

SOUTH KESTEVEN



Corporate Plan **2006/09**



LISTENING

LEARNING

DELIVERING



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INTRODUCTION

A warm welcome from South Kesteven District Council

WELCOME TO THE SKDC CORPORATE PLAN 2006 – 2009.

This plan sets out what we are aiming to deliver and how we intend to turn our considerable but achievable ambitions into reality.

The plan's importance is threefold:

- To show how the plan's aims and actions have the potential to make a significant difference to the lives of the people who live in South Kesteven – not to mention those whom come to work or relax here.
- To explain how we will effectively use in excess of £100 million of public money over the next three years.
- To provide an ideal platform for discussion and debate of the key issues affecting local people, as well as posting a realistic benchmark for assessing our future progress and performance.





LET'S WORK TOGETHER

Naturally, we expect the main audience of our corporate plan to be our own staff and members. However, we fervently hope that our residents, partners and peer authorities will also take the time to read this document as they play such an essential role in the delivery of the plans we have set out.

Similarly, we will be looking to further develop and refine our future corporate plans – and more importantly our aims, objectives and targets. So your feedback on any aspect of this plan is not only helpful but is warmly requested.*

Yes, on our own we can achieve – but together we can achieve so much more and make a real difference to all aspects life in our district.

**OUR DESIRE TO
INCLUDE OUR
PARTNERS AND
LOCAL PEOPLE IN
THE FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT OF
SOUTH KESTEVEN
CANNOT BE
OVERSTATED.**

* See back page for contact details



OUR VISION

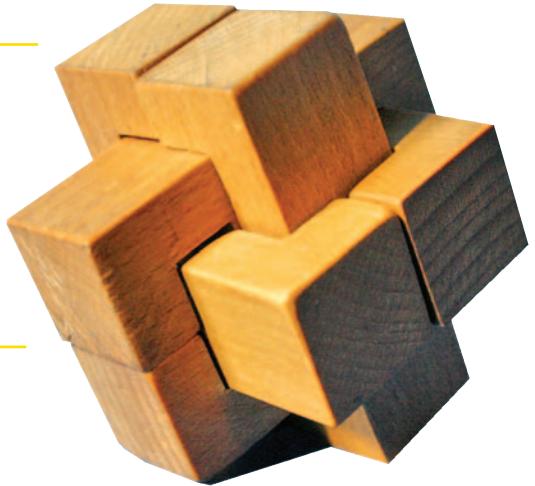
**WE HAVE A CRYSTAL CLEAR VISION
FOR THE FUTURE:**

**“SHAPING THE FUTURE
TOGETHER WITH OUR
PARTNERS AND RESIDENTS
TO DEVELOP A PLACE
WHERE PEOPLE REALLY
MATTER – AND BEING
RECOGNISED AS A
COUNCIL THAT PROVIDES
BRILLIANT SERVICES”**

This vision is deliberately outward looking, reflecting the high standard of our aspirations for the future. Our vision, which aims to clearly focus the attention of everyone at SKDC, will be delivered through our mission, ambitions, corporate priorities, service delivery plans and actions.



OUR MISSION



OUR MISSION APPLIES THE VISION AND INCORPORATES IT INTO OUR WORKING PRACTICES FOCUSING ON WHAT WE WILL BE LIKE AS AN ORGANISATION IN THE FUTURE.

PUT SIMPLY, IT REFLECTS THE CULTURE OF THE ORGANISATION.

PUT EVEN MORE SIMPLY, IT REFLECTS 'THE WAY WE DO THINGS AROUND HERE.'

'The way we do things around here' will determine how we set about delivering our vision - and consequently how we will deliver and enable the services for which we are responsible.

So what do we want to be?

The best way to describe our aspirations is through these three characteristics which will be at the heart of all that we say and do:



WE WILL BE A COUNCIL THAT REMAINS OPEN AND HONEST AT ALL TIMES.



WE WILL BE A COUNCIL THAT SHOWS A PASSION FOR SERVICE.



WE WILL BE A COUNCIL THAT GETS THINGS DONE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

REALISING OUR VISION

IN 2005 COUNCIL MEMBERS UNDERTOOK AN EXERCISE TO DETERMINE JUST WHAT KIND OF ORGANISATION WE SHOULD BE. THEIR MESSAGE WAS CLEAR. OUR VISION IS TO BE AN ORGANISATION WHICH INSPIRES CONFIDENCE AMONGST BOTH OUR LOCAL PEOPLE AND OUR STAFF, AND ONE THAT WORKS IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY IN ITS DELIVERY OF HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. AS A RESULT OF THIS EXERCISE WE HAVE IDENTIFIED FOUR KEY AREAS.

- TO DELIVER VALUE FOR MONEY.....

HOW

- BY ALWAYS LOOKING TO IMPROVE OUR LEVELS OF EFFICIENCY AND ALWAYS SEEKING SMARTER WAYS OF WORKING.



- TO FOCUS ON FRONT LINE SERVICES.....

HOW

- BY CONCENTRATING ON DOING WHAT MAKES THE MOST DIFFERENCE TO OUR LOCAL PEOPLE IN AN EFFECTIVE WAY.



- TO PROVIDE BRILLIANT CUSTOMER SERVICE.....

HOW

- BY SETTING OURSELVES HIGH STANDARDS OF QUALITY, PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, WHILST ENSURING EASY ACCESS TO SERVICES IS AVAILABLE FOR ALL.



- TO INVOLVE ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE DISTRICT.....

HOW

- BY LISTENING TO THEIR VIEWS AND INCLUDING THEM, THEIR COMMUNITIES AND OUR PARTNER ORGANISATIONS IN OUR DECISION-MAKING.



SKDC – OUR KEY AMBITIONS.

By their very definition, our vision and mission are aspirational. However, for local people the acid test is for us to transform these aspirations into tangible outcomes that they can see and experience. To assist in this important process, SKDC has six long-standing key ambitions.

These ambitions are vital because they provide a solid framework that ensures our future decisions and activity are properly balanced and meet the increasingly diverse needs of our local community.

THESE AMBITIONS ARE:

1 WORKING TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE DISTRICT.



2 TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT, AND IN DOING SO MANAGE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.



3 TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND ENCOURAGE A HEALTHY, THRIVING ECONOMY.



4 WORKING TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE LOCAL INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING, NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGAGEMENT AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION.



5 TO MAXIMISE THE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO OUR SERVICES.



6 TO HELP PROVIDE HOUSING WHICH MEETS LOCAL NEEDS.



FOCUSING ON PRIORITIES

A perfect example of how SKDC has listened to the people of the district has been in the compilation of our set of priorities. People were more than clear on what they considered the key issues in South Kesteven to be – and it is on these areas that we focus our resources.

Naturally, it follows that these areas are the most important as we seek to deliver our vision, mission and key ambitions. The seven priorities are listed below. Please note that they are in no particular order. They are all of equal importance.

- **To enhance the quality of life by reducing anti-social behaviour.**
- **To promote access to services and deliver good customer service to all.**
- **To further improve recycling and minimise waste.**
- **To further improve the quality of communication with residents.**
- **To provide the catalyst for town centre regeneration.**
- **To make the best use of resources at our disposal.**
- **To enable the provision of quality affordable housing.**

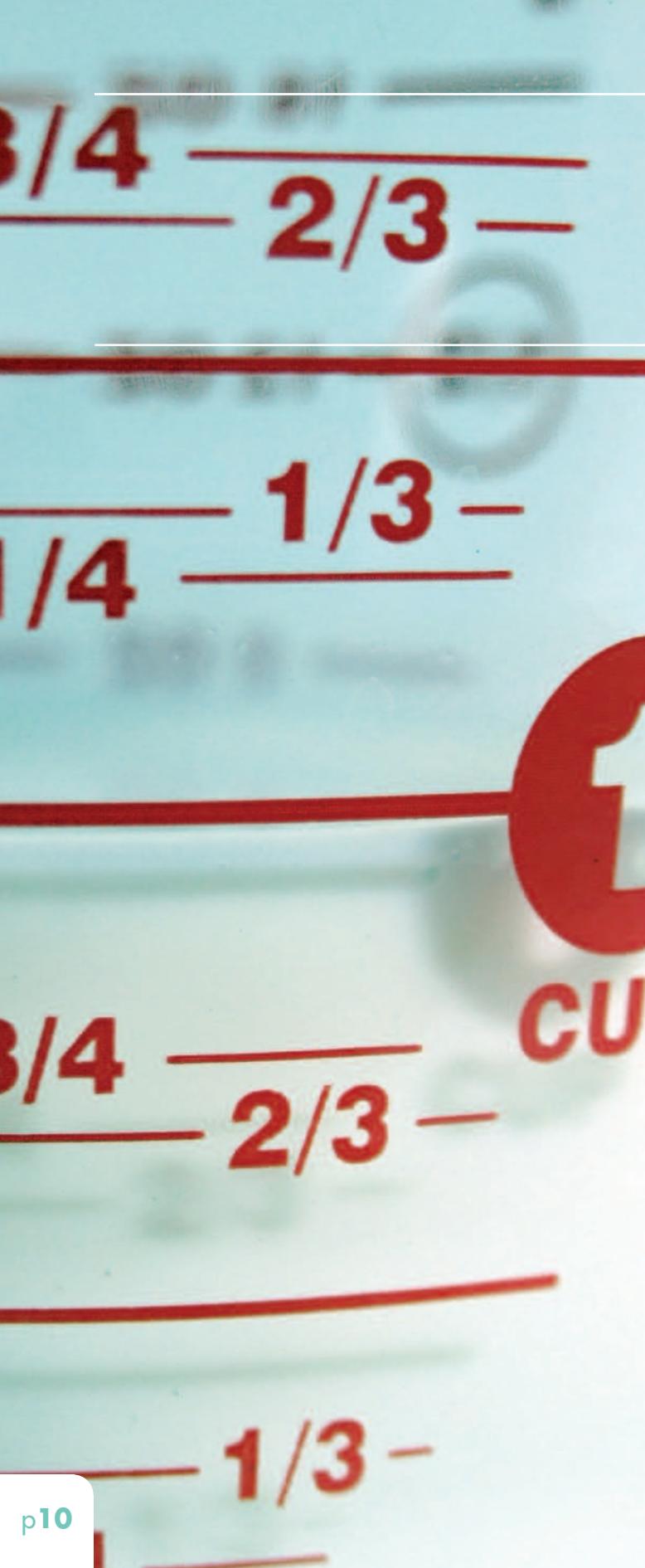


WHERE WE ARE

LOCATED IN THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF LINCOLNSHIRE, INCORPORATING THE TOWNS OF GRANTHAM, STAMFORD, BOURNE AND THE DEEPINGS, 100 VILLAGES AND HAMLETS COVERING 365 SQUARE MILES OF COUNTRYSIDE.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS ARE BASED IN GRANTHAM.





LIFE IN OUR DISTRICT

POPULATION - 129,000 AS ESTIMATED BY THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS IN 2006.

98.4% of the population in 2001 were classified as "white." The remaining 1.6% were from ethnic groups (Asian, African, Caribbean, Chinese). There is a recent trend towards an increase from certain European countries (such as Portugal) and the Baltic States.

THE NUMBERS GAME



UP OR DOWN?

A POPULATION INCREASE OF 4,000 SINCE THE CENSUS 2001.

4000

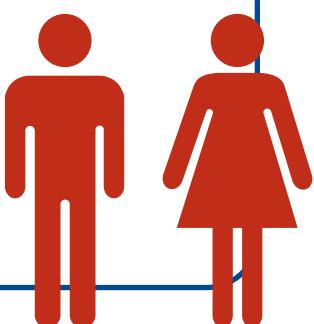
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD

SIZE – 2.4 PERSONS.

2.4 PERSONS

MEN AND WOMEN

49% MALE
51% FEMALE.



49% 51%

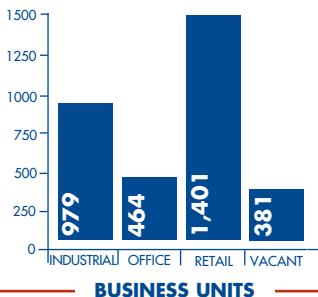
THERE ARE 55,510 HOUSEHOLDS IN THE DISTRICT. GRANTHAM HAS 14,808; STAMFORD HAS 8,769; BOURNE HAS 5,637 AND THE DEEPINGS HAVE 5,446.

THE REMAINING 21,000 HOUSEHOLDS ARE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE 365 SQUARE MILES OF THE DISTRICT.

(FIGURES AS OF NOVEMBER 2005).

AN ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

April 2006 figures on the South Kesteven business community:



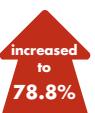
• UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The latest district unemployment rate (March 2006) stands at 2.1% - the East Midlands has a rate of 3%.



• EMPLOYMENT RATE

Our employment rate is 78.8% (2004) – the rate for the East Midlands is 75.6%.



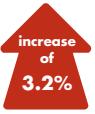
• BUSINESS

At the start of 2005 we had 4,490 VAT registered businesses – an increase of 1.46% on the previous year (figures have risen every year over the past decade).



• PROPERTY PRICES

The average house price is £173,941 (Dec. 2005) – an increase of 3.2% year on year but still representing value for money especially in comparison to certain other parts of the country.



• AVERAGE GROSS WEEKLY EARNINGS

£429.80 (2004) - £469.40 for the East Midlands. These figures are distorted by the high income of workers commuting out of South Kesteven. Generally speaking, the district is regarded as one of low pay with low skill levels.



OUR FOUR MARKET TOWNS CONTINUE TO WITNESS EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION IN MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING, FOOD PROCESSING, COLD STORAGE, DISTRIBUTION, AGRICULTURE, NHS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE TOURISM AND SERVICE SECTORS.

A COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

The mix of urban and close-knit rural communities set in impressive scenery makes South Kesteven an increasingly attractive and popular place in which to live and work – hence the speed of the district's growth.



South Kesteven tends to lose young people, particularly of college age as they move away for educational reasons and usually do not return. Where the district is successful in attracting people, it is the middle age groups (including families with young children).



Education – The district has excellent, high-achieving schools with five secondary schools achieving a 90% and over pass rate for five

GSCE A* - C grades (2004).



Each of the main towns has its own library and leisure centre, whilst a mobile library serves the rural community. Grantham and Stamford have highly popular arts centres (with theatres).



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Statistically, South Kesteven is one of the safest areas in the country, also enjoying a generally low crime rate below the county average. In 2004-05, the crime rate for South Kesteven per 1,000 population was 79. The county figure was 88.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- CRIMINAL DAMAGE ACCOUNTS FOR ONE IN FOUR CRIMES.
- VIOLENT CRIME ACCOUNTS FOR JUST FEWER THAN ONE IN FIVE CRIMES.
- VICTIMS OF CRIME MAINLY LIVE IN THE GRANTHAM AND TOWN CENTRE AREAS – THIS TIES IN STRONGLY WITH WHERE OFFENDERS LIVE TOO.
- OLDER PEOPLE ARE MORE FEARFUL OF CRIME, BUT FIGURES REVEAL THAT IT IS YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE MOST LIKELY TO SUFFER FROM CRIME.

**DOMESTIC BURGLARY
CREATES MORE CONCERN
TO PEOPLE THAN ANY
OTHER CRIME, ALTHOUGH
FIGURES SHOW THAT IT
ONLY ACCOUNTS FOR
ONE IN 20 OF ALL
CRIMES.**



OUR TOWNS AND THEIR FUTURE



STAMFORD – The first conservation area to be designated in England and Wales (1967), since when the whole of the old town and St. Martins has been made an area of architectural/historic interest that is of national importance. There are over 600 Grade II buildings, of which 100 are of especial importance. A market town which is a tourist's delight.

GRANTHAM – A market town of strategic importance due to a prime location, it houses various fine buildings and inns dating back centuries. Now a flourishing market and shopping town with a catchment area of 60,000, it is the administrative headquarters of the district.

BOURNE – A market town where the main roads from Stamford, Sleaford, Spalding and the Deepings converge (historically this drew farmers to the town). Modern industries include light engineering, food processing and printing.

THE DEEPINGS – An area in the south of the district, incorporating West Deeping, Market Deeping and Deeping St. James. It is ideally placed to the north of Peterborough, both for the development of its industrial area and as a commuter belt for the city (and therefore London).

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- **WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS, THE STAMFORD GATEWAY PROJECT IS A PROPOSED TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME THAT WILL INCLUDE THE PEDESTRIANISATION AND REGENERATION OF SHEEP MARKET AND RED LION SQUARE.**

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- **TURNING GRANTHAM INTO A SUB-REGIONAL CENTRE.**
- **MAJOR REGENERATION OF THE GRANTHAM CANAL BASIN AREA PHASED OVER THE NEXT 10-15 YEARS.**
- **A PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME FOR THE TOWN CENTRE.**
- **ONGOING EXPANSION OF CURRENT INDUSTRIAL SITES.**
- **WORKING WITH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- **THE BOURNE CORE RETAIL AREA IS THE PROPOSED EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN CENTRE AND THE SOUTHFIELDS BUSINESS PARK. THIS IS BEING DEVELOPED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BUILDING OF 2,000 PLANNED NEW HOMES ON THE ELSEA PARK ESTATE.**

DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- **THE NORTHFIELDS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE IS BEING FURTHER DEVELOPED AND EXPANDED TO ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES TO THE AREA AND HELP CURRENT ONES TO PROGRESS AND GROW.**

THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US

PRESSURE FOR NEW HOMES

Much of our district is open countryside and is inappropriate for development. Due to our phenomenal growth not only has the pressure to provide housing (especially affordable housing) increased, but so has the pressure to develop within our urban areas.

MANAGING TRANSPORT EFFECTIVELY

The district is geographically well placed. It is approximately 100 miles from London, which is just an hour away by train from Grantham and within easy reach of Nottingham, Lincoln and Peterborough by road and rail. The district is skirted to the west by the main A1 traffic artery with main road connections to the other parts of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. Whilst there are some bus services between the major towns and rural villages, their frequency leaves people heavily reliant on cars for transport. In addition, Nottingham East Midlands airport and Doncaster, Sheffield (Robin Hood) airport are just over an hour's drive away.



BEATING THE ECONOMIC COMPETITION

Despite thriving economies, Grantham, Stamford and Bourne town centres face ever-increasing competition from other shopping centres. Our challenge is to introduce appropriate and impressive facilities to counter this competition, which will also meet the needs of local residents and businesses. We need to maintain places that are attractive to live, work and socialise in.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Certain communities are at a notable disadvantage in important aspects of their lives. These communities have higher levels of unemployment and crime and suffer more illness. Therefore, we need to play a key role in improving opportunities for them.

By working with selected partners we are:

- **PROMOTING HEALTHIER LIVING.**
- **MAKING IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO ACCESS A RANGE OF ENJOYABLE LEISURE ACTIVITIES.**
- **IMPROVING EDUCATION.**
- **IMPROVING WORK OPPORTUNITIES.**

COUNTERING ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

We have an important role to play in managing and reducing the effects of climate change. Ensuring effective management of water resources remains an important consideration, whilst waste management is also a critical challenge as we seek to:

- **CONTINUE TO REDUCE THE WASTE WE PRODUCE.**
- **DEVELOP MORE EFFECTIVE, ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY WAYS OF GETTING RID OF WASTE.**
- **PROMOTE THE MORE EFFICIENT USE OF ENERGY IN OUR HOMES, BUSINESSES AND TRANSPORTATION.**





SKDC HAS AN IMPRESSIVE TRACK RECORD OF IMPROVING THE SERVICES PROVIDED TO LOCAL PEOPLE OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS. HOWEVER, RESTING ON OUR LAURELS IS NOT AN OPTION AND IMPROVING THOSE SERVICES FURTHER REMAINS A PRIMARY AND OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE.



A COMMITMENT TO BETTER LOCAL SERVICES

WE INTEND TO TAKE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL. THERE ARE FIVE KEY ELEMENTS TO HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THESE NECESSARY IMPROVEMENTS:

- 1** DO WHATEVER IS REQUIRED TO SUSTAIN OUR IMPROVEMENT IN OUR SERVICES AND BE SEEN AS A 'BRILLIANT' COUNCIL BY RESIDENTS.
- 2** STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE WAY WE DELIVER OUR SERVICES AND SET A BENCHMARK FOR OTHER AUTHORITIES TO AIM AT.
- 3** MAKE OUR RESOURCES AS EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE AS POSSIBLE, THUS ENABLING US TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICES.
- 4** CONTINUE TO SEEK WAYS OF PROVIDING EVEN BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY.
- 5** INCREASE OUR RATE OF IMPROVEMENT, ESPECIALLY IN PRIORITY AREAS. ALSO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE IN ALL AREAS TO TAKE OUR PERFORMANCE INTO THE TOP 25% OF ALL UK AUTHORITIES WITHIN THE NEXT THREE YEARS.



AGREEING OUR PRIORITIES

WHEN SETTING OUT OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE IT IS NECESSARY FOR US TO TAKE SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM VIEWS. HENCE WHY OUR PRIORITIES ARE REVIEWED AND REFRESHED ANNUALLY IN THREE KEY STAGES.

STAGE ONE - WE LISTEN AND WE LEARN

In many ways this is the most important stage as it is crucial that we know what people think about our priorities and our performance. The annual stakeholder conference allows members, partners and the public to debate the key issues for South Kesteven.

We learn how people feel we have tackled current priorities. We ask are we getting it right for our residents and local businesses?

We also undertake face-to-face market research where we learn what people think about their council; what their priorities are; and ultimately how happy are they with the services we provide. This helps us to shape and develop services and implement improvements – all designed to meet our people's priorities.



RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION METHODS TO ENSURE WE ARE VIEWING THE BROADEST CANVAS POSSIBLE:

- **SIX LOCAL FORUMS ARE HELD REGULARLY ACROSS THE DISTRICT, OFFERING PEOPLE OF OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES THE CHANCE TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES THAT CONCERN THEM.**
- **THE NEW-LOOK ONLINE CITIZENS JURY HAS ADDED AN INTERESTING NEW STRING TO OUR RESEARCH BOW.**
- **THE RESIDENTS' POSTAL SURVEY (1,000 LOCAL PEOPLE) GAUGES PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF COUNCIL PERFORMANCE, BOTH IN HOW SKDC PROVIDES SERVICES AND CONFIRMING THE ISSUES OF HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO RESIDENTS.**

STAGE TWO - WE PLAN AND WE PRIORITISE

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE WANT TO BE, THE NEXT STAGE SEES THE PLANNING OF HOW SERVICES WILL BE DELIVERED. WE DEBATE THESE PLANS IN PUBLIC AT DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY MEETINGS. WE CONSULT WITH LOCAL PEOPLE. WE CONSULT WITH OUR PARTNERS. WE CONSULT WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS.

Only then do we start to develop the council budget and service plans. It is these service plans that detail what we aim to achieve, how we will achieve it, who will achieve it and when it will be achieved by.



STAGE THREE - WE DELIVER

HAVING AGREED OUR BUDGET AND SERVICE PLANS, THE FOCUS TURNS TO TRANSFORMING OUR PLANS INTO REALITY AS EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE. IN ESSENCE, THIS STAGE RUNS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE YEAR, AS IT IS GOVERNED BOTH BY THE LISTENING AND LEARNING PROCESSES AND OUR PLANNING AND PRIORITISING ACTIVITIES.

We also check the quality of our service provision by regularly monitoring our performance. This sees us track and measure progress against a series of national performance indicators to check we are on course to achieve our aims and meet our targets

SKDC has developed a reputation over the years for being an authority that is responsive to change. The continuous review and, where required, amendment of our service plans is at the heart of this approach.





LISTENING TO OUR PEOPLE

During the spring of 2004 SKDC asked residents what they believed the priorities of the council should be. That feedback, together with targets set by central government and the council's own assessment of the future, combined to identify our key areas of concentration.

WHAT DID THEY TELL US?

**THREE CLEAR ISSUES
EMERGED FROM THE
FEEDBACK.**

THEY WANTED US:

- **TO TACKLE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.**
- **TO KEEP OUR STREETS CLEAN.**
- **TO HELP PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

THE ACTION WE TOOK

WE LOOKED AT ALL OUR SERVICES AND GRADED THEM AS:

PRIORITY A&B

THESE BECAME THE AREAS OF OUR PRIME FOCUS.

- **PRIORITY A** services are those where we seek to implement a real 'step change' in delivery.
- **PRIORITY B** services are those where we are developing and improving incrementally.

PRIORITY M

THESE SERVICES CONTINUE TO BE MAINTAINED AT CURRENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS.

PRIORITY Z

THESE SERVICES WERE SCALED DOWN OR DISCONTINUED.

The decision to class the following areas as our Priority A's was confirmed by successive residents' surveys, which showed that eight out of ten residents supported our current priority list.

PRIORITY A SERVICES

IN ADDITION TO THE PRIORITIES OUR RESIDENTS TOLD US THEY WANTED, WE HAVE ADDED OTHER SERVICES WHICH ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THOSE PRIORITIES. SO OUR SEVEN PRIORITIES ARE:

- TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.
- RECYCLING – WE HAVE BEEN SET TOUGH GOVERNMENT TARGETS.
- HELPING TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.
- COMMUNICATIONS – WHICH MEANS COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH OUR PARTNERS AND RESIDENTS AND LISTENING TO ALL THEY HAVE TO SAY – A TWO-WAY PROCESS.
- TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION – WE ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING OUR TOWNS EVEN BETTER PLACES TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY IN.
- ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES – WE WANT TO MAKE ALL OUR SERVICES AS ACCESSIBLE AS POSSIBLE TO RESIDENTS.
- EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES – MAKING THE MOST OF OUR TIME, MONEY AND PEOPLE TO DELIVER THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICE TO RESIDENTS.

Note: Keeping our streets clean has now been placed in the PRIORITY B category purely because of the work done and achievements made over the last two years. Consequently any further changes will be incremental, not requiring a 'step change' approach.

SO WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO...

TACKLE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR?

- Ensured our designated community safety team works in partnership with the local police, CCTV and local businesses.
- Successfully resolved 77% of the 459 anti-social behaviour reports received by the community safety team.



Our latest residents' survey showed a small fall in the percentage of people who felt that anti-social behaviour was a significant problem in their neighbourhood – confirmation of the good work done by the team.

ENCOURAGE RECYCLING?



- Provided comprehensive recycling facilities across the district.
- Collected recyclable and green waste from kerbsides in most areas.
- Kerbside collections have generated increased satisfaction levels in the residents' survey.
- The introduction of the green waste scheme has received widespread support with only 10% of residents believing that SKDC has not acted in their best interests by introducing this scheme.

These initiatives have seen an excellent increase - from 18% to 27% - in the amount of waste recycled in South Kesteven.

HELP PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

- Secured 112 new units of affordable rented accommodation in 2005/06.
- Negotiated and secured over 350 further units of affordable housing to be delivered in future years (as part of the planning applications made).



However, it is clear that it will take time for these improvements to be reflected in the perceptions of our residents as there has been a slight increase in the number of people who consider the lack of affordable housing to be a problem.

KEEP OUR STREETS CLEAN?

We have implemented a comprehensive improvement programme featuring:

- The employment of three urban rangers to patrol South Kesteven and issue fines to people seen dropping litter or allowing their dogs to foul in public places.
- The purchase of specialist equipment to remove grease and chewing gum from town centre paths.
- The issue of 300 fixed penalty notices in 2005/06.



These measures have produced an improvement in satisfaction levels in the latest residents' survey, especially the introduction of the urban rangers, which received widespread support.

HOW DID WE DO LAST YEAR?

THERE'S ALWAYS PLENTY HAPPENING AT SKDC. LOOKING BACK OVER THE LAST YEAR WE'RE PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH SOME OF THE THINGS WE'VE ACHIEVED FOR OUR RESIDENTS – ESPECIALLY AS WE HAVE ONE OF THE LOWEST COUNCIL TAXES IN THE COUNTRY.

HIGHLIGHTS BY THE DOZEN

We believe that we have made remarkable progress since 2003. Here are a dozen highlights from 2005/06 that are a testament to that progress:



1 TACKLING THE HOUSING PROBLEM BY INCREASING THE PROVISION OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES TO 112. PREVIOUS YEARS' RESULTS WERE 50, 35 AND 4 RESPECTIVELY.



2 SECURING EXTRA INVESTMENT FOR THE DISTRICT IN 2004/5 BY LEVERING-IN AN EXTRA 50P FOR EVERY £1 WE RAISE IN COUNCIL TAX AND WINNING £624,000 FOR IMPROVED PLANNING SERVICES.



3 PROVIDING VALUE FOR MONEY AND SETTING ONE OF THE LOWEST COUNCIL TAX RATES IN THE COUNTRY.



4 PRODUCING AN ACTION PLAN FOR STRATEGIC HOUSING, REFLECTING LESSONS LEARNT FROM A PREVIOUS INSPECTION REPORT. A RECENT RE-INSPECTION HAS CONFIRMED THE SERVICE AS ONE STAR WITH PROMISING PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT.



5 REDUCING THE NEED FOR LANDFILL SITES BY RECYCLING OR COMPOSTING OVER 27% OF WASTE COMPARED TO 18% IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.



6 LEADING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR TOWN CENTRES BY DEVELOPING STRONG MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS FOR ALL FOUR TOWNS, LEADING TO AN INCREASE IN RESIDENT SATISFACTION.



7 BRINGING TOGETHER ALL TIERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH OUR LOCAL FORUMS, ATTENDED BY LOCAL PEOPLE.



8 IMPROVING ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES BY INTRODUCING ALLPAY AND OPENING A NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE.



9 OPERATING A CRACKDOWN ON LITTERING BY NAMING AND SHAMING OVER 300 OFFENDERS AND DELIVERING MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN CLEANLINESS STANDARDS.



10 REDUCING THE FEAR OF CRIME BY WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VARIOUS GROUPS. THANKS TO THESE PARTNERSHIPS, RESIDENTS REPORT A REDUCTION IN THEIR PERCEPTION OF CRIME.



11 ENGAGING RESIDENTS WITH DCA (DEPARTMENT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS) FUNDING AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RUTLAND ON LINE WE HAVE DEVELOPED A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF VIRTUAL AND REAL CITIZENS JURIES.



12 IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS BY DOUBLING THE PROPORTION OF RESIDENTS WHO RECEIVE AND ARE SATISFIED WITH THE COUNCIL'S MAGAZINE - SK TODAY.





HOW ARE WE DOING?

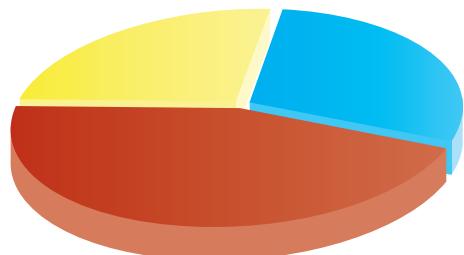
LIKE ALL COUNCILS WE
ARE REQUIRED BY
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
TO COLLECT DATA ON
VARIOUS AREAS, SUCH
AS WASTE, PLANNING,
BENEFITS AND HOUSING
AND REPORT ON THEM
EACH YEAR.

THIS YEAR – LAST YEAR

MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE IS A KEY ASPECT OF THE SKDC APPROACH, BOTH YEAR-ON-YEAR AND IN COMPARISON TO OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

The obvious benefit for us is that we are able to analyse our performance and compare it against other authorities. In 2004/05 we were able to directly compare 37 separate indicators within our various services against other district councils.

WHERE WE WERE

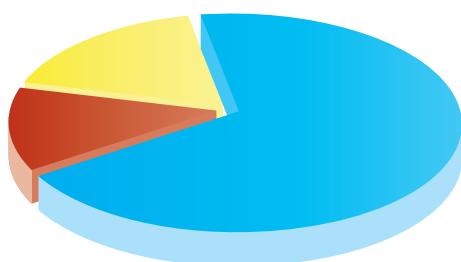


11 INDICATORS IN TOP 25% OF AUTHORITIES

16 INDICATORS RANKED AS AVERAGE

10 INDICATORS RANKED AS BEING BELOW AVERAGE OR IN THE BOTTOM 25% OF AUTHORITIES

HOW WE HAVE IMPROVED



32 INDICATORS IMPROVED IN PERFORMANCE

8 INDICATORS STAYED THE SAME IN PERFORMANCE

12 INDICATORS DROPPED IN PERFORMANCE

The above chart shows how SKDC compares against those district councils on the 2004/05 performance indicators.

The above chart compares our performance for 2005/06 against the previous year – in the areas where actual direct comparisons can be made.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

E-GOVERNMENT

PERCENTAGE OF ELECTRONIC INTERACTIONS
E-ENABLED

04/05: 71.0%

05/06: 99.5%



INVOICES

PERCENTAGE OF INVOICES PAID ON TIME

04/05: 98.64%

05/06: 98.31%



SICKNESS

NUMBER OF DAYS LOST DUE TO SICKNESS ABSENCE

04/05: 8.82 DAYS

05/06: 8.1 DAYS



COLLECTION

PERCENTAGE OF COUNCIL TAX COLLECTED

04/05: 97.97%

05/06: 98.3%



PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESS RATES COLLECTED

04/05: 98.44%

05/06: 99.02%

PERCENTAGE OF RENT COLLECTED

04/05: 98.3%

05/06: 96.8%

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

NUMBER OF REPORTS TO THE COUNCIL OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR.

05/06: 459

PERCENTAGE OF THOSE REPORTS
SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED

05/06: 70%



VACANT DWELLINGS

NUMBER OF VACANT DWELLINGS RETURNED TO
OCCUPATION

04/05: 5

05/06: 11





RECYCLING

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLED

04/05: 14.7%

05/06: 26.8%

TONNAGE OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLED

05/06: 7548 TONNES



ACCESS

PERCENTAGE OF AUTHORITY BUILDINGS ACCESSIBLE TO DISABLED PEOPLE

04/05: 81.8%

05/06: 100%



BENEFITS

AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME FOR NEW CLAIMS

04/05: 42.21 DAYS

05/06: 33.3 DAYS



AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME FOR CHANGES IN CLAIMS

04/05: 5.62 DAYS

05/06: 16 DAYS

WASTE

NUMBER OF KGS OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTED PER HEAD OF POPULATION

04/05: 384.4

05/06: 413.6



PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTED PER HEAD FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

05/06 +7%

PLANNING



PERCENTAGE OF MAJOR APPLICATIONS DETERMINED IN 13 WEEKS

04/05: 63.16% 05/06: 69.23%

PERCENTAGE OF OTHER APPLICATIONS DETERMINED IN 8 WEEKS

04/05: 74.88% 05/06: 77.99%

PERCENTAGE OF MINOR APPLICATIONS DETERMINED IN 8 WEEKS

04/05: 84.14% 05/06: 86.78%

STANDARD SEARCHES CARRIED OUT IN 10 WORKING DAYS

04/05: 99% 05/06: 99.42%

HOMELESSNESS

LENGTH OF STAY IN BED AND BREAKFAST ACCOMMODATION FOR PRIORITY HOMELESS

04/05: 2.33 WEEKS

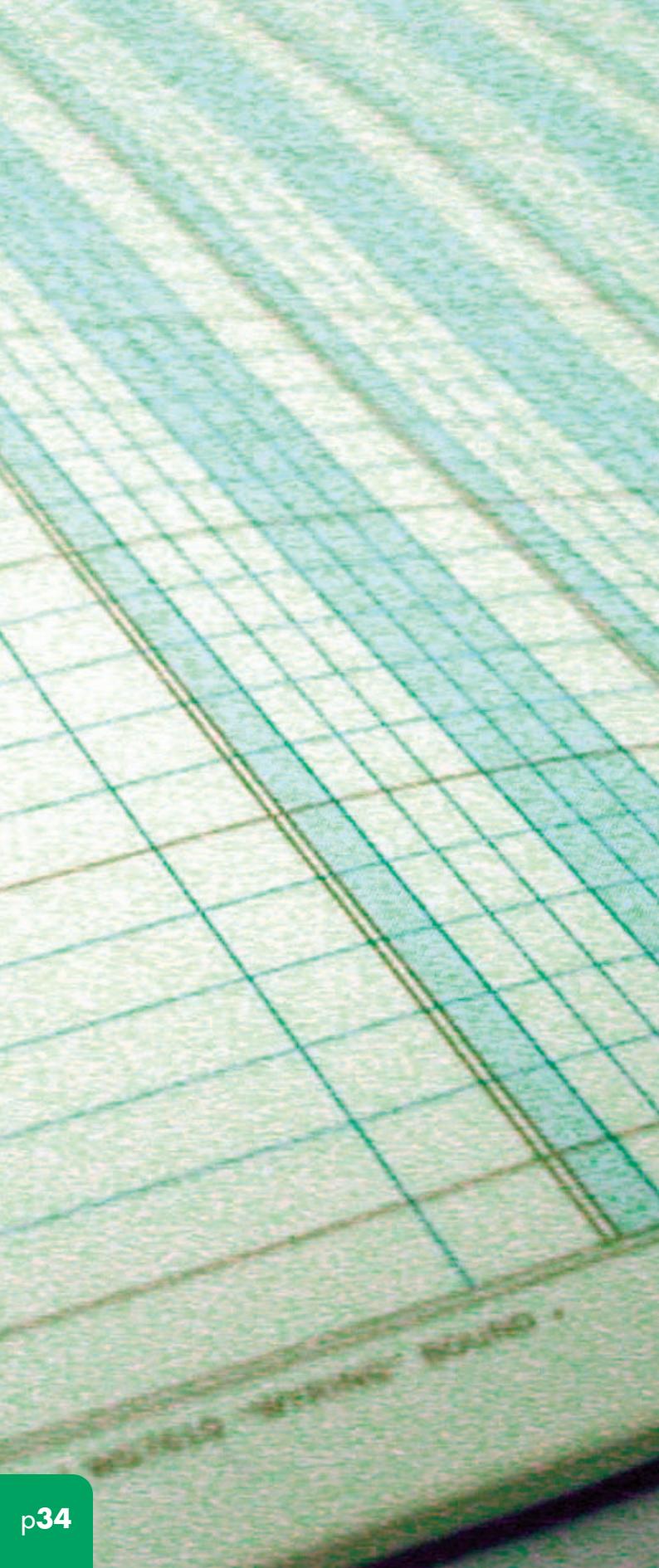
05/06: 2.88 WEEKS



LENGTH OF STAY IN HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION FOR PRIORITY HOMELESS

04/05: 0 WEEKS

05/06: 0 WEEKS



FINANCES

EACH YEAR THE COUNCIL SETS AN AFFORDABLE BUDGET TO ENABLE ITS KEY PRIORITIES TO BE DELIVERED TO ITS RESIDENTS.



THE SKDC BUDGET BRINGS TOGETHER ALL THE KEY SPENDING PLANS FOR SERVICES AND IS FINANCED FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES:



For 2006/07 the total budget amount to be met by grants and taxpayers for the council is £15,398,000. After taking into consideration all of the external funding support, the amount to be met by our SKDC taxpayers is £6,087,000. This equates to an amount per Band D property (excluding parish or town council expenses) of £105.66 which is the second lowest in Lincolnshire and in the lowest 30 in the country.

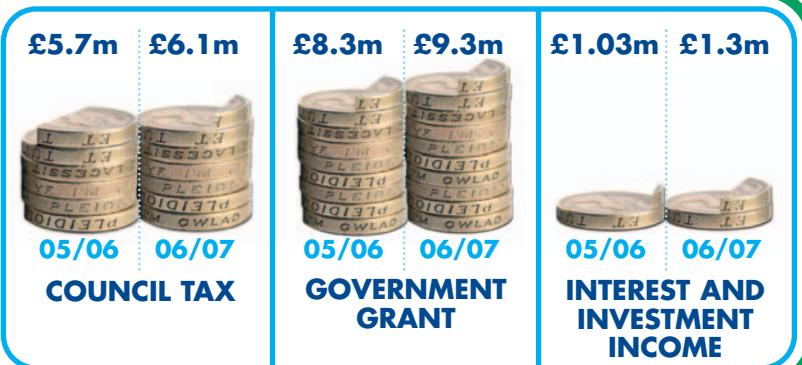
COUNCIL TAX

Less than 10% of the total Council Tax collected goes to SKDC, with the remainder going to County Council, the police and a small amount to the parishes or towns. In 2005/06 a typical Band D council tax bill was £1120.05 (before parish or town council expenses). This increased to £1175.76 for 2006/07. The council tax bills are made up of amounts for each of the following authorities:

	2005/06	2006/07	Percentage of council tax bill
Lincolnshire Country Council	£899.82	£944.73	80%
Lincolnshire Police	£119.43	£125.37	11%
SKDC	£100.80	£105.66	9%
TOTAL	£1120.05	£1175.76	100%

OUR INCOME

We receive income from various sources. Once the total amount is known, our spending plans are calculated to deliver our priorities whilst ensuring any increase in Council Tax is kept at an acceptable level. A summary of the key sources of income is shown to the right:





TAKING THE VITAL "NEXT STEPS"

**SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES
NEVER STOP LEARNING.
THEY NEVER REST ON
THEIR LAURELS.**

Successful businesses are those that constantly strive to improve their performance at all levels, always seeking to move on to the next level of achievement and performance.

NEXT STEPS



THE “NEXT STEPS” IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME IS PART OF THAT APPROACH AT SKDC. THIS PROGRAMME WILL BRING TOGETHER ALL OUR PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES AND WILL HELP DELIVER OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE.

OUR CONCENTRATION ON FOUR KEY AREAS WILL SEE US:

- FURTHER SHARPEN OUR CUSTOMER FOCUS
- GET THE BEST FROM OUR PEOPLE
- CHANNEL OUR RESOURCES AND DELIVER WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO LOCAL PEOPLE
- CELEBRATE SUCCESS AND SHARE BEST PRACTICE

THESE AREAS OF FOCUS ARE BASED ON OUR COMMITMENT TO;

- STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANISATION IN HOW OUR PEOPLE PERFORM, OUR FINANCES ARE HANDLED AND OUR SERVICES ARE DELIVERED.



- CONSTANTLY SEEKING WAYS OF PROVIDING OUR SERVICES TO PEOPLE IN AN EVEN MORE EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE, VALUE-FOR-MONEY MANNER.



- CONTINUING TO ASSESS AND IMPLEMENT, WHERE APPROPRIATE, NEW WORKING METHODS FOR OUR STAFF, MEMBERS AND PARTNERS.



THE NEXT STEPS PROGRAMME



THE PROGRAMME WILL ALSO FOCUS ON DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE ORGANISATION:

STAFF AND ORGANISATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Example - Increase the skills of customer services staff to help deal with more complex queries over a wider range of issues.

PROCESS OPPORTUNITIES.

Example – Improve the consistency of handling telephone enquiries across the organisation.

COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES.

Example – Increase the number of services that can be requested and paid for online.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP.

As we explained at the start of this plan, so much more will be achieved for the people of South Kesteven if we work closely with our various partners. A key partner for SKDC is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

WHO IS IN THE LSP?

All the major public sector organisations within the district.

- Representatives from the business community.
- Elected representatives.
- The voluntary sector.
- Representatives from groups such as young people community forums and faith groups.

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS (LAAS)

These are special agreements made between a council and central government. LAAs help us to reduce bureaucracy in dealing with central government so we can really focus on the key national and local priorities in the district.

We share four priorities with central government, around which our agreement is based:

- Children and young people.
- Safer and stronger communities.
- Healthier communities and older people.
- Economic development and enterprise.

If all targets in these areas are achieved by 2010, we could receive a performance reward grant for investment in future improvements.

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS



A recurring theme of this document is the importance of the partnerships we have with other organisations. However, arguably the most important of all is our relationship with our residents who have told us about the issues that are most important to them – affordable housing, town centre regeneration, improving anti-social behaviour, better access to our services and the environment. We know that we cannot effectively deliver these and other services single-handedly, hence why partnership working is at the heart of our approach.

We also belong to the South Kesteven Local Strategic Partnership, working alongside the police, health, Lincolnshire County Council and the voluntary, business and learning sectors. Here we join together to work towards one definitive aim – a better future for South Kesteven and its people.

Other productive partnerships include our work with the County Council where we continue to seek new and improved methods of delivering shared services, whilst our work with the Welland Partnership has been instrumental in developing a regional approach to service improvement.

HISTORICALLY, WE HAVE WORKED WITH VARIOUS PARTNERS TO HELP DELIVER OUR SERVICES. FOR EXAMPLE, OUR WORK WITH REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS (RSLS) HAS ASSISTED OUR HOUSING STRATEGY, WHILST CLOSE CO-OPERATION WITH THE POLICE HAS RESULTED IN IMPROVED LEVELS OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION.



THE PRIORITIES IN FOCUS

SEVEN PRIORITIES SIT AT THE HEART OF SDKC'S AGENDA AND THAT NATURALLY MEANS THAT THERE IS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE, NOT ONLY AT THE PRESENT TIME BUT ALSO IN THE SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM.

Here is just a sample of what we are doing – and what we plan to do over the lifetime of this Corporate Plan.

As mentioned earlier in this document, all seven priorities share equal importance and therefore what follows is in no particular order.

USE OF RESOURCES

- In 2006 we successfully completed the annual accounts of the Authority within the Government's timetable and produced, for the first time, a summary of accounts document which provides financial information in a user-friendly way.
- By 2008 we will further improve and maximise value for money in service provision and work with partners to deliver the best for the local community. We will ensure we continue to improve by operational review and performance management and meet our corporate efficiency target of one million pounds.
- By 2009 we aim to have in place a fully embedded process for demonstrating value for money and efficiency in all aspects of service delivery.

RECYCLING

- In 2006 we began the roll-out of the twin bin scheme with alternate week collections.
- By 2008 we aim to have 20,000 homes participating in our composting scheme.
- By 2009 we aim to increase our total recycling rate to 50% and apply for beacon status.

2

ACCESS TO SERVICES

- In 2006 we opened a new Customer Service Centre aimed at providing a 'one stop shop' for residents.
- By 2008 we aim to increase the range of services available by working with the County Council to identify and provide shared services.
- By 2009, as well as our existing area offices, we intend to develop further access points across the district.

3

TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

- In 2006 we developed an updated Grantham masterplan working with Grantham Futures.
- By 2008 we aim to have selected a preferred developer for and started construction on the Bourne Retail Area and completed the Stamford Gateway Project with key partners.
- By 2009 we aim to have an improved public realm in Grantham, Stamford and Bourne, generating more visitors, improved employment opportunities and a stronger retail offer to shoppers.

4

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- In 2006 a new, full-time position of Business Crime Project Co-ordinator was created, aimed at significantly reducing business crime.
- By 2008 in conjunction with our partners as part of our Safer South Kesteven campaign we aim to introduce a free phone line where residents will be able to report their concerns regarding any anti social behaviour activities in their area and speak directly with a member of the council's antisocial behaviour team
- By 2009 we aim to have 100% membership of pubs and clubs across the district in the Pubwatch scheme.

5

HELPING TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- In 2006 we plan to provide 130 new affordable housing units, 180 next year and 200 the year after - a total of 510 over the next 3 years.
- Between now and 2008 we will target our grants to improve energy efficiency in homes - especially those of vulnerable people. We anticipate awarding grants to approximately 100 households over this period.
- In 2006 we will be spending some £320,000 on disabled facilities grants rising to £450,000 in 2007 & 2008 (subject to Government funding).
- Working with private landlords we plan to bring some 18 empty homes back into use between 2006 and 2008.
- In conjunction with our partners help prevent 60 cases of homelessness in 2006 and 80 in 2007.

6

COMMUNICATIONS

- In 2006 we have strengthened the Communications team, produced five issues of the internal magazine and relaunched the external magazine.
- By 2008 we aim to hold annual networking events with the local media to discuss their ever-changing requirements and improve further our media service levels.
- By 2009 we aim to make all information material accessible and understandable, and available in a range of formats and languages as requested – and (if applicable) carry the Crystal mark logo as a standard.
- In 2006-7 we will also review our strategy to check that we are providing the right information about what are doing and how well we are doing it. In this way, people will be able to judge our effectiveness and also form opinions about the value-for-money their council tax delivers and the quality of services they receive.

7

APPENDIX

OUR COUNCILLORS

Our councillors represent the views of their wards. They are active in the community, always seeking to ensure that the decisions the council takes reflect local priorities.

SKDC has 58 councillors representing 34 wards.

Our constitution sets out how we operate, how our decisions are made and the procedures we follow to ensure that those decisions are transparent and accountable to local people.

WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS?

THE FULL COUNCIL

A body with the responsibility for strategic policy and decision-making. This includes setting the council tax and budgets. The full council is made up of all 58 members.

THE CABINET

Undertakes most of the day-to-day decisions of the council. Made up of the leader of the council and five other councillors with individual portfolio responsibilities:

- Strategic partnerships & community safety.
- Organisational development & housing.
- Economic development.
- Healthy environment.
- Access & engagement.
- Resources & assets.

DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANELS

Review the work and decisions of the cabinet and all areas of the council's work. Carry out specific projects and investigations and also consider any matter or service provided by an outside organisation which affects residents.

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Makes decisions on planning applications and enforcement items and advises on planning policy. Comprises 21 councillors.

THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by members of the district council and parish councils. Comprises five councillors, two independent members of the public and one parish council representative.

THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Deals with licensing and regulation of taxis, riding establishments, where alcohol is served, public entertainment venues, street trading and so on.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS AND LANGUAGES

SOUTH KESTEVEN HAS A RICH AND DIVERSE CULTURE - A COMMUNITY MADE UP OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES, WITH DIFFERING BACKGROUNDS, BELIEFS OR EXPERIENCES. THIS DIVERSITY IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKE SOUTH KESTEVEN SUCH A GREAT PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE AND WORK.

TO ENSURE ALL RESIDENTS OF SOUTH KESTEVEN HAVE ACCESS TO OUR INFORMATION MATERIAL.

OUR INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN THE VARIOUS LANGUAGES AND FORMATS INCLUDING LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE, ONLINE AND ON COMPUTER DISK.

To request a document in a specific language or format, you can ring us or email us:

t: 01476 40 61 27

e: communications@southkesteven.gov.uk

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