

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: The Leader of the Council

REPORT NO.: POI34

DATE: 2 March 2009

TITLE:	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY
FORWARD PLAN ITEM:	No
DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:	N/A

KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Policy Framework Proposal	
COUNCIL AIMS/ PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Cllr Linda Neal	
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	ALL	
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	YES	
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Carried out and appended to report? N/A	Full impact assessment required?
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Annual Review of Priorities Full Council 4 September 2008 Lincolnshire Local Area Agreement 2008-11	

1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an update for members on the progress being made by the Lincolnshire Assembly to develop a new county wide Sustainable Community Strategy.

It contains the proposed Lincolnshire Sustainable Community Strategy and a chapter for the South Kesteven area.

The new national method of assessing local public services called the 'Comprehensive Area Assessment' comes into being from April 2009 and this will test the effectiveness of how all the councils in Lincolnshire and the organisations they work with help improve the overall quality of life for the people who live and work in the county.

2. RECOMMENDATION

(i) Council approves the Lincolnshire wide Sustainable Community Strategy including the chapter on South Kesteven.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

The draft Sustainable Community Strategy and the local South Kesteven chapter were discussed and considered by the Council at its meeting on 22 January 2009. While the draft strategy was supported members felt that more focus was needed on the economy theme. The final version of the strategy agreed by the County Council at its meeting on 13 February has expanded the Economy section (see page 7 of the attached strategy).

The draft strategy has also been considered by the South Kesteven Local Strategic Partnership and some revisions have been made to the local South Kesteven chapter.

It is planned to publish the new strategy by the end of March.

Sustainable Community Strategy Vision and Outcomes

A Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) seeks to set out long term vision for an area firmly based on an assessment of local needs. Lincolnshire's SCS looks at the type of county Lincolnshire may be in 2030.

A SCS needs to be based on an assessment of local need, this has been informed by work carried out by the Lincolnshire Research

Observatory and through various public consultation exercises, the two 'Big Sky Big County surveys' and the new national 'Place Survey'.

Lincolnshire's vision is to become a '***place where everyone can find and enjoy the lifestyle that suits them best***'. A set of priority themes shown below have been proposed along with some high level outcomes to drive the work of partners.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA), which is a three yearly set of improvement targets agreed between the county council (with its partners including the district councils, police and health services) and central government then helps drive what may be realistically achieved in the medium term to help achieve the 2030 vision and outcomes.

The vision and the lifestyles that people enjoy will come from the following priority themes:

- **Vibrant communities where people enjoy life**
- **Opportunities for good health**
- **One of the healthiest and most sustainable economies in Europe**
- **Good connections between people, services, communities and places**
- **Rich diverse environments, heritage and cultures that residents and visitors enjoy**

These will be supported by a theme that focuses on ensuring that we develop '**innovative and dynamic organisations** working together for Lincolnshire'.

There is a good fit between these county wide themes and the revised set of local priorities that the Council agreed in September 2008 that it wished to focus on (Quality Organisation, Healthy Living, Good for Business and Customer First). The detailed Priority Plans appear with the budget papers elsewhere on this agenda.

The type of outcomes that each of these themes is seeking to achieve is shown in the attached Sustainable Community Strategy (appendix 1) and it is proposed to adopt the Lincolnshire Sustainable Community Strategy rather than creating a separate strategy for South Kesteven.

While the Lincolnshire Assembly is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the whole of the county, South Kesteven has its own LSP which will play a role in ensuring that locally partner organisations contribute to delivering both the Sustainable Community Strategy and

Local Area Agreement. The South Kesteven LSP will not be producing its own local SCS but will work within the county wide strategy; it has developed a smaller set of three complementary priorities, Healthy Living, Sustainable Growth and Community Cohesion to focus on over the next few years. These are set out in the district chapter attached in appendix 2.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND ASSESSED

Although the Lincolnshire County Council is the body that will adopt the Lincolnshire Sustainable Community Strategy, its success depends on the input from many organisations including South Kesteven District Council. Consequently it was felt inadvisable not to bring the outline content before members.

5. COMMENTS OF SECTION 151 OFFICER

Any financial implications arising from the Council's contribution to the Sustainable Community Strategy will be met from existing budget provisions.

6. COMMENTS OF MONITORING OFFICER

The Local Government Act 2000 makes the provision of a sustainable community strategy a statutory obligation. As such the strategy delivery has been included in the Forward Plan as a policy framework document. Whilst this Council will not be required to adopt the strategy in its entirety, Council should approve the South Kesteven Chapter.

7. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER

None

9. CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

The Sustainable Community Strategy is a key building block of the council's performance management framework and there is a good fit between the Council's own priorities and those proposed for the new Lincolnshire SCS.

10. CONTACT OFFICER

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Sustainable Communities Strategy 2009-2030

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Welcome

Welcome to Lincolnshire's Sustainable Communities Strategy. It is a very important part of the work that partners in Lincolnshire are engaged in to help deliver our vision of 'vibrant communities where people enjoy life'.

This short document sets out why we have a community strategy, how we developed it, and how we are working together to make it happen. It ends with a light hearted view of what life could actually be like in Lincolnshire in 2030.

We hope you find it interesting. If you would like to find out more, please turn to page 20 to see where you can get more information.

There is a real feeling of partners wanting to work together for the benefit of our county so we're sure that this Strategy will lead to major improvements across Lincolnshire.

Why have a Sustainable Communities Strategy?

Every local council is under a duty to have a Sustainable Communities Strategy to *'set the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of a local area – typically 10-20 years – in a way that contributes to sustainable development in the UK.'*

In Lincolnshire we are more ambitious than many other areas and not just doing this because we have to. We're aiming to develop a strategy and delivery plans that cover all of our activities to deliver the county wide vision.

It's really important to have that shared focus for nearly £3billion public money spent in our county every year by partners in the Lincolnshire Assembly.

Last year we agreed a three year Local Area Agreement. This is an agreement with national government aimed at improving performance in specific services. That Local Area Agreement will be absorbed into this Strategy.

In the future, when national government looks at how well public agencies are serving Lincolnshire, they will start by looking at priorities in this Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Local Area Agreement that links with it.

How did we develop this Strategy?

We were determined to make sure this Strategy was based on widespread research and engagement with people across the county.

We launched part one of our Big County, Big Skies, Big Future consultation in November 2007 to engage with people across the county on their Big Ideas for the future.

That was followed up by briefings to county groups, workshops to develop our Local Area Agreement, shared priorities from local strategic partnerships across Lincolnshire and pooled research between partners.

We have been developing a shared evidence base for partners based around the Lincolnshire Research Observatory. They have produced two major reports about 'drivers for change' in our county and specialist reports around priority issues. Those reports look at differences between parts of the county (people call these 'gaps' or 'inequalities') as well as a county wide view and have been used to inform this Strategy.

Part two of the 'Big Skies' consultation took place in August 2008. People confirmed that our draft priorities were the right things to aim for in this Strategy.

What does Lincolnshire look like today?

Summarised from 'Lincolnshire: Global change, local issues (2009)'

In a recent national survey, Lincolnshire was rated 29th out of 122 areas based on the labour market, housing, the environment, crime, education and health.

As part of the Big County, Big Skies, Big Future consultation, top issues highlighted by local people were areas where we are already performing well, though some parts of the county have significantly poorer results on worklessness, skills, crime, housing, and the environment.

Communities

Our population has grown by 7% since 2001 compared to 4% nationally. Although birth rates have risen, the main cause of this is people moving into the county. 10-15,000 additional people move here each year.

In addition, many thousands of international workers have identified and pursued employment opportunities, particularly in the south and east of the county.

It is this recent acceleration of population change that, in some communities, can lead to community cohesion issues. Most tensions arise from simple misunderstandings around cultural behaviours and traditions although from time to time more serious disturbances and attitudes can emerge.

Crime rates in the county are low but Lincoln City has a rate above the national average.

Although housing is relatively cheap, income is also low so affordable housing is an issue for many.

Health

The numbers of older people coming to the county and younger people leaving is a key issue for us, particularly the strain placed on health and social care by the elderly. The proportion of people who are economically dependant compared to those who are economically productive is high in Lincolnshire.

Health inequalities persist across the county. People in the east are more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes or have an unhealthy weight. Lincoln residents are more likely to smoke or drink heavily and Boston has lower life expectancy for males.

Economy

Our economy has grown consistently in recent years but still lags behind much of the UK.

County unemployment is below national and regional rates, but Lincoln is consistently higher and seasonal unemployment is a big issue in East Lindsey. There is a similar picture of incapacity benefit claimants.

School attainment is generally higher than national and regional rates with East Lindsey and South Holland lower than national average.

Working age people qualified to NVQ Level 3 remains low.

As we have been working on this strategy, the world wide 'credit crunch' has happened. People have told us they are worried about the effect this will have on them now and for the future. We feel it is our responsibility to do what we can to respond to those concerns whilst we also plan to help Lincolnshire's economy emerge from current difficulties in a strong position to take advantage of any opportunities that arise by building on our strengths in food, farming, engineering and education.

What is our Vision for Lincolnshire in 2030?

Imagine **Lincolnshire** in 2030 ...

Ours is a Big County, with Big Skies that has a Big Future because Lincolnshire is the place where **everyone can find and enjoy the lifestyle that suits them best.** Those great lifestyles come from:

- Vibrant communities where people enjoy life
- Opportunities for good health
- One of the healthiest and most sustainable economies in Europe
- Good connections between people, services, communities and places
- Rich diverse environments, heritage and cultures that residents and visitors enjoy

Supported by organisations working together for Lincolnshire

Imagine Lincolnshire's **Communities** in 2030 ...

Lincolnshire has many **vibrant communities where people enjoy life.**

Our population comes from many backgrounds and these **people get on well and respect each other.**

Everyone feels safe in the places where they live and visit.

There are enough **homes in good condition that are affordable and suit people's needs.**

People's **local environments are well cared for.**

There are **opportunities for social, recreational, sporting and cultural activities.**

People influence, contribute to and take part in their communities.

People have choices about their lives and are treated with dignity.

Imagine Lincolnshire's **Health** in 2030 ...

Lincolnshire has continued to grow, with more people of all ages and health moving to our county and more living longer. Everyone, whatever their background or age, has **opportunities for good health**.

More people enjoy good health for longer.

The gap between most and least healthy people has reduced.

Local **people are actively involved in their own and other people's health and wellbeing.**

Imagine Lincolnshire's economy in 2030 ...

Historic Lincolnshire has **one of the healthiest and most sustainable economies in Europe.**

Clusters of economic excellence in agriculture, food manufacturing, power engineering, leisure and creative industries are critical to the world's economy after the recession.

These clusters are part of a much **more diverse economy** supported by **high quality training for skills.**

Our **top 30 UK university** leads on research and transferring knowledge into the county.

Imagine Lincolnshire's 'connections' in 2030 ...

Lincolnshire is one of the largest counties but with few large towns and many small communities so it is vital that there are **good connections between people, services, communities and places.**

There is **convenient access to services.** Increasingly, people are able to access these from their homes and local communities rather than travel farther away.

Widespread use of digital technology improves lives and life chances.

When people travel, they use a **safe, well managed transport network.**

Imagine Lincolnshire's Environment in 2030 ...

Ours is a huge and varied county ranging:

From the Cathedral to the Coastline....

From the Fens to the Waterways.....

From the City to the Market Towns....

From the Wolds to the Wetlands

Lincolnshire's **rich diverse environments, heritage and cultures are recognised and enjoyed by all.**

Lincolnshire has been shaped by man for thousands of years. We are continuing to do so by **balancing the needs of people, our heritage, the economy and nature.**

We have **embraced the challenges of climate change.** Our innovative solutions balance the needs of traditional strengths like food production and manufacturing with our natural and man-made environments.

Residents and visitors enjoy our heritage and environmental attractions.

Alongside our flourishing economy, the **countryside, coastline and towns are much richer in biodiversity** than in 2000.

Imagine Lincolnshire's organisations in 2030 ...

Our community strategy has set many challenges. We are making the best use of our resources by **working together for Lincolnshire** across public, private and voluntary sectors.

We have developed **creative and innovative approaches** to those challenges.

These are **focused on people and** based on knowledge gained by **involving people and communities**.

All this makes sure we are **spending money wisely** so Lincolnshire gets the best possible value for money.

How will we make it happen?

This Strategy will not achieve anything unless there are resources and plans to make it happen.

Partners have made over £10million available to support the strategy this year until their resources are aligned more fully in 2010 onwards.

We have already developed detailed joint delivery plans for our Local Area Agreement. Government Office for East Midlands has highlighted this as good practice for others to follow.

We have learned from that experience and identified how to improve our approach when we develop detailed delivery plans for this Sustainable Communities Strategy during the first half of 2009. In developing delivery plans we will take account of the fact that, whilst we want to work across the county, some parts need and deserve to improve more or faster than others.

This county wide Strategy will be reflected in local 'chapters' for each District Council's Local Strategic Partnership. Those chapters will link to this Strategy and pick up any purely local issues as well.

What makes our Strategy unique for Lincolnshire?

Every local council area is encouraged to have its own Sustainable Communities Strategy so many of them are very similar. We have thought very carefully about how to make sure ours is focused uniquely on Lincolnshire. There are several ways in which we'll do this:

Outcomes in the strategy cover issues that are particularly important for us, like connections between communities, climate change and flooding and road safety.

In every set of three year delivery plans we will identify and work on 'big ideas' to make major change in outcomes rather than just gradual improvements.

Sometimes there will be tensions between different parts of the strategy. For example, there could be conflicts between economic or highway developments and protecting our environment. The way we resolve them will be unique to Lincolnshire and probably different to predominantly urban areas.

How will we keep the Strategy up to date?

We will manage performance of delivery plans every three months and take action where necessary.

Delivery plans will be reviewed every year to see if medium term targets need to change.

The whole strategy will be reviewed every three years to make sure it is up to date, or earlier if there is a specific need.

Where can I find out more?

Please see www.lincolnshireassembly.com and follow the links to 'Local Area Agreement'.

The printed document will contain standard information on obtaining copies in other formats

South Kesteven District Chapter Lincolnshire Sustainable Community Strategy

Introducing South Kesteven

South Kesteven is located in the south west corner of Lincolnshire and covers 365 square miles. There are 4 main towns: Grantham, Stamford, Bourne, and the Deepings and over 80 villages. The population is growing rapidly and the district offers a desirable location and attractive prices for commuters to Peterborough and London. The local district council and police administrative headquarters are based in Grantham and there is also substantial new housing development underway in Grantham.

Demographic Context

The area was one of the fastest growing districts in the UK between 1991 and 2001. The population of the area is estimated by the Office for National Statistics to be 131,100 for mid 2007. This is an increase of over six thousand since the Census 2001. Historically, between the Census' 1991 and 2001 there was a 14% increase in population, compared to 4% for the East Midlands and 2.5% nationally. The gender split in 2001 was 49% male and 51% female. Grantham town is the largest of the settlements with approximately 15,718 households. Stamford is next largest with approximately 8,901, Bourne with approximately 6,017 and the Deepings with approximately 5,535, leaving almost 21,500 households spread over the rest of the 350 sq miles of the district.

Economy

Grantham has had a long association with the engineering industry, and the manufacturing base in all areas continues to expand and diversify along with food processing, cold storage, distribution, agriculture, local government and the NHS, tourism and the service sectors. The unemployment rate for South Kesteven is 2.7% (Jan 2009) as compared to 3.3% for the East Midlands. The employment rate (2008) is 79.7% as compared to 75.8% for East Midlands. Much of the employment within the district, however, has historically been low paid with low skill levels and the average incomes are distorted by very high incomes of those commuting out of the district. There are excellent high achieving schools in the district with 5 secondary schools achieving a 90%+ pass rate for 5 GCSE A*-C grades in 2007 and 64.5% of all people have qualifications of NVQ2 or above. The area is attracting people of the middle age groups, including families with young children rather than older residents.

The number of VAT registered businesses as at the beginning of 2008 was 5,015 which is an increase on the previous year of 4.37% and indeed has increased year on year for the past ten years or more. An analysis of the NNDR list indicated in Mar 2008 that there are 1009 industrial units, 556 office units and 1579 retail units (of which 344 are recorded as being vacant). Some of the main employers in the

district are in the public sector (including education), manufacturing and food processing businesses.

Spatial Profile

The area lies 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 A1 with the A15, A16 and A52 main road connections to other parts of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. Whilst there are bus services between the major settlements and the many rural villages, the frequency of the services leaves the population heavily reliant on their cars for transport. In addition, East Midlands airport and Doncaster Sheffield airport are just over one hour's drive away.

Vision

South Kesteven by 2030

A successful area supported by excellent social and transport infrastructure. Grantham will have developed as a key economic centre not only in Lincolnshire but also sub regionally. Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings will have equally developed their distinctive market town roles. Rural communities will have remained viable by achieving development that supports their needs. All of this will have been achieved in ways which ensures a good quality of life, health and well being for everyone as well as celebrating the distinctiveness of the district's countryside and heritage.

Our Priorities

Our vision and priorities take full account of spatial and environmental issues and are fully aligned with the planning objectives set out in the Local Development framework. In establishing the priorities which shape South Kesteven we used a range of consultation documents and results collected by a selection of the partners of the LSP including: SKDC, LCC, PCT, Lincolnshire Police, Community Lincs and the Community Safety Partnership. The results of this research gave us three distinct strategic priorities for the district:

Sustainable Growth - There are a number of major development plans within the district:

Grantham Growth Point – In 2006 Grantham was confirmed as a new Growth Point area with the potential to deliver new homes and many more jobs over the next twenty years. Since then the district and county councils along with key partners have developed a strong vision for the town to deliver a true step change and transform it into a better place to live, visit and invest. The aim is to build upon Grantham's principal assets namely its location, excellent transport links, environment and its people. Growth Point status will allow major housing expansion and the chance to enhance the town centre, but will also allow the population to expand from 38,000 in 15,000 households to 50,000 in 21,000 households. This will be delivered together with significant local infrastructure improvements including

more shopping facilities, better roads, local transport, new green linkages and public realm projects.

The vision for Grantham Growth is "To promote ambitious but balanced growth within Grantham, making it one of the regions most aspirational locations to live, to work, and to visit." The Grantham Growth Point website can be viewed at www.granthamforgrowth.co.uk.

Bourne Core Area - The Bourne Core Retail area is the proposed expansion and development of the town centre to meet the needs of the town's growing population. There is continued growth of the industrial units which are being developed in conjunction with the building of 2,000 planned new homes on the Elsea Park estate.

The LSP views Sustainable Growth not only in terms of the built environment but also with regard to the natural environment and the impact of climate change on the district. If both work in harmony we can build sustainable communities in which people want to live and work, now and in the future. Only by developing this balance will we meet the diverse needs of our residents, improving quality of life and offering opportunities which bring communities together. We don't just want to build housing – we want to build the communities who live and work in South Kesteven.

The main outcomes for Sustainable Growth are:

- Grantham to become a sub-regional centre
- Redevelopment of Bourne Core Area including retail, commercial and residential uses in modern buildings
- to support the development of affordable housing across the district
- to ensure that these developments and the natural environment are sustainable
- to develop community transport schemes to prevent isolation of our vulnerable residents
- to promote opportunities for formal and informal education
- to ensure opportunities for employment

Community Cohesion - South Kesteven has seen large scale population change in the last five years (national statistics show that the ethnic demographic has increased from 3.4% to 5.8% - last updated August 08 (*Office for National Statistics – Neighbourhood Statistics – Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group*) with migrant workers coming into the district from eastern Europe and Portugal predominantly. South Kesteven's last resident's survey (2006/7) asked a question on Community Cohesion. The nationally published figure for the district in response to the question on whether the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together was 77%. This was just above the bottom quartile for all councils. Once the detail behind the responses was broken down it was clear that a significant proportion of our residents had a low level of awareness one way or another to make a firm judgement on the question. This led us to identify

Community Cohesion as a priority for the district believing that the issue is greater than the apparent outcome of the survey.

Of course community cohesion also addresses issues around Community Safety as well as inter-generational tolerance and equality of service for older people and people with disabilities. In short, achieving community cohesion means working together to build a strong, safe, inclusive South Kesteven.

With an ever-changing population Community Cohesion needs a long-term commitment in South Kesteven. In order to make sure that South Kesteven as a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area we will develop a programme of activity which ensures:

- People will share respect for one another, develop community pride and, regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds, get on well together
- People will feel safe within their own neighbourhoods
- Cultural Diversity is embraced and celebrated

Healthy Living - The health of the population of South Kesteven is 'good' when compared to the rest of the country. There are comparatively lower levels of coronary heart disease, strokes, cancers, infant mortality and teenage pregnancy. However, there are variations in health and illness within the district in terms of life expectancy, ill-health and long-term illness and such variations are often reflected in the deprivation scores for individual wards across the district. The PCT has identified Harrowby, Earlesfield and St Wulfram's wards as areas of concern. The two key inequalities across South Kesteven have been identified as obesity – 2008 health profile for South Kesteven states that 24.6% of adults in the district are obese and alcohol misuse (188 recorded hospital admissions in 2008) and it is our intention to reduce these inequalities through projects and commissions which promote healthy lifestyles tackling issues with a culture of 'prevention rather than cure'.

To improve obesity levels in both children and adults and reduce alcohol misuse in South Kesteven we intend to:

- Provide a range of educational activities which will lead to improved knowledge of nutrition and the importance of physical activity
- Provide training for professionals working either directly or indirectly with young people on the importance of alcohol awareness thereby reducing incidents of anti-social or criminal behaviour through binge drinking.
- Reduce the number of admissions to hospital related to alcohol consumption
- Maximise the district's use of leisure facilities – either recreationally or as exercise referral to help prevent ill health within South Kesteven

Although these priorities are shown as independent of each other we will seek, wherever possible, to link and support the delivery of projects and commissions across South Kesteven.

Reference Documents:

SK Core Strategy 2009
SK Economic Development Strategy 2009 – 2014
SK Generic Equality Scheme 2009 – 2012
SK Resident's Survey 2006/7
SK Health Profile 2008 (Dept of Health)
Office of National Statistics – Mid year population estimates 2007
South Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008 - 2011
2001 Census