



Small Unmanned Aircraft (Drone) Policy

Report Author

Phil Swinton, Head of Health, Safety, Emergency Planning and Compliance

✉ phil.swinton@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) / Drone use is growing at a rapid rate in the UK. Drone usage will provide a safer option for certain work streams, and this Policy sets out the controls required to implement Drones and their use for Council activities.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to approve the policy and the use of Drones for specified works.

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 Whilst there are some minor costs associated with training designated drone operators and the drones themselves it is expected these will be offset by savings from reduced working at height costs such as not incurring scaffolding costs.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no additional legal or governance implications that are not already reflected within the report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 The Council will be asking for its Public Liability insurance to be endorsed to include the use of drones. It is important that full risk assessments are completed to ensure the drone is suitable for purpose; full training is provided; and that the drone is **only** used in connection with Council business.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.4 This policy has been designed to establish the safe and compliant use of drones. It clearly sets out the requirements necessary to meet the controls required under the CAA guidance and best practices and supports a reduction in risk profile.
- 1.5 The Policy also ensures compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations including the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment 1998

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Head of Health, Safety, Compliance and Emergency Planning

Climate Change

- 1.6 Implementing the Small Unmanned Aircraft (Drone) policy offers potential for efficiencies for a variety of tasks that South Kesteven District Council complete as a landlord or for other property maintenance duties. These efficiencies could include a reduction for contractors to travel to survey properties, where these tasks could be carried out by appropriately qualified staff, or through issues with a property being identified and resolved more quickly through authorised use of drones.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The use of drones is a rapidly growing area which can provide real time benefits to organisations. The primary benefit being a reduction in risk profile through the removal of work at height requirements.
- 2.2 Drones can be deployed with little preparation or need for scaffolding and mobile towers to be erected to support building inspection and maintenance across the Housing and Corporate Property portfolio. In addition, they have potential applications in planning enforcement, emergency response, waste management and identifying areas of illegal waste tipping.
- 2.3 The use of drones is strictly controlled, and the policy clearly outlines the requirements established to ensure compliance with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) guidance on drone usage in the UK.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Introducing a policy which allows for drone use provides several benefits as outlined and supports climate change aspirations with a reduction of the Council's carbon footprint.
- 3.2. The policy is designed to ensure compliance with the CAA guidance and increase the safety of officers, consequently reducing the risk profile of the organisation.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council could continue to utilise scaffolding and mobile towers with current safety mitigations or engage contractors to undertake the works and inspections

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. To ensure the Council has an approved policy in place for the use of Small Unmanned Aircraft (Drones).

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The Policy has received scrutiny and feedback from the Joint Environment and Scrutiny committee and the Rural and Environment committee which met on 24 February 2026.
- 6.2 Feedback was provided on the need to include details of the mechanisms that would be employed to notify residents of drone use and this has been included in the Policy. For planned works it was agreed that tenants would be written to giving the dates of the flights and purpose. For short notice and emergency works the officers will engage in door to door knocking to inform as many residents as possible.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix 1 Small Unmanned Aircraft (Drone) Policy