



your council working for you



corporate plan 2011-2015

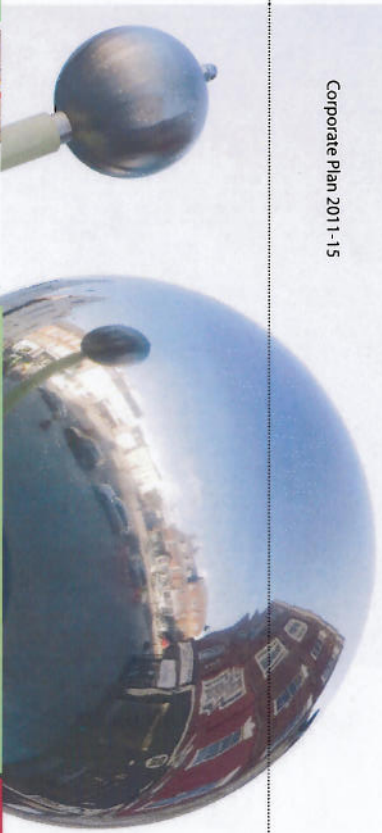
Well run council

South Kesteven District Council
STAMFORD • GRANTHAM • BOURNE • THE DEEPINGS



Foreword

Creating the right environment to.....
 Make South Kesteven a destination of choice



Foreword from Leader and Chief Executive	Page 02
Run our business	Page 04
Move forward	Page 06
Build a successful track record	Page 08
Focus on what is important to local people	Page 10
Our Vision	Page 12
Address some of our Key challenges	Page 13
Achieve our goals and ambitions	Page 14
How you can get involved	Page 15
Our spending plans for the next four years	Page 16
Our priority projects	Page 18

“Despite the tough economic climate we have an opportunity to make South Kesteven a better place. We have ambitious plans for the future and we want to work with local people to deliver our vision for the district.”

We are here to provide the services our residents need and want and to plan for the future. It's our role to help protect and enhance the special qualities of South Kesteven that make it one of the best places to live, work and do business.

We will look to continue to deliver value for money during these challenging times by talking to you on a regular basis to find out what matters most.

Over the last couple of years we have worked hard to make efficiency savings across the council without any major reduction to frontline services. We have challenged the way we work, reduced overhead costs, and adapted to the current climate by doing more with less.

02 Well run council

We are an ambitious council with a vision to make South Kesteven a destination of choice where everyone has a good quality of life. We have great schools, excellent transport links, stunning stately homes which have featured in period dramas, a green rural environment, and a wealth of history and heritage.

Despite the tough economic climate we have invested in a multi-million pound business incubation centre in Market Deeping and 8 local businesses have been offered financial help to improve their shop fronts – with more planned as the project progresses.

We also awarded the design and build contract for a major new development in Bourne town centre and provided 170 extra car parking spaces in Grantham.

To help us achieve your ambitions we have refocused our priorities based on the needs of our district. Our priorities for the next four years are to Grow the Economy, to Keep SK Clean, Green & Healthy, to Promote Leisure, Arts and Culture and to Support Good Housing for All.

The Corporate Plan sets out our strategic direction over the coming years. Please read it and let us know what you think about our plans for the future. Your views are very welcome.

Linda Neal - Leader SKDC
Beverly Agass - Chief Executive

Creating the right environment to.....

Run our business


We provide over 100 services to our customers in South Kesteven. To do this our staff work alongside 58 democratically-elected councillors.

Across the council we are responsible for the implementation of a huge amount of national legislation and regulation and the development of statutory plans in areas like planning. Our customers contact us for a wide variety of reasons from claiming council tax benefit, to submitting a planning application, to reporting an abandoned vehicle, or to set up their business locally.


- Some people choose our service because we provide value for money, such as using a sports centre or booking an arts venue
- Others contact us to find out information about complying with hygiene regulations at food premises, or it may be a homeowner seeking advice on building regulations
- Some people benefit from our services during testing times in their life, like when they need advice with benefits or help in staying in their own home
- Our customers also receive district-wide services like refuse collection and street cleaning

We are a big and diverse business

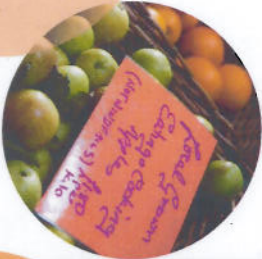
Here's just a flavour of the things we do.....




We monitor hygiene standards in more than 1,300 pubs, cafes, bars, restaurants, shops and food producers



We maintain nearly 200 acres of parks and open spaces and we also check air quality




We licence every SKDC taxi driver to keep you safe on the road



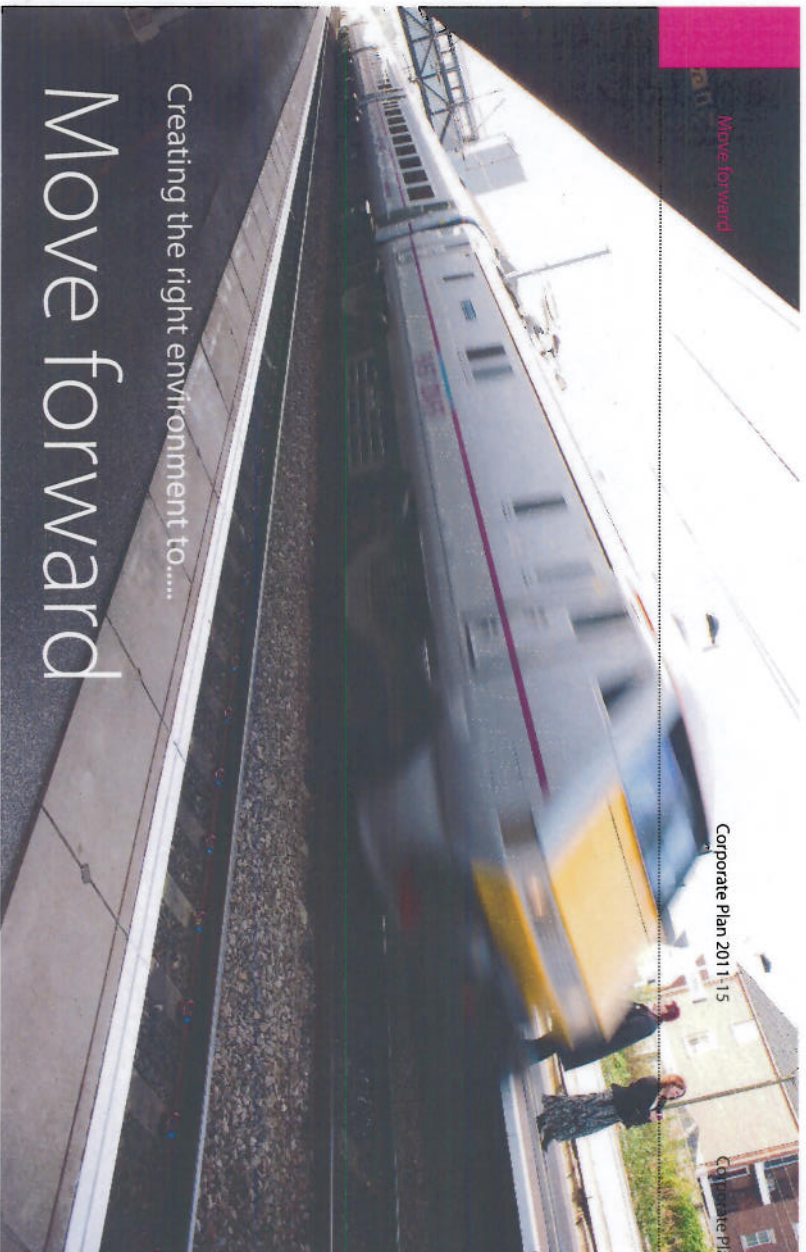
We make sure you can vote in general and local elections



Our CCTV cameras help to keep our streets safe



We clean approximately 65,000 miles of footpaths and roads each year



Creating the right environment to.....

Move forward

South Kesteven is a beautiful place to live. It's the gateway to one of England's largest and most enthralling counties and home to four unique market towns and over 80 villages.

Most of our residents live in Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings with the remainder spread across the district's 365 square miles.

Many people are attracted to the area because of its excellent location (just one hour by train to London), its high-achieving schools, and wide variety of relatively inexpensive housing. We have around 60,000 homes in the district. Grantham is the largest of our towns with over 16,000 properties, followed by Stamford (over 9,000), Bourne (over 5,500) leaving the remainder spread out across South Kesteven.

The make-up of our communities is constantly evolving. Our population has grown steadily over the years and now stands at about 131,200. By 2021, it is expected to increase to 151,000.

Education is a big plus for our district with over 84% of our children achieving at least five GCSEs A* C which is almost 10%

above the national average. Our working population is also well qualified. Just under 70% have passed NVQ2 or above.

These statistics have a positive impact on our unemployment rate which stands at 2.6% compared with the East Midlands average of 3.6% and 3.3% in Lincolnshire. We also have the largest decrease in job seekers allowance claimants, although youth unemployment is high and we have low paid low skilled jobs.

We also have over 8,000 businesses trading in our district and we are actively supporting new growth through initiatives like Enterprise Week and our shop front improvement scheme. However we do have varying levels of deprivation in the district. There are high levels of housing benefit and working age benefit take up in the Grantham wards of Harrowby, Earlsfield and St Annes. But Stamford St Johns, Barrowby and Thurlby rank much lower, nationally as well as locally.

South Kesteven is a safe place to live. Compared to other towns we have a relatively low crime rate which has dropped year on year since 2003.

And it is also a healthy place to be. Life expectancy for both males and females is higher than the England average. The overall health score indicator for South Kesteven is 100.53 compared to the UK score of 100. In a national setting, our residents are therefore healthier, although this varies across the district.

The number of people in our district aged over 65 currently stands at 19,22% which is set to increase to about 28% by 2030, with the number living alone doubling to 12,000 individuals. This shows the need to prepare for an aging population with changing needs.

The size and rural nature of our district brings its own challenges. Our communities vary from small rural settlements to large towns so it is vital that we react to the needs of all our residents, wherever they live, when delivering services.

Transport links to our towns and main villages are excellent but in our many villages and hamlets local people remain heavily reliant on cars.

Broadband access, particularly in rural areas, remains patchy but we are working to secure better coverage and connectivity speeds across the district. Not only will this mean better access to services for residents but make South Kesteven a better place for companies to relocate and to do business.

We have around 60,000 homes in the district. Grantham is the largest of our towns with over 16,000 properties, followed by Stamford (over 9,000)

Creating the right environment to.....

Build a successful track record

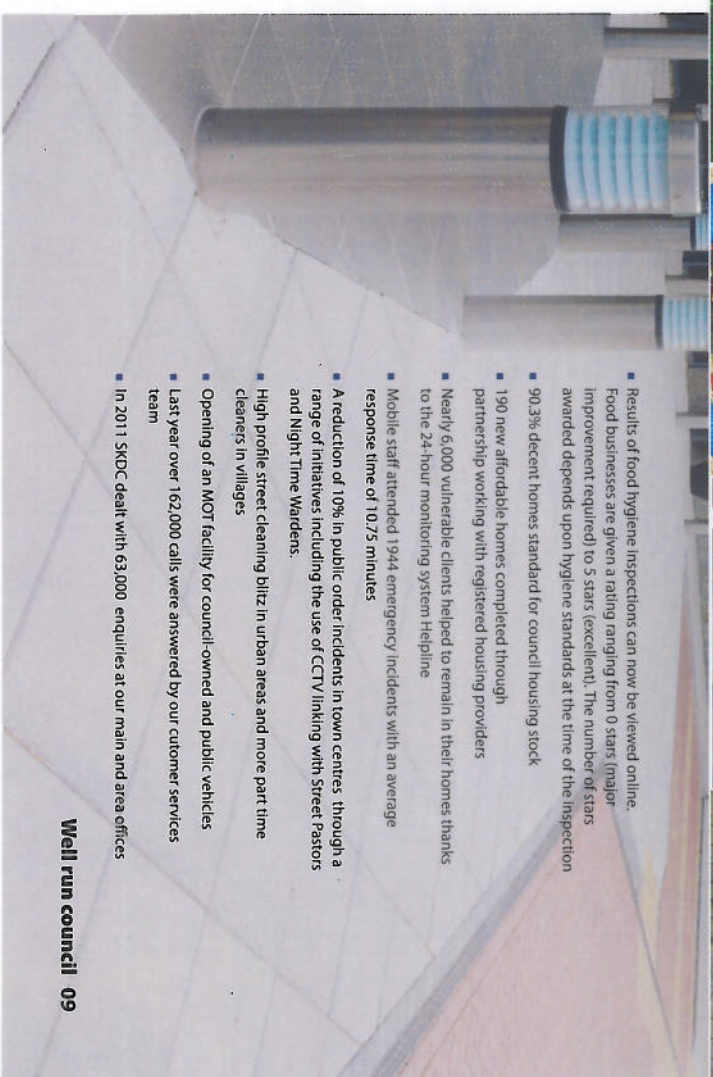


Over recent years we have achieved some real successes. As well as being recognised as a well run council the Audit Commission considers that we are achieving value for money across most of our services.

Here is a snapshot of some of our achievements:

- Opening of a multi-million pound business incubation centre in Market Deeping
- 8 local businesses have been offered financial help to improve their shop fronts
- The award of a design and build contract for a major new development in Bourne town centre
- 90% of local suppliers are paid within 10 days of invoice
- 99% of all invoices are processed and paid within 30 days
- The provision of 170 extra car parking spaces for Grantham town centre
- £5 million capital programme investment in council homes
- 23 empty private sector houses brought back into occupation
- 112 customers received grants from our disabled facilities budget
- New benefit claims are now being processed and paid in 20 days
- Change of circumstances for benefit claims now processed within four days
- Over 1,100 households received advice and assistance on housing issues and 317 were prevented from becoming homeless
- Delivery of a community trust to provide quality leisure services leading to significant management fee reductions
- Delivery of a wide range of community/leisure activities including GP referrals and healthy walks
- Provision of larger scale shows including Jimmy Carr, Magic of Motown and The Hollies
- Promotion of the Guildhall Arts Centre as a wedding venue and providing a historical location for events
- Record use of Stamford's 5K-run cinema
- Facilitation of Arnoldfield Adventure Play Park in Grantham

08 Well run council



- Results of food hygiene inspections can now be viewed online. Food businesses are given a rating ranging from 0 stars (major improvement required) to 5 stars (excellent). The number of stars awarded depends upon hygiene standards at the time of the inspection
- 90.3% decent homes standard for council housing stock
- 190 new affordable homes completed through partnership working with registered housing providers
- Nearly 6,000 vulnerable clients helped to remain in their homes thanks to the 24-hour monitoring system Helpline
- Mobile staff attended 1944 emergency incidents with an average response time of 1075 minutes
- A reduction of 10% in public order incidents in town centres through a range of initiatives including the use of CCTV linking with Street Pastors and Night Time Wardens.
- High profile street cleaning blitz in urban areas and more part time cleaners in villages
- Opening of an MOT facility for council-owned and public vehicles
- Last year over 162,000 calls were answered by our customer services team
- In 2011 SKDC dealt with 63,000 enquiries at our main and area offices

Well run council 09

Creating the right environment to....

Focus on what is important to local people

We are on a journey and have a clear vision of where we want to be by 2021.

After listening to feedback and understanding some facts and figures about our district it is our aim to create an environment where vibrant communities want to live, work, visit and invest.

We want to build on all that is good about our district to make it a place where people choose to settle, where they want their children to be educated, where young people return to after

university, and where businesses stay and relocate to.

To help us achieve this we have talked to our residents and they have told us what they want us to focus on. This has helped us to take a fresh look at our priorities and concentrate on the things that matter most to local people.

Our priorities will help us get to where we want to be. They are:

Creating the environment to....

Grow the economy

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

We will:

- 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

We will:

- 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 lifestyles
- Provide and develop our parks and open spaces



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 as well as offering them a wide choice of things to do in their spare time

- To do this we will:
 - Support and develop a diverse economy – daytime and evening and arts programme
 - Promote our heritage and tourism offer
 - Maintain wide ranging leisure opportunities



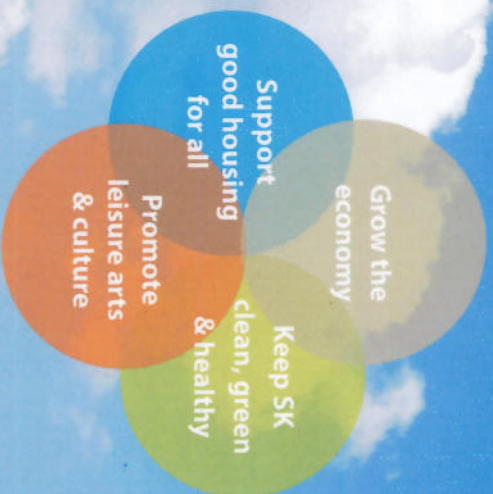
Support good housing for all

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.

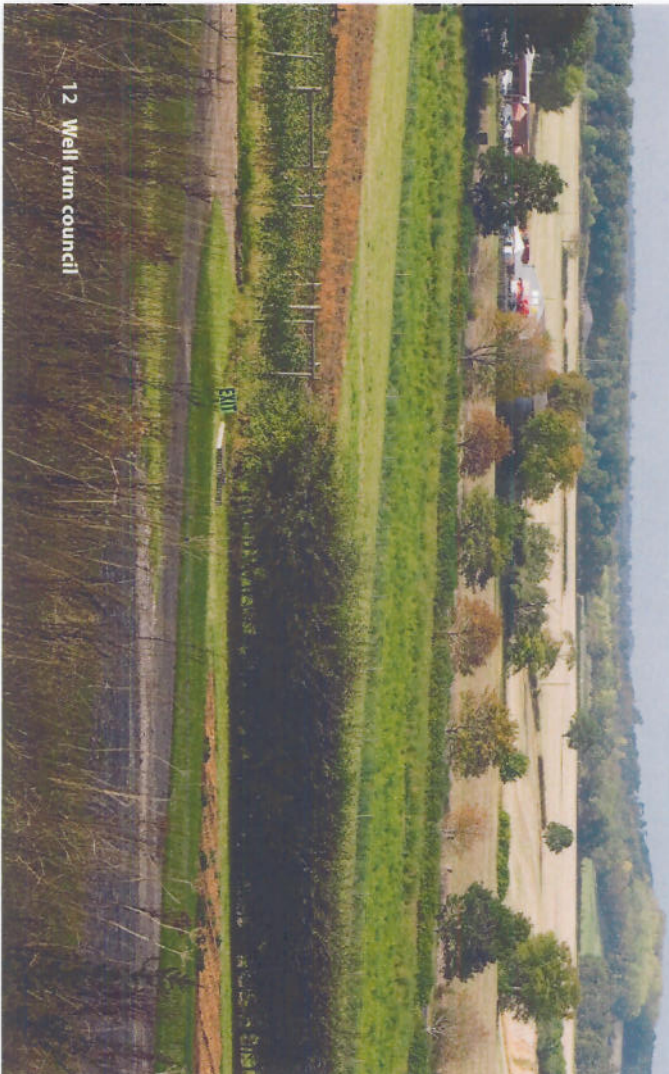
- To do this, we will:
 - Ensure the mixture of housing on offer represents local needs
 - Maximise the development of lifetime homes
 - Support the creation of neighbourhoods and cohesive communities
 - Work to reduce fuel poverty



It is important not to view these four key strands in isolation as they are all interlinked and underpin each other. One size does not fit all and we will adapt our strategies to accommodate different community needs.



Our vision for
South Kesteven
Creating vibrant
communities
where people want to
live, work and invest
(Healthier, wealthier, happier, safer people)



Creating the right environment to.....

Address some of our key challenges

We all know the world has changed dramatically over the last few years and we need to anticipate what that means for us as a council and our residents.

We have gathered a huge amount of information in our State of the District document which looks at the position of South Kesteven in 2011 and the characteristics of the people who live and work in the area.

We have listened to informed experts who have helped us to better understand national and local challenges.

This has proved vital in our work with members to help us understand issues which need to be addressed to help us achieve the priorities of the council.

This work has highlighted some key challenges that our district must face now and in the future.

- South Kesteven is generally a safe, clean and healthy place but analysis highlights the principal challenges facing the council - there are more people, who are getting older, and despite being healthier and better educated than the national average, they earn less
- We are set to be one of the fastest growing districts in the country (by a further 1.5% in the next 10 years) so we need to plan for new homes, employment and infrastructure
- Despite a lower than average unemployment rate we have a high number of young people out of work
- Jobs tend to be low skilled and as a result some people live in the area but travel out of the district to work. Our challenge is to attract higher value, higher wage sectors into the district
- South Kesteven is in a great location for business but we have a shortage of employment land across the district
- Health of our residents is improving but we do have inequalities. People in some wards are likely to live seven years longer than those living in other areas
- With 3,500 on the housing register, meeting the demand for affordable housing is a challenge as well as ensuring we have the right accommodation for a population that is living longer
- The rising cost of fuel for homes and cars is leading to more households falling into fuel poverty. The priority will be to promote low cost solutions which combine low carbon approaches with a reduction in cost for residents and businesses
- Our retail m/k needs improving in some of our towns
- Broadband access remains one of the poorest connections in the country with some rural areas still having no access at all

Creating the right environment to....

Achieve our goals and ambitions

Delivering our priorities

Through our four key priorities - Grow the economy, Keep SK clean, green and healthy, Promote leisure, arts and culture, Support good housing for all - we intend to deliver growth, raise aspirations and provide value for money services for our communities.

We are totally committed to our growth agenda which is why we have evolved and developed the emphasis of our existing priority Good for Business to Grow the Economy as we recognise the need to focus more strongly on this to achieve our vision. We want South Kesteven to be a place where people thrive and prosper, where people have high expectations, and where everyone can contribute to and share in the district's growth. At the same time we do realise that we are working in difficult economic times and need to be innovative and resourceful and provide value for money services.

What we want to deliver by 2021

- Thriving and sustainable market towns offering a better quality of life
- Recognition as a growing vibrant environment which attracts visitors and businesses alike
- A growing, mixed local economy offering improved prosperity and lifestyle
- A healthy and safe environment with improved transport links
- People living healthier lifestyles
- Town centres offering something for everyone
- A thriving entrepreneurial culture with increased high value jobs
- Good quality housing for all
- To capture, encourage and retain local talent
- Connected communities who are able to work or live anywhere in the district

How you can get involved

We all need to feel that we live in a place where we belong. Getting involved is a great way to increase your sense of belonging and to contribute to your local community.

If we are to deliver services which are important to our residents, we need more of you to get involved to continue helping us shape our plans. There are several ways you can do this, whether you have lots or only a little time to spare. Here are some of the ways you can become involved in the work of the council:

- By attending one of our community drop-in sessions or Cleaner, Greener, Safer community events; details are available on our website
- You can attend any of our public meetings, details of which are posted on our website
- You can join one of the groups that the council works with to improve local service, for example, the Wyndham Park user forum in Grantham
- If you use a particular service frequently, you can join one of our user consultation groups, such as the tenants' associations
- If you can think of any other ideas about how you would like to get involved, please e-mail us on pr@southkesteven.gov.uk or call 01476 406127
- By responding to consultation exercises, details of which are on the council's website
- You can either write to, or email, your local councillor on any local matter that concerns or interests you
- If you use a particular service frequently, you can join one of our user consultation groups, such as the tenants' associations

At SKDC we're committed to ensuring that we provide services in a way that is fair for all residents. As part of our ongoing commitment to equality and diversity we have undergone a peer assessment which found us working at achieving level on the equality framework for local government.

Our spending plans for the next 4 years

We have been recognised by the Audit Commission as being a council that provides value for money services. Acknowledged as being a well run, prudent and careful council, we will continue to maintain this approach, even in these economically challenging times.

This section will provide you with an overview and understanding of our financial position over the next 4 years and how we plan to deliver the savings, efficiencies and budget reductions that are necessary as a consequence of significant reductions in government grant funding.

We use the medium term financial plan to help us. This plan looks at the way in which we organise our finances so we are best placed to deliver our plans and priorities for the years 2011/12 through to 2014/15.

We are already experiencing a significant reduction in the amount of government grant funding we get, and expect this will continue through to 2014/15. This is shown in the graph below.



This equates to a reduction of around 23% in government funding over the next 4 years.

This, coupled with tight restrictions on council tax growth, decreasing streams of income from fees, charges and investments, and the costs of increasing salaries, utilities and fuel and pensions, have all been taken into account to help us balance our books.



"We have been recognised by the Audit Commission as being a council that provides value for money services. Acknowledged as being a well run, prudent and careful council"



We have to be careful. Alongside cutting costs where we can, we can use reserves to fund the capital programme and one-off priorities. These are savings that the council has made in previous years.

To make sure that we are prepared for the challenges that lie ahead we are:

- Looking at new ways of working including sharing office space and home working
- Reviewing our assets (land and buildings)
- Making sure our resources are targeted and help to deliver our priorities

- Identifying areas where additional income can be generated
- Exploring opportunities to provide support for other partners wherever possible

Despite these pressures the council remains in a robust position. Years of good financial management and tight control have left us with a sustainable budget and an adequate level of balances and reserves to support our new priorities.



Our Priority Projects

Keep SK clean, green and healthy

- Healthy Life styles – tackle health inequalities and childhood and adult obesity (Fit Kids, Exercise Referral, Food4Life)
- Youth Sports Engagement – to encourage participation in sport (Fair Play Football and summer activities)
- South Kesteven in Bloom – encourage residents to take part in floral competitions to develop community pride
- Green Flag Status for parks in South Kesteven – five-year improvement programme starting with Wyrndam Park in Grantham before being rolled out across the district



Grow the economy

- Promote Destination South Kesteven as THE place to do business.
- Improve Grantham town centre to attract investment.
- Develop an apprenticeship scheme to meet local demands
- Encourage higher paid jobs through business development
- Capture and retain local talent
- Progress major projects including the Southern Quadrant and Station Approach in Grantham and Wherry's Lane in Bourne
- Secure broadband coverage across the district, particularly in rural areas, to improve overall access and attract new business



Support good housing for all

- Work with developers to increase the number of Lifetime Homes – properties which can be adapted to fit residents at all stages of their lives
- Work with the community to create a safer, cleaner and greener South Kesteven by ensuring a visible presence on the streets to help combat antisocial behaviour, the fear of crime and crime itself
- Bring old homes back to life by investing in run-down (void) properties and using local skill in the form of apprentices, local colleges and businesses
- Work with landlords to improve the quality of private rented housing



Promote leisure, arts and culture

- Destination South Kesteven – raise the profile of the district to make it a place where people want to live, work and visit
- Develop a cultural programme of arts and leisure activities and events to attract a wider audience
- Promote the district's heritage and tourism
- Encourage a diverse daytime and evening economy





South Kesteven District Council
Council Offices
St. Peter's Hill
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 6PZ

t: 01476 40 60 80
e: pr@southkesteven.gov.uk
w: www.southkesteven.gov.uk

The Corporate Plan is also available in a larger print A4 format and Braille, on our website, on CD or in other languages. To request a copy in a different format ring 01476 406127.