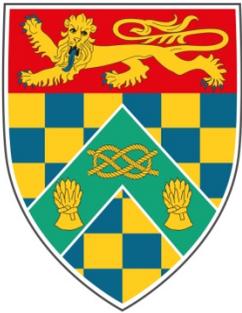


Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

2017/18



SOUTH KESTEVEN
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Contents	Page Number
Foreword	3
Political makeup of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee	4
Role of Scrutiny	5
Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	6 - 8
Culture and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee	9 - 11
Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 - 14
Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee	15 - 17
Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee	18 - 21
Combined Overview and Scrutiny Committees	21 - 22
Call-in	22

Foreword by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees

I am pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017/18. The report contains a look back at what the Overview and Scrutiny Committees have looked at during 2017/18.

This is the first Annual Report under the new Overview and Scrutiny Committee structure. The new structure put in place has five Overview and Scrutiny Committees each with a remit which enables them to work alongside Cabinet Members to assist with the development of policy and make recommendations to the Cabinet, and to scrutinise decisions that have been made.

Political make up of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is politically balanced, comprising 7 non-Cabinet members of the Council. Details of membership during 2017/18 are shown under each individual Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

During 2017/18, each Committee met a minimum of five times. Full details of the agendas and action notes from those meetings are available on the Council's website.

<http://moderngovsvr:8080/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a responsibility to monitor the Council's performance, consider its decisions, question how those decisions were made and recommend improvements.

Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee also undertakes external scrutiny to examine wider issues that affect the district. The Council is required to have a Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee; this function as outlined within the Constitution, allows each Overview and Scrutiny Committee to fill this role.

There have also been three joint or combined Overview and Scrutiny Committees which are also noted in this document.

Role of Scrutiny

Scrutiny work had four key functions which are:

- *To provide a “critical friend” challenge to the Cabinet as well as external authorities and agencies*
 - Challenge by scrutiny should be constructive, 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
- *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 taken into account
- *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
- *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-co-ordinated and integrated into corporate processes
 - Scrutiny work should be carried out with strategic objectives in mind
 - Scrutiny should contribute to improving local public services

Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/18 comprised the following Members:

Chairman: Councillor Ray Wootten

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew

Councillor Felicity Cunningham

Councillor Helen Powell

Councillor Breda Griffin

Councillor Mrs Judy Smith

Councillor Nikki Manterfield

The Corporate Plan's two main areas for focus during 2017/18 were "Open for Business" and "Commercially and Customer Focused". These areas were the focus in the forefront of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work programme. During 2017/18 the following issues were considered by the Committee.

Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy was one of the major pieces of work that the Committee worked on during 2017/18. Two housing summits and workshops were held together with round table discussions with sectors of the housing industry. Members from other Overview and Scrutiny Committees were invited to help inform the content of the Housing Strategy document. Four key themes (delivering new homes, ensuring quality housing, providing choice for older and disabled people and supporting housing need) were used as a basis for the consultation questionnaire, which 75% of respondents supported. These four areas became the following themes within the strategy:

Theme 1: Help to meet the housing needs of residents

Theme 2: Facilitate the delivery of new housing across a range of tenures

Theme 3: Enable those whose independence may be at risk to access housing (including their current home) that meets their needs.

Theme 4: Encourage, support and regulate the private sector to provide well managed, safe homes.

Progress would be monitored by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees together with the Cabinet Member for Communities which was critical to its success.

The Housing Strategy was adopted by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 April 2018.

Private Sector Housing Renewal – Independent Living

A new Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 October 2017. The Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had helped to inform the content of the policy following the increased funding made available through the Better Care Fund for Disabled Facilities Grants. The policy had been designed to help improve the speed of the application process and offered preventative solutions to help reduce reliance on health and social care.

Recommitment to the Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant

The Covenant was a voluntary statement of mutual support between civilian community and the local Armed Forces community. The first Covenant was launched in June 2012 and the Committee recommended that it was appropriate to refresh the commitment to the Covenant. A wide range of partners worked together to support the Covenant and had identified and developed measures to support the action plan.

Tenant Involvement Framework

The Committee was involved in shaping a new tenant involvement framework for establishing ongoing communications with tenants. The new proposed framework consisted of a three tier structure with emphasis on the use of low commitment involvement using surveys and neighbourhood based involvement to allow for a more targeted and focused approach.

The Cabinet approved the new Tenant Involvement Framework for adoption at the meeting in May 2018.

Community Cohesion

The Committee had discussed community cohesion at a number of its meetings during the year with a view to putting a strategy together. A workshop, to which all Members were invited, was held at the beginning of May to help inform a response to the Government's Green Paper on Integrated Communities following the independent review carried out by Dame Louise Casey. Paul Drury, Prevent Officer from Lincolnshire County Council had also attended meetings of the Committee to speak about community cohesion and the collaborative opportunities available including community training and funding options.

Community Fund Grant Scheme and Ward Member Grant Scheme

As part of the review of the Community Fund Grant Scheme a Working Group of the Committee was formed to look at specific aspects of the fund. The Community Fund Grant Scheme had been established in 2015 to offer financial assistance to local community organisations for projects and events that delivered a wide benefit to residents of South Kesteven and was administered on behalf of the Council by the Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service (LCVS). During the review process the Working Group looked at the amount of funding and also the application form itself with a view to having a “fast track” application form for smaller amounts of funding. It also looked at the possibility of distributing a proportion of the fund to Members to be individually used within their Wards. From this review the Ward Member Grant Scheme was included in the budget on a trial basis from April 2018 and the Community Fund Scheme was still in place for 2018/19.

Crime and Disorder

All the Overview and Scrutiny Committees remits include functions under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and also the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations. Inspector Simon Outen from Lincolnshire Police was invited to the January meeting of the Committee and gave a presentation to Members on policing in Lincolnshire. Crime nationally was on the increase and in Lincolnshire this was up by 10.18%, although Grantham did have one of the lowest crime increases and was the sixth best performer in the County. The presentation included funding issues, the increase in crime, changes to how burglary was now recorded, staffing issues, rural crime particularly in relation to hare coursing, which had seen a decrease in Lincolnshire as a whole, and anti-social behaviour.

Community Partnership Working

As part of the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny arrangements, Members received a presentation on Community Safety Partnership Working. The Community Safety Partnerships were formed in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Lincolnshire was a “two tier” area and had a county strategy group which was known as the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP) which was a single multi-agency forum for addressing community safety issues across Lincolnshire. Agencies involved with the SLP forum included Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board, Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children’s Board, Victims Commissioning Group, Public Protection Board, East Midlands Criminal Justice Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Culture and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Culture and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/18 comprised the following Members:

Chairman: Councillor Linda Wootten

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Stephen Benn

Councillor Katherine Brown
Councillor Tracey Forman
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith

Councillor Judy Stevens
Councillor Sarah Stokes

The district of South Kesteven has a tremendous amount to offer for both residents and visitors to the area. The Culture and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee focused on how the area could be promoted, as culture was seen as a key driver in promoting the area.

Cultural Strategy

Work started on the process for developing the Council's new Cultural Strategy. A more collaborative approach and community engagement was seen as the way forward. Two workshops were held to consider the new Cultural Strategy and discussions from the workshops provided a clear set of overarching aims and a number of strands with the four main strands being Heritage, The Arts, Sports and The Sciences. A number of cross cutting themes were also identified where the Council could potentially add value to activities within local communities and support improvement in the cultural offer. The Committee recommended to Cabinet that an expert resource was commissioned together with additional internal resources to help development of the Cultural Strategy and provide the necessary strategic guidance to the Council's cultural activities.

Deepings Literary Festival

At the July meeting of the Committee, Members received a presentation from Councillor Judy Stevens on the inaugural Deepings literary festival which had taken place in April 2017. The event had involved the whole of the Deepings community as well as attracting visitors from outside the area. Local businesses had actively supported the festival providing venues, goods, services and sponsorship. Volunteers from across the Deepings had supported the event and one example of how the Council might add value to festivals was letting local communities retain ownership whilst providing access to the expertise of experienced officers and the literary festival had provided a good example of this type of model project.

Stamford Georgian Festival

In September 2017 the third Stamford Georgian Festival was held. Members received an overview of the event including the Stamford Bull Run which had been a major part of the previous festivals. The number of partners supporting the event had increased and for the first time Stamford Endowed Schools were partners with the festival. Additional grants for the festival had been awarded from LEADER funding as well as from Leisure in the Community. Events that had proven successful at previous festivals were repeated including carriage rides and re-enactment events in the Meadows, period traders and dances.

RAF 100 Commemorative Programme

To celebrate the hundredth year since the formation of the Royal Air Force, a Commemorative Programme was created with Lincolnshire playing an active role as the historic “Bomber County” and home of the modern air force. A programme was developed of related events to complement the RAF Celebrations with longer-term benefits to bring aviation heritage to life within the district. A brochure had also been created called ‘Heritage of Flight’ which included World War One and World War Two and Cold War aviation heritage sites within the district.

Historic England

At its November meeting the Committee received a presentation on Historic England, a public body that championed and protected England’s historic places. The presentation focused on the heritage within South Kesteven which had over 2,000 designated assets on the register. These assets included parks, gardens and grade I and II listed buildings. The value and impact of heritage and the historic environment in which they lived could be seen through the following components, tourism, education skills, sense of place, personal development, environmental life, quality of life and regeneration development all of which contributed to an area’s sense of belonging, pride, quality, vibrancy and sense of place. Within the East Midlands, heritage directly contributed to Gross Value Added by £712m in 2015. Investing in the historic environment brought more visitors to local areas and encouraged them to spend more.

Visitor Economy Strategy

At its November meeting the Committee received a report on the context and process by which the Council’s new Visitor Economy Strategy would be informed and developed. At its January meeting an overview of the vision for Visitor Economy was provided to the Committee with one of the main issues to be considered when developing the strategy being to “treat the visitor as you would like to be treated when you were a visitor” with the aim to exceed visitor expectations. Distinct branding and marketing was also necessary for potential visitors to identify with the District.

A workshop was held in March 2018 to help inform the development of a Visitor Economy Strategy.

Wyndham Park Improvement Project

The project recognised the importance of green space in attracting families to an area and Wyndham Park was considered an excellent asset for Grantham and the wider district, which the Council had a duty to maintain. Through the project the council had developed a good relationship with the Heritage Lottery Fund that had led to a successful grant award. The park had also received WREN funding for work in the paddling pool area.

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/18 comprised the following Members:

Chairman: Councillor Mike Exton

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Bob Russell

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Lynda Coutts
Councillor Nick Craft

Councillor Brian Sumner
Councillor Martin Wilkins

The Corporate Plan's two main areas for focus during 2017/18 were "Open for Business" and "Commercially and Customer Focused". "Open for Business's" aim was to put the customer at the heart of everything the Council did. "Commercially and Customer Focuses'" aim was to continue to improve the effective use of the Council's resources taking into account customer insight and intelligence which would inform future service delivery models.

The Big Clean

The Big Clean was one of the main initiatives which the Committee dealt with during the 2017/18 municipal year. The overriding objective of the Big Clean project was to encourage economic growth. The attractiveness of an area was valued by residents with clean streets ranking in the top 5 issues of importance. The Big Clean initiative was undertaken over a three month period during July to September 2017 and involved most of South Kesteven. Resources were targeted to get value for money for the district with expectations being managed accordingly. Cleaning crews involved employees, volunteers and both Parish and Town Councils. The project was a big success.

Air Quality

In May the Committee received a presentation on Air Quality. The Government had published a draft Air Quality Plan for Nitrogen Dioxide, its priority was to "tackle poor air quality in all its forms". Grantham was the only area within South Kesteven subject to an Air Quality Management Area due to nitrogen dioxide levels related to traffic. Nitrogen dioxide was monitored at 37 sites across the district including Stamford. An update on the Annual Air Quality status and progress against measures in the Council's Air Quality Action plan was given at the February meeting of the Committee.

Enviro Crime Enforcement Policy (including Dog Fouling and Littering)

Both dog fouling and street littering were discussed by the Committee at meetings during the year. As a legacy following the Big Clean initiative and the Council's wish to maintain a much improved environment, an Enviro Crime Enforcement Policy was drafted. The content of the policy was based on feedback from Members following a workshop held in December 2017. A range of options were considered on how appropriate enforcement could be provided to stop those who continued to commit enviro crimes such as littering, fly tipping, graffiti and associated anti-social behaviours together with fixed penalty notice amounts. The Committee recommended the adoption of the document; Cabinet adopted the document at its meeting in April 2018.

Higher Street Standard

Another legacy from the Big Clean initiative was the introduction of a Higher Street Standard based on intelligence gathered and lessons learned from the Big Clean project. During the 12 weeks that the project ran a higher standard of cleansing was attained. In order to build on this, two additional teams with specialist equipment and skills gained during the Big Clean would be funded. The standard street cleansing programme continued but a programme of works would be designed and implemented to obtain the higher street standard. The Committee discussed the proposed document at its February meeting and recommended to Cabinet that the higher street standard be adopted. Cabinet adopted the document in May 2018.

Trade Waste

All through the 2017/18 meeting cycle the Committee were given updates on trade waste. The Cabinet recommended to Council that trade waste should be implemented to business customers at the meeting in November 2017 and this was incorporated in the budget for 2018/19.

Street Lighting

Following Lincolnshire County Council's decision to turn off street lights in the early hours of the morning, street lighting, which came under the responsibility of the District Council, was discussed by the Committee at various times during 2017/18. Possible options were circulated at the July meeting but Members felt that more work was required. Two working groups were held to look in detail at the options available. The general consensus was that lights should not be turned off at night and of the options considered, Members agreed with the option that kept the lights on. During the discussions on street lighting a policy was also compiled and agreed at the Committee meeting held in April 2018. The recommendation to Cabinet concerning the proposed

option and the adoption of the policy document at the time of writing this document has yet to be considered by Cabinet.

Municipal Waste Management Strategy

At its April 2018 meeting the Committee received a presentation on the draft Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy which was out for consultation. The strategy set out how the eight local authorities in Lincolnshire and the Environment Agency would work together in partnership to deliver sustainable waste management services which protected the environment and delivered best value for money. The Lincolnshire Waste Management Partnership's vision for the strategy was:

"To seek the best environmental option to provide innovative, customer-friendly waste management solutions that give value for money for Lincolnshire"

A set of ten high-level objectives had been developed and agreed by the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership to work towards the vision. Consultation on the document was open until early July. Both residents and organisations could respond to the consultation document. A response to the document would be compiled following a workshop to which all Members would be invited.

Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/18 comprised the following Members:

Chairman: Councillor Robert Reid

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Barry Dobson

Councillor Mike Cook

Councillor Graham Jeal

Councillor Peter Stephens

Councillor Brenda Sumner

Councillor Paul Wood

The two main areas in the Corporate Plan during 2017/18 were “Open for Business” and “Commercially and Customer Focused”. The aim for “Open for Business” was to put the customer at the heart of everything the Council did. The aim for “Commercially and Customer Focused” was to continue to improve the effective use of the Council’s resources taking into account customer insight and intelligence which would inform future service delivery models. Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s aim would be to scrutinise and be a critical friend to the Cabinet.

Local Plan Consultation Programme

The June 2017 Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee was an additional meeting to consider the Local Plan Consultation documents prior to them going to Cabinet. The Committee recommended that the Consultative Draft Local Plan should be made available for consultation purposes along with the accompanying appendices and updated Local Development Scheme. The Committee had a further meeting later in the year to receive an update on the feedback from the Consultation which was to accompany the Local Plan when it was submitted to the Secretary of State. Once submitted an Inspector would be allocated to consider the Plan prior to the next stage of the process.

Cabinet approved the Consultative Draft Local Plan for consultation purposes at its June 2017 meeting.

Review of the Commercial Investment Strategy

At the June meeting, the Committee considered the Commercial Investment Strategy. This included the balance of local investment against returns, investment opportunities outside the district and how these should be considered on a case by case basis and in line with other criteria changes. The Committee suggested that further consideration should be given to removing the lower limit for both yield and lot size.

Cabinet approved the revised Commercial Investment Strategy at its meeting in July 2017.

New Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme

The Committee considered the Government revaluation of Business Rates charged which came into effect on 1 April 2017. The new revaluation had resulted in significant increases in business rate bills for many premises in South Kesteven compared with the 2010 valuation. The Chancellor's 2017 Spring Budget stated there would be £300m of funding available over 4 years for local authorities to utilise. This funding would be ring-fenced to provide temporary financial relief to businesses facing the steepest increase in their bills as a result of the revaluation. South Kesteven's allocation of this Government funding would be over a 4 year period and would be a fixed contribution from Government. The funding would be front loaded for 2017–18.

At its July 2017 meeting Cabinet agreed to proceed with an urgent key decision by the Cabinet Member for Retail and Visitor Economy for Discretionary Rate Relief.

Car Park Tariffs

The meeting in October 2017 saw the Committee being asked to consider proposed amendments for consultation to the car parking tariffs at Welham Street, Grantham. The proposed amendments aimed to provide support and enable development of a diverse daytime and evening economy alongside the new cinema leisure complex.

At its October meeting, Cabinet approved the proposed revised tariff structure and authorised consultation in accordance with the relevant Regulations.

River Witham Corridor

The Committee was informed of an opportunity to access Priority Axis 6 funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This funding had been identified as a potential pot for projects within the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) area. Potentially 10 regeneration projects along the River Witham Corridor could benefit from this funding. An outline funding application was submitted in October 2017 and notification that the outline bid had been successful came in January 2018. The Council was progressing with a full application for the 2nd stage of the process and was working in partnership with North Kesteven District Council, the Environment Agency, Buckminster Estates and the National Trust in developing projects and securing match funding based on the needs of local infrastructure for the area. Funding had been committed by these local partners.

The Committee supported the application and endorsed the continued partnership working. The outcome for the 2nd stage of the bidding process was expected soon.

Housing Development Programme

The Council's second phase of the affordable housing programme was due to be completed in December 2017. The Committee was provided with an outline of the strategy going forward. (This was not about the detailed plan). Sites had been identified that offered an opportunity to maintain the momentum in the delivery of new homes and take forward the next phase of the housing programme. It also took into consideration the Council's commitment to releasing land to deliver new homes across the District. The Committee recommended that the 10 potential development sites detailed in the report should be taken forward for further evaluation and included in the Phase 3 – Housing Development Programme. They also agreed that the potential benefits of delivering all of the development programme in partnership with Gravitass Ltd (the company wholly owned by South Kesteven District Council) should be considered as part of the procurement options and that a more agile approach to funding the development of housing a development reserve should be created with the ability to fund changes to the programme over time.

At the Cabinet meeting in January 2018, the 10 potential development sites were approved for further evaluation and inclusion in the Phase 3 – Housing Development Programme along with the other recommendations.

Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring

The Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2018 scrutinised the management of the Council's Budget. It received updated budget monitoring information in respect of the financial position and considered the summary forecast outturn position as at the end of Quarter 3 against the annual budget for 2017/18 for the General Fund Revenue Budget, the Housing Revenue Account Budget and the Capital Programmes – General Fund and HRA.

Housing Needs Assessment

The Committee was provided with an update on the Government consultation on housing needs assessment. A summary of the changes and implications for the Local Plan was provided. The aim was to ensure there was sufficient land allocated to provide new homes. A five year review to assess sufficient appropriate provision and future trajectory would need to be carried out which could have an impact for the five year supply calculations. The aim was to establish the direction of growth across the District and to identify the appropriate number and locations required for new housing developments in order to meet the anticipated future requirements for the District.

The update was noted and a workshop was arranged to consider the implications and impact on the Local Plan.

Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/18 comprised the following Members:

Chairman: Councillor Bob Sampson

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Rosemary Kaberry-Brown

Councillor Pam Bosworth

Councillor Andrea Webster

Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew

Councillor Sarah Stokes

The Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a unique remit. It was envisaged that the Committee would be an ideal conduit to help develop, scrutinise and progress the future strategies and policies of all of the Cabinet Members. Whilst the other Committees concentrated on specific areas, the perspective for the Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee provides a wider range of issues to consider. The broadest definition of rural is seen as: wide, open areas relating to agriculture. Because the District is vast and encompasses a variety of habitations and elements a more flexible and sensitive approach is required to identify District wide issues.

The Committee has one of the widest remits of all the Committees and although the work is wide ranging it needs to fit within the parameters of the Corporate Plan but in particular within the following two main areas of focus. “Open for Business” – With around 50% of people in the District live in villages and outer areas and a commuter culture had been generated. The Council would need to look at the impact of a commuter culture, how to deal with social changes, how it responded to customers and how it could provide the required services across the 365 square miles of the District. “Commercially and Customer Focussed” – The Council had to ensure it was working towards being self-sufficient by 2019 and continue looking at ways of achieving this.

Some of the areas the Committee covers overlaps with the remits of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees. National and regional drivers also are pertinent such as the Housing White Paper – Fixing Our Broken Housing Market, the development of an updated Housing Strategy to meet and respond to the context of the White Paper as well as addressing and tailoring the strategy to the varying needs of South Kesteven as a whole. Housing Reform and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) were also potential crossovers.

To try and initially ascertain what issues there were in rural communities, the Committee decided to invite guests from specific organisations so that they could be provided with an overview of the issues faced in rural areas. The aim was to look at potential ways these issues were or could be addressed. The Committee also undertook a number of ward visits where they met with Ward Councillors who had arranged an itinerary pertinent to particular issues or exemplars within their wards. Some of the Wards visited were

- Aveland
- Casewick
- Market and West Deeping
- Deeping St James
- Grantham St Vincent's

One of the first issues considered by the Committee was Communications and the Cabinet Member for Communications attended a meeting to provide an overview of the Councils current forms of communicating and the proposed forms of communications. One significant issue highlighted was broadband services in the villages or the lack of in some areas. This led to an invitation to a future meeting being extended to the BDUK representative to explain where the allocated funding for improving broadband had been used and what proposals and future rollout plans there were for the future.

Other Guest speakers included:

Sparse (A Special Interest Group of the Local Government Association): The guest speaker provided an insight into how rural communities would be affected as a result of Brexit. The presentation included an outline of the implications of future European and Government Funding.

National Farmers' Union: The guest speaker provided a presentation that contained details of proposals to help address the changes resulting from Brexit. A lot was being undertaken behind the scenes to ensure sustainable agriculture businesses. Some issues highlighted were access to a competent and flexible workforce, a regulatory regime that was fit for purpose and a new outlook on International Trade along with the creation of a domestic agricultural policy. The Committee agreed that the speaker should be invited back the following year to hear what progress had been made.

Lincolnshire Police gave a presentation at the meeting in April 2018 and the Committee was informed of the issues faced by the police in such a diverse District. The Police were often the first port of call for a number of issues that could often be dealt with by other organisations. One of the successes was the Galileo project which related to combatting hare coursing. A reduction in police officer numbers and recruitment of PCSOs meant the police were spread thinly across a very wide area and had to make difficult decisions on what was an urgent incident. The police had to adjust their approach to incidents in order to try and address the issues they faced and their aim was to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, make rural communities feel safer and respond to the needs of the community by building effective Partnership arrangements through a Rural Community Advisory Group.

Rural Engagement and Promotional Trailer

The Committee received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Retail and Visitor Economy on the proposals to procure a Rural Engagement and Promotional Trailer. The vehicle would be used as a more flexible approach to engaging and developing community cohesion, promotion of the SKDC brand and taking issues that required consultation out into rural communities. The trailer could also be used as a mobile control centre in emergency situations. The Committee acknowledged the potential for such a vehicle and agreed in principle the purchase of the trailer.

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) Consultation

Members of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been invited to attend a meeting of the Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to take part in the considerations of the Consultation. Lincolnshire's Health and Wellbeing Board was undertaking a review of medical services in Lincolnshire. The response to the consultation would be submitted by the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Skills, but Members from both Committees and Rural were asked to highlight issues they felt would affect the whole of the District but in particular rural communities.

The Draft PNA included an acknowledgement of Government reforms along with the potential impact and concerns within the Community Pharmacies. There were no clear details of the proposed Government reforms so any changes or impact on services would need to be considered post-consultation. Members discussed the pharmaceutical provision currently in all areas of the District and highlighted that closing any provision could potentially discriminate against people in rural areas in particular such as the elderly, young families, single parent families and children who required regular medication.

The response to the consultation was submitted by 11 February 2018 and a copy of the response was sent to all Members who attended the meeting.

Housing in Rural Areas

The Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the proposed approach and timetable for a range of relevant issues relating to the construction and management of housing in rural areas. The Housing Strategy out for consultation and although there was no specific focus on rural areas it would be covered within the Strategy. A new White Paper outlining significant changes in Government Policy had been released and it was important that changes were factored into the plans and policies the Council developed. The Draft Housing Strategy would be able to factor in any changes.

At the request of the Committee a joint meeting with Members from the Communities and Wellbeing OSC along with representatives from local groups and partnerships was arranged to consider housing in rural areas.

Permitted rural development

The Committee was provided with an update on the Government's proposed changes to permitted rural development. The implication was an increase in the number of potential new dwellings allowed per agricultural unit from 3 to 5 dwellings. A further change in classes A and B under Part 6 of the (General Permitted Development) Order meant that the floor area of new/extended buildings would increase from 465sqm to 1000sqm. This meant there could be larger dwellings as well as smaller ones. The Committee noted the changes and suggested the document be sent to the Development Management Committee for information.

Combined Overview and Scrutiny Committees

During 2017/18 there were two combined Overview and Scrutiny Committees which took place together with the Budget - Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee which took place in January 2018.

Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021

The first combined Overview and Scrutiny Committee took place in November 2017. A combined Rural, Communities and Wellbeing and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee took place to discuss the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy. A workshop had been held before the meeting to which all Members of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees had been invited. Representatives from outside organisations had attended giving their experience of issues relating to homelessness and had helped Members to identify and inform the content of the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021. The recommendation from the combined Committee endorsed the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021 subject to:

- a) Regular monitoring reports being provided to each District on the delivery of the action plan and outcomes achieved;
- b) A review of the comparability of the data contained within the report being carried out by the District Housing Network, and
- c) A further review is undertaken before the end of 2018 to take into account the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The recommendation from the Committee was confirmed by the Cabinet at their meeting in January 2018.

Corporate Strategy

The second combined Overview and Scrutiny Committee took place in April 2018 and involved all five Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The combined Committee received a presentation from the Chief Executive on the emerging Corporate Strategy. The Strategy had been designed to help officers identify what had to be done to deliver Councillors' aspirations and provide direction on how this could be facilitated. The core strategic goal was to achieve complete and sustainable financial autonomy by 2025 and the Strategy set out how we would be achieving that goal by focusing on three main areas growth, agility and competitiveness. The combined Committee recommended its adoption to Cabinet. Cabinet recommended its adoption to Council and Council adopted it in May 2018.

Budget - Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In January 2018 the first meeting of the Budget – Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held to consider the budget proposals for 2018/19. The role of the Committee was to consider and seek clarification on the elements of the budget proposals put forward. At the meeting reference was made to the decrease in the Revenue Support Grant and the need for the Council to have a balanced budget that provided it with opportunities, resources and funding to deliver services as well as future initiatives and projects whilst allowing for investment.

Call-ins

Commercial Investment Call-In

During the 2017/18 period one call-in was held in respect of an individual Cabinet Member decision with regard to a commercial investment proposal.

The Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the issue which had been called-in and, following the representations made and the reasons given by the Cabinet Member for making the decision, the Committee's decision was not to support the call-in.