

Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 13 January 2026, 2.00 pm



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Elvis Stooke (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Baker (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Sarah Trotter

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Philip Knowles

Other Members present

Councillor Ian Selby

Officers

Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)
Tom Amblin-Lightowler, Environmental Health Manager – Environmental Protection
& Private Sector Housing
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Kay Boasman, Head of Waste Management and Market Services
Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection
Gyles Teasdale, Head of Property and ICT
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

38. Public Speaking

There were none

39. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gloria Johnson,
substituted by Councillor Nikki Manterfield.

40. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor Robert Leadenham noted that he was the Chairman of the
Grantham Canal Partnership, prior to their presentation.

41. Updates from the previous meeting

The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer noted that there were changes to the Private Sector Retrofit Scheme, and updates would be shared with the committee in due course.

42. Minutes of the meeting held 10 November 2025

The minutes of the meeting held 10 November 2025 were proposed, seconded, and carried AGREED as an accurate record.

43. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service

The Leader of the Council noted that he had been engaging with the local MP, Gareth Davies, and Anglian Water about delayed water infrastructure across the district.

44. Annual Air Quality Update

It was AGREED to move the Annual Air Quality Update to item seven of the agenda.

The Annual Air Quality Update was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Planning.

Local air quality in South Kesteven was managed via an extensive diffusion tube monitoring network comprising fifty-eight passive NO₂ diffusion tubes at thirty-five separate locations (some have triplicate/duplicate tubes at one location). The diffusion tube network was used to monitor NO₂ concentrations across the District, identify potential new areas of concern and monitor at known hotspot areas.

The 2025 Annual Status Report (ASR) was appended to the report, outlining monitoring data and identified trends.

The 2025 ASR identified that during 2024 there were no exceedances of the 1 hour mean objective when using annual mean as a proxy for hourly mean. This was positive and supported the overall improvement in air quality.

The ASR reports that there was compliance with the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide NO₂ at all fifty-eight passive monitoring tubes across the thirty-five monitoring locations. This was a continuing trend since 2019.

Within the 'conclusions and priorities' section of the 2025 ASR report it

recommended that the Council continue to use the passive monitoring network to monitor air quality levels, and to ensure that compliance was maintained throughout the district. The report recommended:

- Continue passive monitoring within the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to ensure the NO₂ concentration remains below 40 µg/m³.
- Continue to consider amending AQMA No.6 to remove the pollution declaration of 1- hour NO₂ mean exceedances and potential revocation of the AQMA'.

During discussions, comments were made on the following:

- A Member queried the necessity to keep monitoring air quality levels. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed the authority had a duty to comply with management data.
- It was confirmed that there hadn't been exceedances for twelve years, however, it was too soon to consider revocation of the AQMA.
- A visiting Member queried the annual cost of air quality management. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed there was no cost to the area and the authority was obliged to make the declaration. The ongoing cost was the production of the action plan every five years, including a traffic monitoring exercise. However, this was done in house to minimise costs. It was agreed that any annual costs of air quality monitoring could be provided to committee Members. **ACTION**

The Annual Air Quality Update was noted by the Committee.

The committee adjourned at 14.17 due to a technical issue.

45. Grantham Canal Partnership Presentation

The meeting resumed at 14.27.

The Grantham Canal Partnership Presentation was presented by the representatives from the Grantham Canal Society.

The presentation is appended to the minutes, and encapsulated the following:

- An update and insight into the work of the Grantham Canal Society (GCS)
- Description of the short-term plans and longer-term ambitions of the GCS.
- Discussion of how the GCS could take a more focussed and active role in the management and development of the canal east of the A1.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- Members praised the work of the society.

- A Member identified that some members of the public were resorting to parking on grass verges to access the canal footpath. It was suggested this could reflect a broader accessibility issue.
- In response, it was acknowledged that greater advertising was needed to also highlight which parts of the canal/towpath were public rights of way as sections of the canal/towpath were owned by a third party farmer. Many of the rights of way were under Canal and River Trust who owned much of the canal.
- It was noted that SKDC had worked with the Grantham Canal Society over the previous year for dredging work and both parties wanted to continue that partnership.
- It was confirmed that the sources of the water were Denton and Knipton reservoirs and Smite Feeder.
- It was queried whether the Grantham Canal Partnership held a species list. It was agreed that this would be circulated. ACTION
- There were no heavy metals or pesticides detected within the canal.
- It was confirmed that the partnership had volunteers from a range of backgrounds and was engaging with Grantham College.

The Grantham Canal Partnership presentation was noted by the committee.

46. Grantham Canal Maintenance Works

The Grantham Canal Maintenance Works was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement.

South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) became responsible for approximately a 1km stretch of the Grantham Canal located in the south-western area of Grantham between the A1 / A607 slip roads (Swingbridge Road) and Earlesfield Lane in 1983.

In 2024, reports were received of water seepage through the banks of the canal by a business based just off Trent Road. This was causing some damage to the access road which had a detrimental impact on their trading.

In response to the issue which arose in 2024 and a lack of updated survey information, a comprehensive condition survey was commissioned from external consultants in order to assess the current condition of the canal and its banks, the cause of the seepage, and options for a full improvement scheme.

The works specified by the condition survey report included stop logs located at The Swingbridge Road, Trent Road and Earlesfield Lane culverts. In addition to these stop logs, safe means of access to place and lift out these sections would be required, including railings, steps, working platforms and fencing. An electronic water level gauge and stop log store would also be installed.

It was anticipated that these works would cost in the region of £250k (subject to tender evaluation). The works would have enabled the water levels to be stabilised and facilitate safe water management. However, there would be a need for further works in order to stabilise the canal banks for the future long-term condition. These works were estimated at £750k, to be spent in the following 5 years.

During discussions, comments were made on the following:

- The Head of Service (Property and IT) noted that, following the issues identified in 2024, the canal low levels were resulting in ground surface flooding after heavy rain.
- The scope of SKDC's responsibilities for the organisation's section of the canal was queried. It was confirmed that SKDC were responsible for the canal and maintenance of the towpath.

The Grantham Canal Maintenance Works was noted by the committee.

47. Section 19 flooding Recommendations and Corresponding Actions

The Section 19 Flooding Recommendations and Corresponding Actions was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement.

Following a major flooding event, it was the responsibility of the Lead Flood Authority to undertake an investigation and produce Section 19 reports. The reports sought to establish a background to the flooding event and identify causes and recommendations to reduce the chances of flooding in the future. It should be noted that Section 19 reports contained recommendations only and there was not a statutory obligation to comply with these.

Appended to the report were details of the outstanding recommendations from Section 19 reports in South Kesteven.

During discussions, comments were made on the following:

- A Member praised the detailed level of the Section 19 reports but did note a disparity in one report between it being a one-in-thirty-year event and a one-in-a-thousand-year event.
- It was noted that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) were installing their own gages to monitor specific areas, known as Project Groundwater.
- A Member noted that district Councillors had a responsibility to engage with LCC to share local knowledge in these instances.

The Section 19 Flooding Recommendations and Corresponding Actions were noted by the committee.

48. Waste Policy Update

The Waste Policy Update was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

The Waste Policy document provided the residents of SKDC with an outline of the services provided and helped to manage their expectations regarding service delivery. Furthermore, it acted as a guide to Members on how to handle issues and ensures that any problems were dealt with fairly and transparently.

The key areas of change within the policy document were:

Section 3.5 - The addition of orange lidded black caddies to the collection material description list. This was added in anticipation of the rollout of food waste collections from April 2026.

Section 7.5 / 7.6 - The removal of the January and February winter collections, taking effect from January 2027. Residents, who had paid for the garden waste service, would still receive a Christmas tree collection in January.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- A Member queried whether a reduction in service would result in a reduction in cost. Adding that SKDC needed to be extremely clear in what they were doing. If the cost savings were going towards the service, SKDC needed to be clear with the messaging. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste responded that the original proposal was to increase by £2 and £1. By reducing this to £1.50 and 50p there is was a shortfall, which was matched by the reduction in service. The current cost fell below the cost recovery metric.
- The Cabinet Member also that that HGV duty excise was increasing, median repair costs had increased by 12%, MOT service charges had increased 27% per vehicle, and there were salary increases of 3.2%.
- A Member suggested consideration of a flat fee per bin. The Cabinet Member noted that this would reduce income by £13,000 which was not the point of reducing collections. The point of reduction was to respond to a genuine concern about keeping costs down for residents.
- A Member noted concern that whilst the removal of the January and February service would reduce SKDC's carbon footprint, it would increase that of the user who would alternatively have to drive to a disposal centre. Another Member noted concern that this could led to the unintended consequence of increased fly-tipping. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the proportion of fly tipping from garden waste was low and was mostly committed by professionals. The Cabinet Member endorsed composting as a solution, stating that there was advice and guidance on the SKDC website.

- The Cabinet Member confirmed there were 36,000 green bin subscribers and 5,000 secondary bin subscribers.
- The Cabinet Member agreed to send a spreadsheet out to committee containing further cost analysis. ACTION

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to recommend the updated Waste Policy to Cabinet.

The meeting adjourned at 16.08.

49. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy- Feedback and Review

The meeting resumed at 16.18.

The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy- Feedback and Review was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance & Licensing.

The Cabinet Member outlined the motives of the policy review to be public safety and transparency. Over previous years, SKDC had received feedback from drivers, operators, and Councillors indicating that the economic environment was disproportionately affecting the taxi industry.

Following this, a 12-week enforcement operation occurred in 2025 and two workshop sessions were also held for taxi and private hire drivers, one in Grantham and one in Stamford.

In addition to concerns about out of area drivers and council fees and charges, feedback had been received on the necessity of undertaking knowledge and English tests. Feedback was also received that the requirements to get an SKDC taxi were more difficult than other authorities.

Proposed policy changes, included the following:

Knowledge Test – Removal of the knowledge test requirement, removing a cost for new applicants.

English Test – This was to remain in the updated policy; however, the cost would be free of charge for all first tests. If a first test was failed, then further tests would be chargeable.

New drivers entering the profession - The provision of a 1-year licence for drivers entering the profession which supported feedback relating to difficulty in recruiting new drivers.

Delegated Authority- It was proposed that delegated authority was given to the Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder to make minor changes to the updated policy as required.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- A Member noted that they had worked with the policy for many years and believed it made common sense. They didn't believe the knowledge test was needed given the technology available. They requested clarity about the level of changes that would be delegated. It was confirmed this would be minor amendments, usually grammar or the insertion of links.
- It was confirmed that qualifications would be accepted if they demonstrated an understanding of the English language.
- The English test would be facilitated externally.
- A Member drew attention to the use of the word 'dial' in Appendix E – 2.3(ii). The Head of Service (Public Protection) agreed to review this and, if necessary, amend under the delegation.

It was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to recommend to Council that the updated Hackney and Private Hire Licensing Policy was adopted.

50. Work Programme 2025 - 2026

It was AGREED for the Food Waste item to be added to the Work Programme for March.

51. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent

The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture & Place) reminded members of the member briefing on 14 February 2026 and Joint-Environment and Rural & Communities OSC on 24 February 2026.

The meeting concluded at 16.39.