

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 21 MAY 2026

12.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Ian Selby Chairman
Councillor Anna Kelly Vice-Chairman

Councillor Kyle Abel
Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Steven Cunningham
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Zoe Lane

Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Richard Litchfield
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Habib Rahman
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Rob Shorrock
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection

Chris Prime, Communications Manager
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

122. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:

Emma Baker
Helen Crawford
James Denniston
Nick Robins
Penny Robins
Vanessa Smith
Peter Stephens
Ian Stokes

123. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

124. Public Open Forum

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

125. Notices of Motion

126. Councillor Sue Woolley

Councillor Sue Woolley proposed the following motion:

This Council notes:

- 1. Small HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) of 3-4 occupants can be established without planning permission under permitted development rights, with no requirement for community consultation.*
- 2. In December 2025 across SKDC, Serco managed 45 properties for resettlement purposes. providing 194 bedspaces.*
- 3. By March 2026 that figure had risen to 69 HMOs providing 301 bedspaces. Of those 69 properties, only 3 are occupied by families.*
- 4. The rate of increase of 55%, 107 new bedspaces in four months, represents a significant and accelerating pressure on South Kesteven's housing stock and communities. 5. Many councils have successfully introduced HMO regulation through Article 4 Directions in areas of intensive HMO properties. 6. Current*

permitted development rights mean residents have no right to be consulted on, or informed of, HMO conversions in their street.

This Council believes:

- 1. The current rate of HMO growth in Grantham is unsustainable and demands immediate action.*
- 2. Residents have a right to be consulted on developments that affect the character of their neighbourhood.*
- 3. An Article 4 Direction is a well-established, proportionate planning tool that gives communities a proper voice while ensuring legitimate housing needs continue to be met.*
- 4. Our Council has blocked this measure on two separate occasions, in October and November 2025, which has allowed the situation to worsen. This Council cannot allow further delay.*

This Council resolves:

- 1. To instruct officers to gather evidence to establish whether there are sufficient grounds to justify the implementation of an immediate Article 4 Direction to restrict the permitted development rights to change the use of dwellinghouses (use class C3) to small HMO's (use class C4) pursuant to the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 in respect of a 2km radius centred from the Grantham Market Cross and to bring a report setting out their recommendations to the ordinary meeting of Full Council due to be held in September 2026 (or an earlier ordinary meeting of Full Council, if feasible), for debate and decision.*

In introducing the motion, Councillor Woolley proposed to alter the wording with the consent of Council. However, not all present consented to alter the motion, therefore discussion returned the motion on notice.

The following points were raised during the proposal of the motion:

- Residents of Grantham should be able to give their thoughts on planning applications for small HMOs.
- The motion was raised as a 'quality of life issue' rather than a 'political issue'. This issue affected families, elderly residents and future generations alike.
- Grantham and South Kesteven had proud identities, and were places where people knew their neighbours. Many residents had expressed concerns about HMOs, due to the perceived pressures they created; these pressures included parking and community cohesion.
- When family homes were converted into HMOs, entire streets could change overnight. This motion wished to give power back to the people in the affected

area, as they deserved the right to comment on significant changes proposed in their neighbourhoods. Local decisions should reflect local needs and voices.

- The motion was about protecting the character of towns and villages. It was not about stopping HMO housing, but managing it thoughtfully.
- Local members of Grantham who have had local meetings, discussions, and had put politics to one side were to be applauded.

The motion was seconded. The seconder raised the following points:

- The Council had considered action on HMOs in Grantham on several occasions during the past eight months. The last occasion was November 2025. Since then, the number of HMOs had been rising. The bedspace count under Serco now stood at 301.
- He believed Grantham was suffering due to a failing dispersal policy set at governmental level.
- South Kesteven had supported 215 asylum cases, almost double that of any other neighbouring local authority. The status quo was not acceptable, and something needed to change.
- This motion asked officers to gather the relevant evidence associated with an Article 4 direction.

An amendment to the motion was proposed and seconded, to amend the entire section headed '*This Council resolves...*' to:

1. *To instruct officers to immediately commence all necessary work required for the making of an immediate Article 4 Direction, pursuant to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, removing permitted development rights for the change of use from dwellinghouses (Use Class C3) to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4).*
2. *That the proposed Article 4 Direction shall apply to all Grantham District Council wards together with Belmont Ward.*
3. *That officers bring forward the immediate Article 4 Direction, together with all necessary supporting documentation and evidence, for formal declaration and approval by Full Council no later than the meeting scheduled for 16 July 2026.*
4. *That the necessary officer resource, legal work, consultation requirements, and evidential preparation associated with the proposed Direction be funded from the Council's Local Priorities Reserve and already received Service User Grant Funding.*
5. *That ward-level data relating to HMO concentrations, resettlement accommodation, and associated housing pressures be circulated to all members alongside the report.*

After consulting with the Monitoring Officer, the Chairman ruled that this amendment was invalid. In their view paragraph 1 exposed the Council to legal risk, and there was a concern that paragraph 3 would be unlawful, as the law required statutory notice to be served and for members of the public to submit their views before the making of an Article 4 direction. Paragraph 5 introduced a further aspect to the motion; motions should only consist of one issue.

A further amendment to the substantive motion which removed text, and replaced text in the final paragraph was proposed and seconded:

This Council notes:

- 1. Small HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) of 3-4 occupants can be established without planning permission under permitted development rights, with no requirement for community consultation.*
- 2. In December 2025 across SKDC, Serco managed 45 properties for resettlement purposes. providing 194 bedspaces.*
- 3. By March 2026 that figure had risen to 69 HMOs providing 301 bedspaces. Of those 69 properties, only 3 are occupied by families.*
- 4. The rate of increase of 55%, 107 new bedspaces in four months, represents a significant and accelerating pressure on South Kesteven's housing stock and communities. 5. Many councils have successfully introduced HMO regulation through Article 4 Directions in areas of intensive HMO properties. 6. Current permitted development rights mean residents have no right to be consulted on, or informed of, HMO conversions in their street.*

This Council believes:

- 1. The current rate of HMO growth in Grantham is unsustainable and demands immediate action.*
- 2. Residents have a right to be consulted on developments that affect the character of their neighbourhood.*
- 3. An Article 4 Direction is a well-established, proportionate planning tool that gives communities a proper voice while ensuring legitimate housing needs continue to be met.*

This Council resolves:

- 1. To instruct officers to gather evidence to establish whether there are sufficient grounds to justify the implementation of an appropriate Article 4 Direction to restrict the permitted development rights to change the use of dwellinghouses (use class C3) to small HMO's (use class C4) pursuant to the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 in respect of*

the wards of Grantham (inclusive of Belmont ward) and to bring a report setting out their recommendations to the ordinary meeting of Full Council due to be held in September 2026 (or an earlier ordinary meeting of Full Council, if feasible), for debate and decision.

The proposer and seconded of the substantive motion were happy to accept these amendments and therefore this amended version became the substantive motion.

Debate ensued, with the following information being highlighted:

- A residents' meeting was attended by 70 people. They understood that there was a shortage of housing, which could be due to a failure of successive governments nationally to deliver affordable social housing. This could often leave HMOs as the only option. Residents were concerned about the quality of life of those living in HMOs, with direct concerns over laundry and communal facilities.
- Who lived in a property was not a material consideration of the planning regime.
- Any HMOs already in place would remain.
- Thanks were offered to those who had pushed the government to temporarily halt further applications for HMOs in the Grantham area for asylum seekers.
- This motion was about restoring balance and public confidence and the basic principle that communities should have their say.
- This motion would not impose an Article 4 direction immediately. In September this council could make an informed decision with all the facts.
- HMOs provided an important source of housing for people who were poorer, which included care leavers, working people, and those escaping domestic violence. If you were a young low paid worker they provided an affordable way of trying to make ends meet. HMOs enabled people to stay and contribute to society.
- This was a sanitised version of the motion that had previously been brought to Full Council, and it should be for Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.
- If you stripped away permitted development rights for small 3 or 4 bedroomed properties, you were not stopping those corporate buyers who had deeper pockets. The Council already had the tools to enforce when necessary, it could be preferable to focus on that and locate the bad landlords.
- Smaller HMOs were not required to be considered by the Planning Committee.

A further amendment (addition) was proposed and seconded:

This Council notes the failure of prior Conservative administrations to grasp the issue.

On being put to the vote, this amendment was not carried and therefore was **LOST**.

The debate returned to the substantive motion:

- The cross-party support on this motion was welcomed.
- An Article 4 direction did not necessarily mean that the Council was against HMOs. In the short-term at least it meant that more knowledge of them was required. The legislation attached to Article 4 directions already required officers to gather evidence in the fashion suggested by the motion.
- The source of funding for officers to carry out research was a matter for Full Council. It could be left to the discretion of the Section 151 Officer, or alternative sources of funding, such as the Asylum Dispersal Grant, or the Local Priorities Reserve could be used.
- The geography attached to any Article 4 direction would be determined by the evidence captured. A future report would determine or recommend a proposed area.

In summing up, Councillor Woolley stressed that the motion was not aiming to class HMOs as bad, nor was its intention to say 'no' to future HMOs. It was about putting the residents of Grantham first.

A recorded vote was requested – the results of the recorded vote were as follows:

For: Councillors Kyle Abel, Matt Bailey, Rhys Baker, Ashley Baxter, David Bellamy, Pam Bosworth, Pam Byrd, Steven Cunnington, Phil Dilks, Barry Dobson, Patsy Ellis, Paul Fellows, Ben Green, Tim Harrison, Graham Jeal, Gloria Johnson, Anna Kelly, Jane Kingman, Gareth Knight, Philip Knowles, Zoe Lane, Robert Leadenham, Bridget Ley, Richard Litchfield, Nikki Manterfield, Paul Martin, Penny Milnes, Virginia Moran, Charmaine Morgan, Habib Rahman, Susan Sandall, Max Sawyer, Ian Selby, Paul Stokes, Elvis Stooke, Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, Sarah Trotter, Mark Whittington, Jane Wood, Paul Wood, Sue Woolley (41)

Against: Councillors Rob Shorrocks, Lee Steptoe (2)

Abstentions: Councillors Harrish Bisnauthsing, Richard Cleaver, Chris Noon, Rhea Rayside, Murray Turner (5).

Therefore, the substantive motion was **AGREED**:

This Council notes:

1. Small HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) of 3-4 occupants can be established without planning permission under permitted development rights, with no requirement for community consultation.
2. In December 2025 across SKDC, Serco managed 45 properties for resettlement purposes. providing 194 bedspaces.

3. By March 2026 that figure had risen to 69 HMOs providing 301 bedspaces. Of those 69 properties, only 3 are occupied by families.
4. The rate of increase of 55%, 107 new bedspaces in four months, represents a significant and accelerating pressure on South Kesteven's housing stock and communities.
5. Many councils have successfully introduced HMO regulation through Article 4 Directions in areas of intensive HMO properties.
6. Current permitted development rights mean residents have no right to be consulted on, or informed of, HMO conversions in their street.

This Council believes:

1. The current rate of HMO growth in Grantham is unsustainable and demands immediate action.
2. Residents have a right to be consulted on developments that affect the character of their neighbourhood.
3. An Article 4 Direction is a well-established, proportionate planning tool that gives communities a proper voice while ensuring legitimate housing needs continue to be met.

This Council resolves:

To instruct officers to gather evidence to establish whether there are sufficient grounds to justify the implementation of an appropriate Article 4 Direction to restrict the permitted development rights to change the use of dwellinghouses (use class C3) to small HMO's (use class C4) pursuant to the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 in respect of the wards of Grantham (inclusive of Belmont ward) and to bring a report setting out their recommendations to the ordinary meeting of Full Council due to be held in September 2026 (or an earlier ordinary meeting of Full Council, if feasible), for debate and decision.

127. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 1:29 p.m.