



your council working for you



Annual Report 2010/11



Introduction

Welcome to our Annual Report 2010/2011

The last year has been a testing time for everyone. Our residents and businesses have felt the pinch of the global recession and we have faced the challenge of providing our services with less money.

Despite a large cut in grant from central government we have been working hard behind the scenes to minimise the impact on local people through a carefully managed programme of spending reduction.

We have made substantial changes to the way we operate, streamlining management and "back office" costs, as well as delivering services differently. This has included joining up with other councils to share management expertise.

This annual report gives us the chance to share with you our progress over the last 12 months and report back on some of the milestones we have achieved. It also contains our plans for 2011/12 and some of the challenges we'll face with our partners in the year ahead.

We have stood by our commitment to bring value for money, quality public services, and to prioritise the things that residents value most.

Last summer we consulted residents about where they would be prepared to see service changes or increased charges in the future through a series of workshops and face to face interviews and they told us quite clearly what was most important to them. We have taken this feedback onboard when formulating our plans.

The "Cleaner, Greener, Safer" campaign came out a clear priority. Our residents told us they would support a reduction in green waste collections in winter which allowed us to divert resources to highway verge clearance and increased town centre street cleaning and litter picking.

The regeneration of our towns continues to be an important focus for us. Over £2.3 million has been allocated to the redevelopment of a key area of Bourne and a further £4 million to Grantham Growth projects.

We have also been working with partners to find new land and premises to meet current and new business needs and have invested money in a new shop front scheme which helps businesses give their shops a make-over.

Young apprentices in construction, plumbing, engineering and hairdressing were given the tools of their trade for the second year running and over 70 local businesses signed up for SKDC's business event of the year B2B.

Looking forward we will be concentrating on providing our residents with the things that matter most from emptying dustbins to cutting grass, providing healthy activities to well maintained parks and open spaces, and regenerating our towns so they remain places which people want to live in and visit.

We hope that you find this document useful and interesting and if you have any ideas of how we can improve your council and the services we provide, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Beverly Agass
Chief Executive

Linda Neal
Council Leader

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Facts and figures about South Kesteven

- The district covers 943 square kilometres making it the 31st largest in England
- Two thirds of its 131,200 population live in one of the four market towns and the remaining one third live in one of over 80 villages in the area
- The population is projected to increase to 151,000 by 2021
- The second most common language spoken in South Kesteven is Polish, and this reflects the largest proportion of the ethnic minority community
- Grantham is the largest town with about 16,000 dwellings followed by Stamford with about 9,000
- Schools are a big draw with 84.1% of pupils achieving 5+ GCSE's A*-C. This is higher than the England average of 75.3%
- It has close-knit communities and is set in impressive scenery
- The district is made up of historic houses and castles, riverside walks, and a strong agricultural presence

Did you know that South Kesteven.....

- Is one of the fastest growing districts in the UK
- Has been awarded Growth Point status to turn Grantham into a bigger, better and balanced town
- Has one of the lowest council tax rates in England
- Is a district where 83% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- Is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
- Has the latest business and innovation centre which houses 36 managed workshop units
- In Stamford has what has been described as "the most beautiful" and "the finest" stone town in England
- Is home to over 8,000 businesses

Making a difference..... our highlights!



South Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) took delivery of three new cars for use by its partner organisations, including officers from SKDC. They will be used across the area to promote projects aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour as they are equipped with magnetic removable signage.



Many residents and visitors enjoyed our "Cleaner, Greener, Safer" community events across the district finding out how they could do their bit for the environment.



SKDC's education team leader Gwen Came went back to the classroom to help pupils in Stamford work on their recycling posters.

More highlights



More than 20 local entrepreneurs starting out in business have now received a helping hand through SKDC's laptop recycling scheme.



Students turned litter pickers during Recycling Week when they teamed up with estates supervisor Sandra Mullin to pick up rubbish. They also visited our recycling depot.



More than 400 visitors turned out for our annual B2B event in Grantham for a day of speed networking, business advice, presentations and seminars.



Climate change co-ordinator Michael Rickard handed out over 30 magnifying glasses to a classroom of kids to help them get up close with creatures great and small in the school pond.



The first tenants moved into our brand new £4.3 million Eventus innovation centre in Market Deeping and the verdict was: "It's great for our businesses!"



Teenagers from across the SK district put councillors on the spot during a Local Democracy Week "Question Time" style event in the main council chamber.



Cabinet member Mike Taylor receives a framed £1 coin from Stamford Mayor David Brailsford to mark the transfer of Stamford Recreation Ground from SKDC to Stamford Town Council.

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ing our
customers at the
heart of what
we do allows us to
focus of what
really matters to
local people and
businesses to
make sure we
provide the things
that are important
to them.

Making a difference... our performance

We are here to help you in a number of different ways. From emptying your wheelie bins to regenerating your town and village centres. Our focus is to understand what you, our residents value.

That's why we think it is important that we tell you what we have been doing over the last year and how we have performed under our priority themes: Customer First, Quality Living, Good for Business and Quality Organisation.

For each, we have gathered some of our key successes, and also included areas where we can do better.

Customer First

Engaging with You

We have changed the way we consult with residents by getting out and about in the district and talking to people at our Cleaner, Greener, Safer events. Traditional questionnaires also helped us gather views on development ideas, community safety issues and travel patterns.

Getting it right

We surveyed our customers and 85% of them told us we had dealt with their enquiry and got it right first time! On top of that 93% of them were happy with the advice and information provided by our staff. We also showed a 1% improvement on the number of telephone calls we answered. This increased from 95% to 96%.

Working quicker

We have also been working hard over the last couple of years to reduce the time it takes us to process new housing/council tax benefit claims and notification of change of circumstances. These have further reduced from 9.5 days to 7.14 days.

Website a hit

Our website www.southkesteven.gov.uk is a key channel of communication for us which is why we have spent time and energy improving the way it looks and its contents. Our customers certainly think we are going in the right direction because satisfaction with the website has risen from 71% to 75%. We now have 1,000 visits daily.

Continuing to focus on...

Even though we have just fallen short of our target we have seen a significant improvement in the amount of calls answered by SKDC staff within 28 seconds. This has improved from 75% to 84% thanks to targeted training which has meant that calls are answered quicker.



Quality Living

Waste for recycling

The amount of waste recycled, reused and composted by residents in SK continued to grow (from 50.6% to 51.5%) despite the recession and a concerted effort by manufacturers to reduce packaging. We promoted the importance of recycling through school activities and community events. We also encouraged people to throw less food away through our "Love food hate waste" campaign.

More affordable homes

For the third year in a row we have exceeded our target with 190 affordable new homes built across the district (target 150). Over 540 additional homes were also provided in the district despite current economic conditions.

Safer streets

Joint working between our anti-social behaviour and licensing teams and the police has seen a significant drop in the assault with injury crime rate (5.26 to 3.88 per 1,000 population). Police patrols assisted by SKDC officers, night time wardens, street pastors and door staff all played their part in the fight against crime.

Cleaner streets

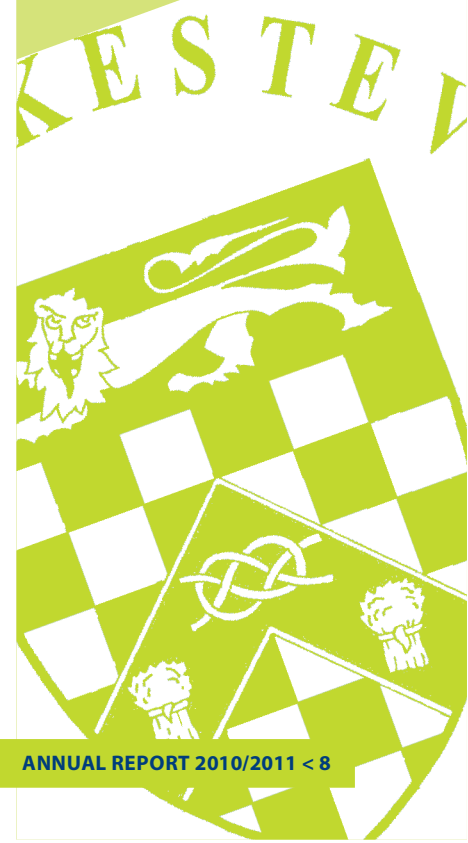
Extra street cleaning in our towns has proved a hit with residents and visitors alike – and helped us exceed our 2010/11 target into the bargain.

Continuing to focus on...

We have greatly improved the number of council homes which now reach Decent Homes Standards. The percentage of homes now meeting the standard has increased from 67.1% to 90.3%.



Creating an attractive and sustainable environment for our communities to enjoy, with a street scene that is green, clean, safe and well looked after.



Working with partners to create an environment where businesses can develop, grow and thrive.



Good for Business

Opening is a big Event-us in Market Deeping

The first tenants moved into Eventus – a new £4.3million business and innovation centre in Market Deeping – and the verdict was: “It’s great for our businesses!” SKDC contributed £300,000 towards the scheme which will benefit businesses for many years to come.

Development money for Bourne

Councillors earmarked £2.3 million towards the development of a key town centre location in Bourne. The decision was made after residents and businesses gave their thumbs up to a smaller revised project which will see the area around Wherry’s Lane transformed.

New look for shop fronts

Businesses in and around Market Place and Narrow Westgate in Grantham have been offered the chance to spruce up their shop fronts thanks to a pilot scheme which aims to boost the local economy whilst enhancing and retaining the character of the town. The scheme will be rolled out to other towns in the district over the next three years.

Reduced car parking charges

We listened to our local traders and reduced short stay car parking charges back to 2008 levels to help boost the economy in our district. Councillors agreed to amend the charges to encourage more people to visit and stay longer in our towns.

Grantham Festival

A new festival was staged in the town centre around the theme “Grantham Firsts” to coincide with the popular Belton Horse Trials. Visitors and residents alike enjoyed a host of family based activities and local shops were able to showcase their businesses.

Continuing to focus on....

We are investing £4 million across our district to secure new land and premises to meet business demands and will continue to work with companies who wish to invest and bring with them better paid jobs.



An artists impression of Wherry’s Mill, Bourne

Quality Organisation

Collection rates on the up

Despite the tough economic climate we have managed to collect 98.26% of council tax – the second best collection figure ever achieved by SKDC. This success was mirrored in both rent and non domestic rate collections.

Talking to residents

We have actively engaged with local people to find out what's important to them and their views have helped shape difficult budget decisions. Feedback is also influencing a review of our Local Forums and is paving the way for better parish council communication.

Saving energy

Great strides have been made in reducing our carbon footprint. Over the last three years we have reduced the amount of energy we use as a council by 13.4% – that means heating, lighting and appliance use in our buildings as well as the fuel used to run our vehicles. We have also reduced the amount of paper we use by 10.3%.

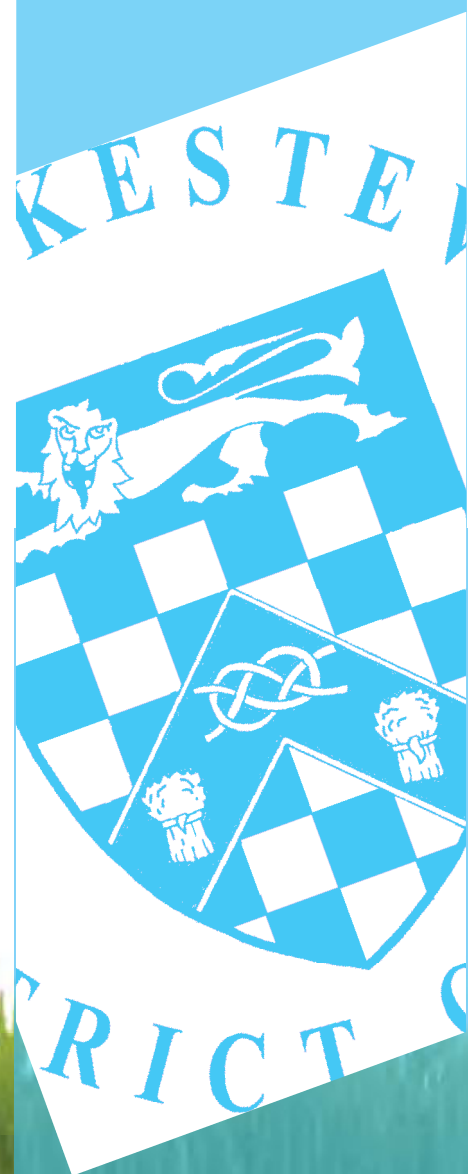
Service with a smile

Making sure our customers receive the right service is vital. Our "All About People" training ensures our staff are able to deal with queries quickly and efficiently to improve the services we provide.

Continuing to focus on...

We will continue to challenge the way we work to achieve value for money across all our services. We will do this by prioritising our resources within tighter budgets and by improving efficiency and productivity.

We deliver quality services and we are an employer of choice



Balancing the Books

This section of the annual report will tell you how we make the most of the money we have, how we balance the books, and tell you about the long term projects we have invested in, all of which are crucially important in these challenging economic times.

Would you like to know how much it cost to provide council services in 2010/11, how much income we received and where we got it from? What about finding out about how much the council is worth, what our reserves are or more about our major investment projects?

If the answer is yes, read on.....

Our summary income and expenditure account for the 2010/11 financial year.

Service area	Net Expenditure £000
Central services to the public – includes collecting council tax and business rates, council tax benefits, elections and land charges	1,081
Cultural, Environmental, Regulatory and Planning services – includes arts and leisure facilities, parks and open spaces, tourism, cemeteries, environmental health, community safety, street cleaning, waste collection and recycling, building and development control, planning policy, economic and community development	12,659
Highways, roads and transport services – includes car parking, bus stations and supported travel	(127)
Housing Services – includes managing council housing, housing benefit, housing policy and homelessness	4,489
Corporate and democratic core – includes corporate management and democratic services	1,809
Non-distributed costs – costs that do not directly relate to the above headings	98
Net Cost of Services	20,009
Net corporate costs – includes interest paid minus interest received, profit from trading activities, capital and pension account adjustments and investment income	3,105
Net Operating Spending	23,114
Amount to be met from government grants and local tax	
General government grants – money provided by central government to help pay for some of the services we provide	(2,057)
Council tax income – our share of council tax collected	(7,577)
Non-domestic rate income – money from the national non domestic rate pool based on a fixed amount per person	(8,860)
Total Income	(18,494)
Net deficit for 2010/11 – the income and expenditure account includes a number of items that result in a deficit. This does not affect council tax or balances.	4,620

The table above is a summary of our income and expenditure account, excluding accounting adjustments. If you would like to see a full version of the council's accounts (which have been audited and approved by the audit commission for the 2010/11 financial year) or would like to know more about the council's finances, please contact the accountancy section on 01476 406208 or email accountancy@southkesteven.gov.uk

The balance sheet for the 2010/2011 financial year

At the end of every financial year, we draw up a balance sheet. This shows you how much our land and buildings are worth, the value of our investments, what we owe to others and what others owe to us, what cash we have and our reserves. It also shows how these are financed.

Balance as at 31st March 2011	£000
Value of land and buildings	232,445
Investments	30,323
Cash and money in our bank accounts	491
Stocks and work in progress	71
Money owed to us	5367
Money we owe	(32,394)
Total assets less liabilities	236,303

Financed by:	
Financial balances for capital spending	(222,370)
Revaluation reserve	(3,060)
Pensions reserve* (our share of the Lincolnshire County Council Pension Fund)	22,549
Reserves available to cover future spending for specific purposes	(22,851)
Working balances	(10,571)
Total	(236,303)

* This includes our pension liability of £23 million as at 31st March 2011, valued in line with general accountancy practice.

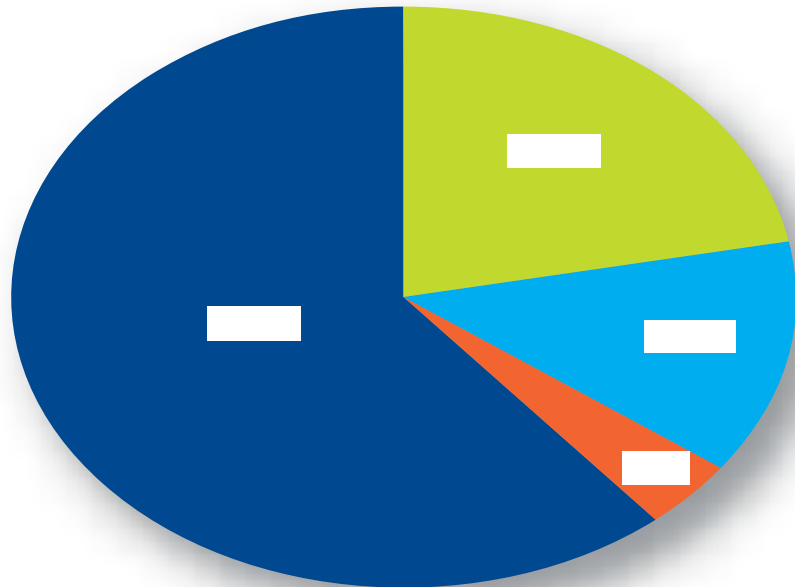
Spending on major investment projects during the 2010/11 financial year

As well as spending money providing services day to day we also spend money on major investment projects. This type of expenditure is called capital spending as it tends to relate to the acquisition, creation or enhancement of assets that we have. In 2010/11 we spent just over £6.1 million, as shown below.

- £335,000 on various energy saving initiatives including ground source heat pumps and voltage optimisers for council offices, arts and leisure centres.
- £416,000 on Bourne Core Area (purchasing property to facilitate the first stage of the re-development of the Wherry's Lane area in Bourne town centre).
- £4,685,000 on improvements to our council housing stock –including new kitchens and bathrooms, rewiring and disabled adaptations.
- £707,000 on home improvement grants.

These projects were funded from a mixture of government grants, capital receipts, a major repairs reserve and a capital reserve, as shown in the pie chart below.

How capital projects were funded



- government grants
- capital receipts
- major repairs reserve
- capital reserve

Key measures of our financial performance

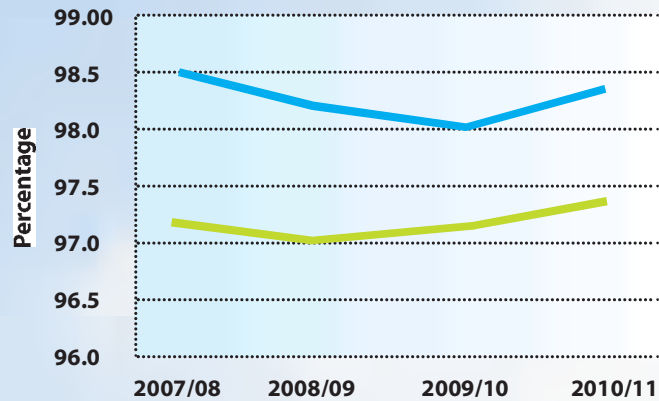
Collection of Council Tax



We collected over £ 57.4 million of council tax in 2010/11 (98.3% of council tax due).

This is important, and not just for us because we don't just collect council tax for our own organisation, we collect it for Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Police and parish and town councils in the district as well.

Our performance over the last few years, together with national averages is shown in the graph below.

A graph showing the % of council tax collected



-  % of council tax we collected
-  % of council tax collected nationally



Our vision for South Kesteven 2021

**Vibrant communities where people
want to live, work and invest**
(Healthier, wealthier, happier, safer people)

To achieve this vision we will ensure that:

- Our four towns are focal points for local communities
- Our town centres are attractive and welcoming places to visit
- Our shops offer something for everyone
- Improved transport links mean better access
- Our district is the place where companies want to do business
- High speed broadband is available to all
- Everyone works together for the benefit of local people
- Good quality housing helps the population grow
- Our residents enjoy healthy and more active lifestyles
- We provide affordable and energy efficient homes



Looking to the future

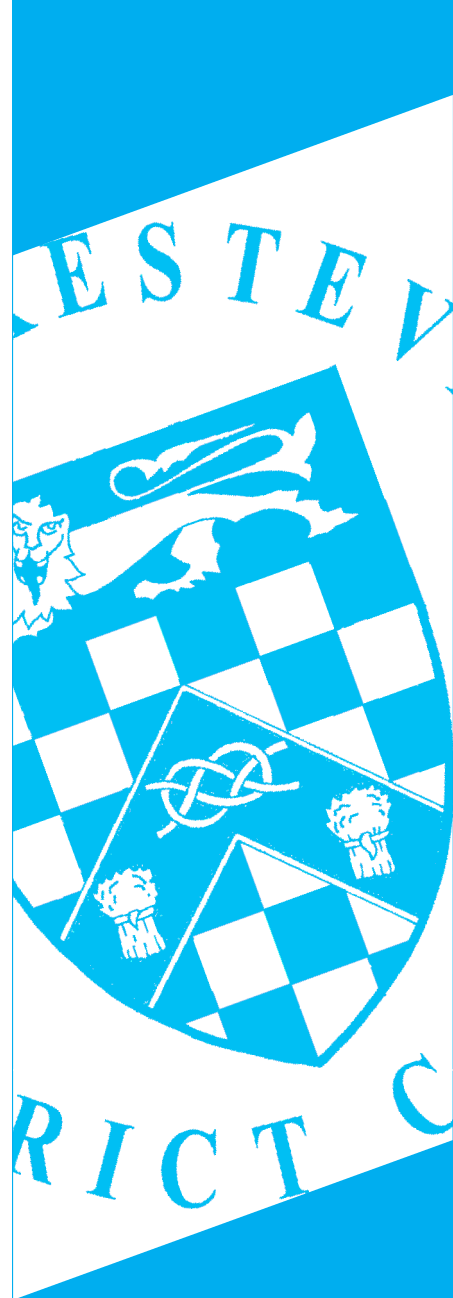
We are living in challenging times. Like many of our residents, the council's income has reduced and we are having to react to a greater demand for our services by providing more with less money.

To help us respond to the needs of our community we have been working hard behind the scenes on a new priorities and actions that we want to achieve over the next four years and beyond based on a realistic balance of what we would like to do and what we can afford to do.

With members we have looked a whole host of information to give us a full picture of the people who live in our district and we have also been out in our towns talking to residents about what matters most to them.

Top of the things they would like to see us focus on is creating jobs for local people closely followed by improving shopping facilities in our town centres. These have changed since 2009 when level of crime and health services were considered more important.

Looking forward our vision will guide and develop our services. We have refreshed and refined our priorities (as shown in the diagram below) to ensure that we create the right environment for the people of South Kesteven.



Creating the environment to....

Grow the economy

The economic prosperity of the district are driven by national factors, but there are key things that we can do to help.

- Support and facilitate business growth
- Enable the delivery of an attractive retail and leisure offer
- Be a council that is easy to do business with and look to say 'yes' whenever we can
- Promote infrastructure to support growth
- Encourage the provision of higher paid jobs
- Be somewhere that businesses want to invest

Keep SK clean, green and healthy

We know the services the public value most – refuse collection, street cleaning, recycling, green spaces – so we will continue to invest in them to make sure they are both high quality and low cost

- Provide and develop our parks and open spaces
- Maintain a clean and attractive street scene
- Sustain high levels of recycling
- Reduce our carbon footprint whenever and wherever we can
- Encourage active and healthy lifestyle

Promote leisure, arts and culture

People are living longer than ever before so we need to provide services which help people stay fit and healthy

- Support and develop a diverse economy – daytime and evening
- Enable access to a balanced culture and arts programme
- Promote our heritage and tourism offer
- Maintain wide ranging leisure opportunities

Support good housing for all

Demand for housing in South Kesteven continues to grow. We must move with the times and ensure that future development benefits local communities and improves the quality of the environment

- Ensure the mixture of housing on offer represents local needs
- Maximise the development of lifetime homes
- Support the creation of neighbourhoods and cohesive communities
- Work to reduce fuel poverty

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