington, Jane Wood, Paul Wood, Sue Woolley (41)

Against: Councillors Rob Shorrocks, Lee Steptoe (2)

Abstentions: Councillors Harrish Bisnauthsing, Richard Cleaver, Chris Noon, Rhea Rayside, Murray Turner (5).

Therefore, the substantive motion was **AGREED**:

This Council notes:

1. Small HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) of 3-4 occupants can be established without planning permission under permitted development rights, with no requirement for community consultation.
2. In December 2025 across SKDC, Serco managed 45 properties for resettlement purposes. providing 194 bedspaces.

3. By March 2026 that figure had risen to 69 HMOs providing 301 bedspaces. Of those 69 properties, only 3 are occupied by families.
4. The rate of increase of 55%, 107 new bedspaces in four months, represents a significant and accelerating pressure on South Kesteven's housing stock and communities.
5. Many councils have successfully introduced HMO regulation through Article 4 Directions in areas of intensive HMO properties.
6. Current permitted development rights mean residents have no right to be consulted on, or informed of, HMO conversions in their street.

This Council believes:

1. The current rate of HMO growth in Grantham is unsustainable and demands immediate action.
2. Residents have a right to be consulted on developments that affect the character of their neighbourhood.
3. An Article 4 Direction is a well-established, proportionate planning tool that gives communities a proper voice while ensuring legitimate housing needs continue to be met.

This Council resolves:

To instruct officers to gather evidence to establish whether there are sufficient grounds to justify the implementation of an appropriate Article 4 Direction to restrict the permitted development rights to change the use of dwellinghouses (use class C3) to small HMO's (use class C4) pursuant to the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 in respect of the wards of Grantham (inclusive of Belmont ward) and to bring a report setting out their recommendations to the ordinary meeting of Full Council due to be held in September 2026 (or an earlier ordinary meeting of Full Council, if feasible), for debate and decision.

127. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 1:29 p.m.

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
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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 Max Sawyer 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.

Membership of Committees – May 2026

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (1)	Ind (1)	Lib Dem(1)	SK Ind (0)	Lab (0)	Green (0)	Reform (1)
Gareth Knight	Barry Dobson (VC)	Chris Noon	James Denniston	Murray Turner (C)				Richard Litchfield
Matt Bailey	Anna Kelly							
Robert Leadenham								

Employment Committee (9)

Conservative (2)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (1)	Ind (1)	Lib Dem (1)	SK Ind (1)	Lab (0)	Green (0)	Reform (1)
Gloria Johnson (VC)	Anna Kelly	Paul Stokes (C)	Ashley Baxter	Harrish Bisnauthsing	Gift to Con group			Graham Jeal
Ian Stokes	Rhys Baker							
Susan Sandall								

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (1)	Grantham Independent (1)	Ind (0)	Lib Dem (0)	SK Ind (1)	Lab (0)	Green (1)	Reform (1)	Unaligned (1)
Paul Martin	Barry Dobson	Elvis Stooke (C)			Gift to Dem Ind		Emma Baker (VC)	Ben Green	Charmaine Morgan
Gloria Johnson	Max Sawyer								
Nikki Manterfield									

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (1)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Lib Dem (1)	SK Ind(0)	Lab (1)	Green (0)	Reform (1)
Gareth Knight (VC)	Max Sawyer	Tim Harrison (C)	Gift to Grantham Independent	Murray Turner		Lee Steptoe		Gift to Councillor Mark Whittington
Matt Bailey		Elvis Stooke						
Gloria Johnson								

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (0)	SK Independent (0)	Lab (1)	Green (0)	Reform (1)
Zoe Lane (VC)	TBC	Gift to Green	Gift to Lib Dems	Habib Rahman		Lee Steptoe (C)	Emma Baker	Kyle Abel
Susan Sandall	Paul Fellows							
Gloria Johnson								

Licensing Committee (11)

Conservative (5)	Democratic Independent (3)	Grantham Independent (2)	Independent (0)	Lib Dem (1)	SK Ind (0)	Labour (0)	Green (0)	Reform (0)
Rob Leadenham (VC)	Paul Fellows (C)	Elvis Stooke		Harrish Bisnauthsing				
Jane Kingman	Philip Knowles	Patsy Ellis						
Helen Crawford	Rhea Rayside							
Pam Bosworth								
Susan Sandall								

Governance and Audit Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (0)	SK Ind (1)	Labour (0)	Green (1)	Reform (0)
Sue Woolley	Rhea Rayside	Tim Harrison	Phil Dilks		Paul Wood (C)		Vanessa Smith (VC)	
Peter Stephens	Gift to Grantham Independents	Paul Stokes						
Gift to Mark Whittington								

Planning Committee (13)

Conservative (4)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (2)	Independent (1)	Lib Dem (1)	SK Ind (1)	Labour (0)	Green (1)	Reform (1)
Gift to SK Ind	Paul Fellows	Steven Cunningham	TBC	Harrish Bisnauthsing	Penny Milnes (VC)		TBC	David Bellamy
Sarah Trotter	Pam Byrd	Patsy Ellis			Paul Wood			
Gloria Johnson	Max Sawyer							
Helen Crawford (C)								

Standards Committee (11)

Conservative (4)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (2)	Independent (1)	Lib Dem (0)	SK Ind (1)	Labour (0)	Green (0)	Reform (1)
Sarah Trotter (VC)	Pam Byrd (C)	Tim Harrison	Virginia Moran		Penny Milnes			Ben Green
Peter Stephens	Max Sawyer	Chris Noon						
Matt Bailey								
Nikki Manterfield								

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (1)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Lib Dem (1)	SK Ind (0)	Labour (1)	Green (0)	Reform (1)
Nikki Manterfield (C)	Rhea Rayside (VC)	Tim Harrison	James Denniston	Habib Rahman		Lee Steptoe		Kyle Abel
Pam Bosworth								
Rob Leadenham								

Chief Executive Appeals Panel (3)

Conservative (1)	Democratic Independent (1)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (0)	Liberal Democrat (0)	SK Ind (0)	Labour (0)	Green (0)	Reform (0)
Nikki Manterfield	Richard Cleaver	Tim Harrison						

Chairman's Civic Engagements

22nd May to 3rd July 2026

Event Date	SKDC Ref	Organisation and Event	Location
01 June 2026	AK0001	St Wulfram's Licensing & Institution, Bishop of Grantham	St Wulfram's Church, Grantham
06 June 2026	SKDC001-AK	SK Community Awards	Dysart Park, Grantham
07 June 2026	AK0002	Mayor of Peterborough Civic Service	Peterborough Cathedral, Peterborough
09 June 2026	AK0003	Inspire+ Mini Olympics	South Kesteven Sports Stadium, Grantham

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Council

Thursday, 16 July 2026

Report of Councillor Bridget Ley
Cabinet Member for Finance

Warm Homes Social Housing Fund Grant

Report Author

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

✉ Alison.Hall-Wright@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To consider recommending to Cabinet the acceptance of the additional Warm Homes Social Housing Fund (WH-SHF) grant of £999k which the Council has been awarded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), approve a budget increase of £1.598m to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme and approve the transfer of £599k from the HRA Priorities Reserve in order to comply with the match funding condition.

Recommendations

Full Council is asked to:

- 1. Recommend that Cabinet accept the additional £999k Warm Homes Social Housing Fund grant which has been awarded to the Council by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.**
- 2. Note there is a match funding requirement attached to the grant.**
- 3. Upon acceptance of the grant approve a budget increase to the HRA Capital Programme of £1.598m and approve the transfer of £599k from the HRA Priorities Reserve in order to comply with the match funding condition.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Sustainable South Kesteven Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 Following a grant application to DESNZ the Council has been successful in being awarded £999k which it is required to match fund to the same amount. The council's element will be funded from a £599k transfer from the HRA Priorities Reserve and £400k already included in the HRA Capital Programme budget which meets the eligibility criteria.
- 1.2 As a result, the capital programme for 2026/27 will need to be increased by £1.598m to reflect the cost of the additional works.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of finance and Deputy S151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 Due to the level of proposed budgetary increase, Full Council are required to consider approving the expected increase to the HRA capital programme. This is subject to Cabinet accepting the grant funding.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.4 The allocation of additional funding via the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund will allow for additional energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation measures to be installed in Council owned properties. Investment in these properties via grant

funding and allocated HRA funding will also help to reduce running costs for tenants, address risk of fuel poverty and promote warm and efficient homes.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council submitted a bid to Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) for additional grant from the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund of £999k to enable energy efficiency improvement works to be completed on an additional 106 properties in the Council's Housing Stock during 2026/27. Confirmation was received in June 2026 that the Council has been awarded the grant which needs to be spent by 31 March 2027, a report will be presented to Cabinet on 21 July 2026 to seek approval to accept the grant.
- 2.2 The planned energy efficiency improvement works will increase the EPC ratings on the properties included in the bid from a D, E or F to a C which will support the Council with achieving EPC rating of C by 2030 across the housing stock.
- 2.3 Table 1 provides details of the proposed energy efficiency works that will be installed at each of the properties, these are subject to change following the completion of retrofit surveys and energy modelling at each of the properties as these reports could identify alternative works to achieve an EPC rating of C.

Table 1 – Proposed Energy Efficiency Works

Works	Number of Properties
Air Source Heat Pumps	10
Loft Insulation	32
Replacement Windows	12
Solar PV Panels and Replacement Windows	10
Air Source Heat Pumps, Solar PV Panels and Loft Insulation	42
Total	106

- 2.4 As part of the grant terms and conditions the Council is required to provide match funding of £999k. This can be met by transferring £200k budget from the window and doors programme and £200k budget from the heating programme as properties currently scheduled to receive works under these schemes can be transferred to the Warm Homes programme. A transfer of £599k will also be required from the HRA Priorities Reserve to provide the balance of the match funding. There is sufficient funding in this reserve to enable the match funding to be provided.
- 2.5 If acceptance of the grant award is approved by Cabinet the HRA Capital Programme budget will need to be increased by £1.598m to reflect the cost of the additional works. The amendment consists of the £999k grant funding and the

£599k transfer from the HRA Priorities Reserve as the balance of £400k is already included in the HRA Capital Programme budget.

Table 2 – Summary Funding

Funding	Amount
Grant Funding	£999k
Match Funding:	
HRA Priorities Reserve	£599k
Existing HRA Capital Programme Budget	£400k

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The Council is required to achieve an EPC rating of C across the housing stock by 2030 so acceptance of this grant and the associated match funding, and the budget amendment will support this requirement.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Full Council could choose not to approve the budget increase and the transfer from the HRA Priorities Reserve, but this would not support the achievement of an EPC rating of C across the Council's housing stock by 2030.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Approval of the recommendations in this report will ensure the Council is able to proceed with the proposed energy efficiency improvement works detailed in table 1.



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Council

Thursday, 16 July 2026

Report of Councillor Gareth Knight,
Vice-Chairman of the Finance and
Economic Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Annual Review of Overview and Scrutiny 2025/26

Report Author

Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

 lucy.bonshor@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees during 2025/26.

Recommendations

That Full Council notes the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2025/2026.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	All
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

1.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

1.2 The Constitution requires that there is an annual report on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the previous year. The Constitution also allows for a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen to take place to discuss the content of the report; all Chairmen were consulted via email and asked to select notable pieces of work for the year. This is reflected in the Appendix to the report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

2.1 Under Article 6.4 of Part 2 of the Council's Constitution, the Chairmen of all Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to determine the content of an annual report relating to each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The report is to be co-ordinated and signed off by the appointed Chairman of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 The five Overview and Scrutiny Committees are:

- Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2.3 In addition to the above, there is also a yearly meeting of the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee which involves all Overview and Scrutiny Members.

2.4 The Constitution outlines that the Environment and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees can meet jointly to discuss certain issues,

such as Planning and Licensing Policy. Other Overview and Scrutiny Committees can meet jointly as and when required.

- 2.5 This annual report covers those Committees that were in place during 2025/26 and contains a summary of the topics that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has considered at their meetings during the municipal year.

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution prescribes that an annual Overview and Scrutiny report is produced.
- 3.2 The Council could opt to amend the content of the Annual Report, as presented. However, the report is only a summary of topics covered during the year. Minutes of each committee meeting are available on the Council's website, as are the webcasts.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 All Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committees from 2025/26 were asked by email to contribute to the content of the report. Any comments received have been reflected within Appendix 1

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26.

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Scrutiny Annual Report 2025/26

Report of: Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

1. Introduction

1.1 During 2025/26 South Kesteven District Council had five Overview and Scrutiny Committees each comprising nine members of the Council.

- Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.2 There were also joint meetings held between the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also held which comprised all Members from the five Overview and Scrutiny Committees and was Chaired by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees are responsible for discharging the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the discharge of functions under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, which require councils to put arrangements in place to designate a committee as a crime and disorder scrutiny committee.

1.4 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for monitoring the Council's performance, considering its decisions, questioning how those decisions are made and recommending improvements. The Committees may also undertake external scrutiny to examine wider issues that affect the District.

2. Role of Scrutiny

2.1 There are four key functions of scrutiny:

2.1.1 To provide a "critical friend" challenge to the Cabinet as well as external authorities and agencies

- Challenge by scrutiny should be constructively robust and purposeful
- Scrutiny should work effectively with the Cabinet and senior management
- Scrutiny should provide an effective mechanism for the Cabinet to demonstrate public accountability

2.1.2 To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities

- Scrutiny should take a community leadership role by focusing on issues of public concern
- Scrutiny should have a constructive relationship with the press and media
- Scrutiny should create the conditions for plural views and concerns to be considered

2.1.3 Scrutiny members should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public

- Scrutiny should operate with political impartiality
- Scrutiny should have ownership of its work programme
- Scrutiny members should have a worthwhile and fulfilling role

2.1.4 Scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services

- Scrutiny should have access to timely and accurate performance information
- The scrutiny work programme should be balanced well-coordinated and integrated into corporate processes
- Scrutiny work should be carried out with strategic objectives in mind
- Scrutiny should contribute to improving local public services

3. Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Bridget Ley

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Gareth Knight

3.1 The Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 13 January 2026 to consider the Fees and Charges Proposals for 2026/27 and the budget proposal for 2026/27 and indicative budgets for 2027/28 and 2028/29 for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

3.2 The Charging Policy had been reviewed and this was also considered by the Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Fees and Charges Proposals for 2026/27.

3.3 The Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered revenue and capital budgets in respect of the General Fund covering:

- The funding position for the General Fund
- Draft General Fund budget proposals
- The draft Capital Programme 2026/27 – 2028/29
- Capital Financing
- Reserves and Balances

3.4 In respect of the Housing Revenue Account this had been set in the context of balancing the sustainable 30 year financial business plan following priorities outlined within the Housing Strategy.

4. Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Murray Turner

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Barry Dobson

During 2025/26 Committee cycle the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held six meetings, one of these was an extraordinary meeting where the Committee considered the business plan for the refurbishment of gym equipment at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre. The Committee received a number of reports during the year in respect of LeisureSK Ltd and the Committee reviewed the operational performance and received updates on the financial performance.

The Committee received progress reports in respect of the Market Action Plan and the Play Area Strategy which included the significant work that had been undertaken to improve play areas across the district following the implementation of the Play Area Strategy the previous year and the £100,000 that had been allocated to invest in replacement equipment.

At the October meeting a presentation was made to the Committee from the founder and CEO of Pop-Up Art in support of the work that had been done through the Cultural Strategy.

Thatcher Fest Celebrating Thatcher's 100th Birthday

- 4.1 Thatcher Fest, a week-long cultural programme marking the centenary of Margaret Thatcher's birth had been held in Grantham. The collaborative approach taken by the Council to act as a facilitator, had enabled a diverse programme of events to be undertaken with strong audience participation, including engagement from first-time visitors. The programme of events had attracted extensive regional, national and international media coverage which had raised Grantham's profile and supported local organisations demonstrating the value of partnership working.

Leisure Investment Programme

- 4.2 Progress on the Council's Leisure Improvements Programme, which supports the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2024–27 by investing in high-quality leisure facilities and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities was considered by the Committee. A Leisure Investment Reserve of £500,000 had been established to support improvements to leisure facilities, including decoration and the replacement of worn-out fixtures, with the reserve used primarily to improve and refresh changing room areas across the leisure centres. During the year the Committee received reports outlining the work being undertaken to improve both the Council's leisure facilities and the wider leisure offer within the district. The subsequent updates provided Members with information on planned investment works across the leisure assets, wider support for community organisations, and the opportunity to ask questions on these areas. The Committee was also updated on Phase 1 of the Leisure Improvements Programme, following the report presented to the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 November 2025, when the funding allocation criteria had

been agreed. The scope of works was developed by Officers and consultants, with support from Welland Procurement, and procured through an open tender process. Cabinet approved the award of the contract to Northdown Property Services at its meeting on 5 May 2026. Members noted that, while works at Bourne and Stamford Leisure Pools could be completed without pool closures, Grantham Meres Leisure Pool would need to close for a period of time to allow the works to be carried out.

Cultural Strategy

- 4.3 The Committee received a progress update on the Cultural Strategy at its October 2025 meeting, which outlined the continued delivery of cultural opportunities, community engagement and support for the wider cultural sector across South Kesteven. Members noted that the 'Pay it Forward' scheme had raised over £13,000 to help improve access to arts and cultural experiences for residents who may otherwise face barriers to participation. The Committee also considered the ongoing work of the Arts and Culture Team across the Council's three artistic venues, district-wide outreach activity and partnership work with cultural organisations. Members welcomed the Council's continued support for cultural activity, including its annual contribution of just over £3,500 to the Arts Council England-funded Rural Touring Scheme, delivered by Live and Local, which brings high-quality drama, music and comedy performances to rural communities. The update also highlighted the continued success of the Music in Quiet Places programme, with four rural church events held in 2025, family fun days delivered in Bourne and the Deepings, and Stamford Arts Centre's participation in the Into Film Festival for the first time, helping to broaden access to film and raise the profile of cinema at the venue and the continued success of the pantomimes held at both the Guildhall Arts Centre and the Stamford Arts Centre.

Sports and Physical Activity Strategy

- 4.4 The Committee reviewed the refreshed Sports and Physical Activity Strategy (2026-2031), building on delivery over the previous five years. The strategy set out partnership-led opportunities to support residents and visitors to live healthy, active lifestyles. The strategy was structured around four key pillars and included an action plan along with key performance indicators. The refreshed strategy was essential to ensure the goals and objectives remained relevant and aligned to the national context along with the needs of the community in South Kesteven. The Committee recommended the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy (2026-2031) for adoption and Cabinet approved the Strategy in March 2026.

5. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Elvis Stooke

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Emma Baker

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee met five times during 2025/26. The Committee received various external presentations during the

year including from the Grantham Canal Partnership and a Leisure Energy update on Grantham Meres Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. Public speaking at the Committee referenced air traffic pollution from idling engines and the effect on Air Quality particularly in Grantham and how this could be addressed. The Committee also received information in respect of Section 19 flooding recommendations following the flooding that had arisen from storms Henk and Babet although it was noted that most Section 19s within the district did not have any recommendations for South Kesteven. Policies considered included the Corporate Enforcement Policy and a review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Air Quality

- 5.1 The Committee scrutinised the Annual Air Quality update which reported that the Annual Status report continued to give a positive picture with the Air Quality Management Area continuing to be monitored and reported to the Committee providing assurance on ongoing compliance and trend data. Further detailed consideration was programmed and would enable the Committee to revisit the evidence base and any mitigation activity in light of emerging data.

Waste and Recycling

- 5.2 The Committee focused on service resilience, efficiency and readiness for national policy change. Members considered a review to restructure waste collection rounds, noting that rounds had not been significantly changed since 2012 and examined how proposed changes would support reliable collection performance and future demand. The Committee also received updates on revisions to the Waste Policy, including winter garden waste collection arrangements. The Committee reviewed the planned introduction of weekly food waste collections from 13 April 2026, in line with the Environment Act 2021. Members noted that the service would divert food waste, which makes up around a third of residual waste, from black bins to anaerobic digestion, supporting recycling and reducing carbon emissions. Food waste would be collected separately and taken to a different site, although the additional 12 vehicles required may increase overall fleet fuel use and emissions.

Trees and Woodland

- 5.3 The Committee's work on trees and woodland covered both governance (policy) and delivery (planting), ensuring that operational practice aligns with the Council's strategic ambitions. Members reviewed draft Tree Management Policies to replace the 2019 Tree Guidelines, updating the framework to better reflect the adopted Tree and Woodland Strategy. Scrutiny also considered analysis and modelling of the potential costs associated with changes to the Council's approach to managing tree-related risk, and the Committee recommended the policy for approval, which Cabinet subsequently approved in January 2026. Alongside policy development, Members endorsed the 2025/26 tree planting programme—covering planned planting numbers, locations and delivery methods—and later considered a strategy setting out the principles and financial constraints that guide annual planting, including

how planting distribution is assessed against areas of greatest need across the district.

Climate Action and Decarbonisation

- 5.4 In relation to climate action and decarbonisation, the Committee maintained oversight of performance, investment decisions and major delivery programmes. Members received the Council's 2024/25 carbon emissions update, noting reductions across leisure and waste emissions and overall electricity usage, and scrutinised the Draft Climate Action Plan, including its delivery framework, the remit of actions and lead officer responsibility; the Committee recommended the Plan to Cabinet and it was adopted in March 2026. The Committee also tracked delivery through the Climate Change Reserve Fund, receiving updates on initiatives designed to deliver carbon and cost savings, including the £1m programme to accelerate the upgrade of Council-owned streetlights to energy-efficient LEDs (reporting a 66.8% reduction in electricity use, £122k annual saving and 136 tonnes of carbon avoided annually). Further scrutiny covered external funding and partnerships, including the Grantham Meres Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme following the award of £3,587,500 funding to support installation of a new low-carbon heating system, alongside wider solar PV and low-carbon heat projects across the Council's estate.

6. Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Bridget Ley

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Gareth Knight

The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee met six times during 2025/26. The Committee considered a wide range of significant issues affecting the Council and the district, including major capital projects, financial performance, housing investment, economic growth and support for residents.

Regular scrutiny was given to the delivery of the Turnpike Depot, the Grantham Future High Street Fund, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and wider infrastructure and regeneration projects, alongside detailed monitoring of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. Members consider the impact of maintenance backlogs across housing and corporate assets, investment priorities for leisure facilities, the review of the Economic Development Strategy, car parking changes, the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and discretionary payment policies. Collectively, this work demonstrated the Committee's role in holding decision-makers to account, monitoring financial resilience, highlighting delivery risks and ensuring that major programmes and policies remained aligned with local priorities and the needs of residents.

Turnpike Depot

- 6.1 A significant focus of the Committee's scrutiny during the year was the Turnpike Depot project, which Members monitored through regular updates, site engagement and closure reporting. This reflected the scale and

importance of the scheme as a major corporate investment, the Committee reviewed progress against the programme, considered financial forecasts and risk information, and noted changes to the construction timetable as the project moved towards completion. Members also maintained oversight of delivery risks and key milestones throughout the build. This sustained scrutiny helped ensure transparency, supported effective Member involvement and provided assurances that progress and challenges were being closely monitored. By the conclusion of the project, the depot was reported to have been delivered on time and within budget, demonstrating a strong example of effective oversight of a major capital scheme.

Financial Monitoring and Budget Oversight

- 6.2 A core part of the Committee's work was the regular scrutiny of the Council's financial position across both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. Members reviewed provisional outturn reports, quarter two and quarter three budget monitoring and policy proposals relating to council tax support and discretionary payments. These reports highlighted both areas of strong performance, including General Fund underspends and prudent reserve management, and areas of pressure, particularly within the Housing Revenue Account where additional investment was required to respond to repairs, voids and compliance responsibilities. The Committee's scrutiny helped ensure that financial decisions were transparent, evidence-based and responsive to emerging risks.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26

- 6.3 The Committee received updates during 2025-2026 on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Funding had been directly allocated to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority (GLCCA) which in turn had passported the funds to the Unitary/District Councils and County Council. South Kesteven was awarded approximately £1,212,660 with an additional £162,103 being awarded in respect of the Rural England Prosperity Funds (REPF). Almost all funding had been allocated to a variety of projects across the entire District with grants being allocated in a more strategic and targeted direction than previously under the headings of Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills. The Rural England Prosperity Fund was used to fund improvements to community facilities and amenities across the District.

Leisure Investment Reserve

- 6.4 The creation of a Leisure Investment Reserve was approved by the Governance and Audit Committee in July 2025. The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the criteria for how the reserve would be allocated with a clear focus being on cosmetic and decorative works where the £500,000 would be prioritised across the four locations: Grantham Meres Leisure Centre, Bourne Leisure Centre, Stamford Leisure Centre and Grantham Football Stadium. An improvement plan for each of the locations was developed focussing on those areas with a strong interface with customers and where there was clear evidence of investment required.

7. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Lee Steptoe

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Zoe Lane

During 2025/26 the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee met five times. Throughout the year, the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee maintained a strong focus on both strategic direction and operational delivery across the Council's housing responsibilities. The Committee considered a broad programme of reports covering housing supply, homelessness services, tenant satisfaction, performance and compliance, and key policy development. In doing so, Members provided challenge, oversight and support to ensure that services remained responsive to resident's needs, reflected legislation and regulatory changes, and contributed to the Council's wider priorities of delivering safe, sustainable and high-quality homes across the district.

New Build and Acquisitions

- 7.1 The Committee received regular updates on the Council's housing delivery programme, reflecting the importance of increasing housing supply across the district. Members monitored progress on a range of schemes including Swinegate, Larch Close, Wellington Way, Toller Court, Kesteven Road and Bourne Road, as well as the Council's use of acquisitions where these complemented development activity. The Committee noted key milestones during the year, including the handover of new apartments at Swinegate and continued work to progress pipeline schemes, demonstrating the Council's hybrid approach to meeting housing need.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

- 7.2 Homelessness and rough sleeping remained a recurring and high-priority area of scrutiny throughout the year. The Committee reviewed updates on the work of Change4Lincs, outreach provision, winter night shelter arrangements and wider partnership activity designed to prevent homelessness and support people into stable accommodation. Members also considered how grant funding was being used to meet local need and noted successful outcomes from the winter night shelter resettlement work. This ongoing oversight reflected the Committee's commitment to ensuring a proactive, compassionate and effective response to some of the most acute housing pressures faced by residents.

Housing Performance and Tenant Satisfaction

- 7.3 The Committee maintained regular oversight of housing performance data across technical services, housing management and compliance, enabling Members to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement. Reports during the year highlighted improvement in repair, void turnaround, damp and mould response times, stock condition coverage and compliance in key safety areas. Alongside this, the Committee also scrutinised the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey, including the Council's decision to undertake the survey in two waves to better assess the impact of service improvements. Together

these reports helped ensure that performance monitoring remained closely linked to tenant experience and service quality.

Strategic Policy Development

- 7.4 A significant part of the Committee's work involved considering and shaping key housing policies and strategies before they progressed to Cabinet. During the year, Members scrutinised the draft Housing Strategy, Tenancy Agreement, Tenancy Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, Voids Policy and updates to the Corporate Enforcement Policy, ensuring that these documents reflected current legislation, regulatory expectations and local priorities. The Committee's role in reviewing these proposals helped strengthen the policy framework supporting housing services and demonstrated its contribution not only to accountability, but also to informed and evidence-based decision-making. The committee has been fully updated by officers of the progression, implementation and likely consequences of the Renters' Rights Act, 2025.

8. Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Nikki Manterfield

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Rhea Rayside

The Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee met six times during 2025/26 and considered a broad and varied programme of work focused on community resilience, customer access, public wellbeing and support for local residents. The Committee scrutinised reports on customer services, welfare and financial assistance, health and wellbeing initiatives, community engagement, rural safety and support for the armed forces community. Members also received a number of presentations during the year, including on the Armed Forces Covenant, rural crime, environmental health and the *We are Undefeatable* campaign, which added context and insight to the Committee's wider scrutiny work. Through this work, Members provided constructive challenge and oversight to ensure that services remained accessible, responsive and aligned with the Council's wider priorities for supporting strong, safe and inclusive communities across South Kesteven.

Customer Services and Customer Experience

- 8.1 The Committee maintained regular oversight of customer access and service performance throughout the year, considering updates on customer contact volumes, call handling, appointments and the increasing use of digital channels. Members noted improvements in telephone response rates and examined how customer behaviour was changing across online forms, portals and face-to-face services. The Committee also scrutinised the Customer Experience Strategy 2025-2029 and its supporting action plan, helping to ensure that the Council's approach to customer contact remained modern, accessible and focused on meeting residents needs across a range of service areas.

Welfare and Financial Advice

- 8.2 Supporting residents through financial hardship remained a significant area of focus for the Committee. Members received a number of updates on the work of the Welfare and Finance Advice Team, including delivery of the Household Support Fund, voucher schemes, referral routes and wider wrap-around support for residents facing cost of living pressures. The Committee reviewed how funding had been distributed locally, the level of referrals received and the value of additional assistance provided, as well as preparations for the introduction of the Crisis and Resilience Fund. The Committee also received presentations. This scrutiny reflected the Committee's interest in ensuring that practical support reached residents effectively and responded to changing need.

Health and Wellbeing and Age Friendly Communities

- 8.3 The Committee continued to monitor the Council's contribution to improving health and wellbeing across the district, including progress against the South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. Members were updated on the Council's work to refresh actions and also noted the important milestone of South Kesteven being accepted into the UK Network and Age Friendly Communities. Alongside this, the Committee considered presentations and updates linked to community wellbeing campaigns and activity aimed at supporting people with long-term health conditions. Collectively, these items demonstrated the Committee's support for preventative, partnership-based work that helps residents live healthier and more connected lives.

Community Safety and Armed Forces Support

- 8.4 The Committee also considered a range of issues relating to safety, resilience and support for specific communities. This included presentations on the Rural Crime Action Team, the Corporate Enforcement Policy and the Council's ongoing work under the Armed Forces Covenant. Members reviewed how partnership working, enforcement activity and advocacy were being used to support rural communities tackle local issues and meet statutory responsibilities on the armed forces community. This area of work highlighted the Committee's role in overseeing services that contribute to confidence, fairness and community wellbeing across the district.

9. Joint Scrutiny Committees

There were two Joint Scrutiny Committees held during the year:

- **Joint meeting of the Environment and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (10 December 2025)** This meeting looked at a review of the Street Trading Policy and also included on the agenda were Planning issues covering the Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (2024-25) and Section 106 updates, Planning Enforcement update, the annual publication of the Authority's Monitoring Report and an update on Planning Performance in respect of Major Planning Appeals.

- **Joint meeting of the Environment and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (24 February 2026)** This meeting considered the Small unmanned aircraft (Drone) Policy which had been referred to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee from the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Body Worn Video Policy both of which were recommended to Cabinet for adoption. Also considered again by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee was the Street Trading Policy which had been discussed at a workshop for Members at which robust discussion and debate had taken place. The mandatory introduction of CCTV in Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles was debated but the Joint Committee were minded not to recommend the introduction due to the current national loopholes with regard to the licensing of hackney carriages and the local impact this would have.

10. Call-in

During the 2025/26 period no issues were called in.