

Council



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Thursday, 24 November 2022 at 1.00 pm
Council Chamber - Council Offices, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Members: Councillor Helen Crawford, Chairman of the Council
Councillor Gloria Johnson, Vice-Chairman of the Council

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Robert Broughton
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor Louise Clack
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Kelham Cooke
Councillor John Cottier
Councillor John Dawson
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin
Councillor Graham Jeal

Councillor Rosemary Kaberry-Brown
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Matthew Lee
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Annie Mason
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Julia Reid
Councillor Robert Reid
Councillor Kaffy Rice-Oxley
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Lee Steptoe

Councillor Judy Stevens
Councillor Adam Stokes
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Jill Thomas
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Dean Ward
Councillor Hannah Westropp
Councillor Hilary Westropp
Councillor Amanda Wheeler
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Mary Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley
Councillor Linda Wootten
Councillor Ray Wootten

Please note that space is limited in the Council Chamber for members of the public. A live broadcast of the meeting will be shown in another meeting room at the Council Offices which members of the public are welcome to use. Attendance in both the Council Chamber and the extra meeting room being made available will be allowed on a first-come-first-served basis. The meeting will also be broadcast live on the [Council's YouTube channel](#).

Published and despatched by democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk on Wednesday, 16 November 2022.

01476 406080

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive

www.southkesteven.gov.uk

Agenda

This meeting is available as an audio stream via YouTube

For those Councillors who wish to attend, prayers will be held at 12:55pm before the commencement of the meeting. Please be seated by 12:50pm.

1. Public Open Forum

The Council welcomes public participation at its meetings.

The public open forum will commence at **1.00 p.m.** and the following formal business of the Council will commence at **1.30 p.m.** or whenever the public open forum ends, if earlier.

Any member of the public requesting to speak should register with democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk and provide three days' notice of the question or statement they wish to make.

Up to six people can register to speak during this item, with each person being permitted to speak for up to five minutes.

2. Apologies for absence

3. Disclosure of Interests

Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September

(Pages 7 - 15)

5. Communications

To include any announcements from those individuals listed at 3.1(d) of the Council Procedure Rules.

6. Budget Framework Proposed Amendments 2022/23

(Pages 17 - 27)

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the amendments required to the 2022/23 budget framework in response to the current financial climate and the impact on the budgets approved by Council on 3 March 2022.

7. Deepings Leisure Centre

(Pages 29 - 72)

To determine whether the previously agreed refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre proceeds given the significant changes to the Council's financial outlook, and to withdraw from the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields.

8. Statement of Licensing Principles 2023-2026 (Pages 73 - 78)

The Gambling Act 2005 requires the Council, as the Licensing Authority, to review and publish a Statement of Principles every three years. This report presents the draft Gambling Statement of Principles 2023-2026 for approval and adoption.

9. Political Proportionality, Allocation of Seats on Committees and Appointment to an Outside Body (Pages 79 - 84)

To provide Full Council with an update on the political proportionality and allocation of seats on Committees since the last meeting, taking into account the results of two by-elections held on 10 November 2022 and notification of a resignation.

To provide Full Council with an opportunity to appoint a Member onto the Joseph Clarke's (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation to fill a vacancy.

10. Interim Review of Polling Places (Pages 85 - 123)

This report details proposals for changes of some polling places following an interim review of polling places and polling stations.

11. Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman Protocol (Pages 125 - 130)

This report provides Full Council with an opportunity to consider a draft protocol for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen, which seeks to set out a clear process for bestowing such an honour.

12. Proposed amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules and Planning Committee Scheme of Delegation (Pages 131 - 152)

This report provides Full Council with an opportunity to consider a recommendation from the Constitution Committee to make an amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules and Planning Committee's Scheme of Delegation.

13. Members' Open Questions

A 45-minute period in which members may ask questions of the Leader, Cabinet Members, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and opposition group leaders excluding the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, Licensing and Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committees and Governance and Audit Committee.

14. Notices of Motion

a) Councillor Amanda Wheeler

The UK's current voting system (known as First Past the Post) originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men.

Currently in Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use the archaic single-round FPTP for general elections. Meanwhile, internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect parliaments in more than 80 countries. These countries tend to be

more equal, freer and greener. Under PR, MPs and Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and protected characteristics of local communities and the nation. MPs better reflecting their communities leads to improved decision-making, wider participation and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken.

Proportional Representation ensures all votes count, have equal value, and those seats won match votes cast.

PR would also end minority rule. In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a government with 56.2% of the seats and 100% of the power.

PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. So why not Westminster?

South Kesteven District Council therefore resolves to write to Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws to enable Proportional Representation to be used for general elections.

b) Councillor Ashley Baxter

*This Council welcomes the **anticipated** endorsement by the Department for Education (DfE) of the Lease between the Deepings School (part of the Anthem Trust), Lincolnshire County Council and South Kesteven District Council.*

The Council recognises that the Deepings Leisure Centre was the second most visited Leisure Centre in the District; and its sudden closure, in July 2021, has caused long-term distress, disadvantage, discomfort and expense to people previously served by the centre.

This Council resolves to:

- 1. Reiterate its commitment to a major refurbishment of the Deepings Leisure Centre to ensure the facility re-opens to restore much-needed swimming and leisure facilities to the Deepings and surrounding area.***
- 2. Appoint 'design and build' contractors for the Deepings Leisure Centre refurbishment within 1 calendar month of confirmation of the Lease by DfE.***
- 3. Require the Cabinet Member for Leisure to prepare and present an updated Project Plan for the Deepings Leisure Centre. The Plan will include indicative costs, income and timescale for the agreed refurbishment.***
- 4. Convene a joint meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees before 31st January 2023 to scrutinise the aforementioned Project Plan.***
- 5. Ensure that best endeavours are taken to 'future-proof' the centre, particularly in terms of energy cost and consumption.***

15. Close of meeting

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MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

1.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Helen Crawford Chairman
Councillor Gloria Johnson Vice-Chairman

Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Robert Broughton
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor Louise Clack
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Kelham Cooke
Councillor John Cottier
Councillor John Dawson
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Jan Hansen
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Nikki Manterfield

Councillor Annie Mason
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Kaffy Rice-Oxley
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Judy Stevens
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Dean Ward
Councillor Hannah Westropp
Councillor Hilary Westropp
Councillor Amanda Wheeler
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley
Councillor Linda Wootten
Councillor Ray Wootten

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Alan Robinson, Deputy Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Cotton, Director of Housing and Property
Nicola McCoy-Brown, Director of Growth and Culture
Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director of Planning
Chris Prime, Communications Manager

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Jordan Brooks, IT Helpdesk Engineer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer
Louise Field, Executive Assistant to the Leader of the Council

37. Public Open Forum

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman of the Council invited a minute's silence to remember Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Following the minute's silence, the Chairman along with Councillors Phil Dilks, Kelham Cooke, Mark Whittington, Ian Selby, Susan Sandall, Charmaine Morgan, Paul Wood and Lee Steptoe shared their memories of the Late Queen.

The Chairman of the Council then invited members to hold a further minute's silence for the late Councillor Judy Smith. Following the minute's silence, The Chairman, Councillors Kelham Cooke, Paul Wood, Paul Fellowes, Philip Knowles, Linda Wootten, Ian Selby, Phil Dilks and Charmaine Morgan all paid tribute to Councillor Smith.

No members of the public had registered to speak as part of the public open forum.

38. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin
Councillor Rosemary Kaberry-Brown
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Robert Reid
Councillor Adam Stokes
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Jill Thomas

39. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

40. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

41. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted the Chairman's engagements which had been circulated at the meeting, for information.

The Chairman thanked those members that had been present at the Civic Service on Sunday 4 September.

The Chairman also highlighted that she had been present at St. Wulfram's Church, Grantham for a remembrance service for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Leader of the Council noted his pride at how South Kesteven District Council had worked throughout the national period of mourning, and highlighted the following pieces of work:

- Supporting the books of condolence in Bourne, Market Deeping, Grantham and Stamford;
- The organisation of the floral tributes; and;
- The Operation London Bridge team and the mayoral teams of Bourne, Market Deeping, Grantham and Stamford for their work throughout the period of mourning. This included the management of the proclamation in the four towns.

The Head of Paid Service informed members of the appointment of temporary Councillors to Hough on the Hill Parish Council.

Hough on the Hill Parish Council had recently received resignations from all of its members and was no longer quorate. Where a Parish Council was inquorate and unable to operate, the District Council could make temporary appointments to enable the Parish Council to progress urgent business. The making of temporary appointments to Town and Parish Councils was delegated to the Chief Executive and any appointments were required to be reported to the next meeting of Council for information. Members were advised that the Chief Executive had used these powers to make three temporary appointments to Hough on the Hill Parish Council - Councillor Penny Milnes, Councillor Paul Wood and County Councillor Alexander Maughan - until three new Parish Councillors had been elected or co-opted and taken up office.

42. Horbling Conservation Area

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy presented a report considering the potential designation of the Horbling Conservation Area and the adoption of the Horbling Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

The Cabinet Member outlined to members that designating the Conservation Area would recognise the special interests of Horbling. The boundaries of the Conservation Area were defined in the map appended to the report in the agenda pack.

The Cabinet Member ended the introduction by highlighting that the Conservation Area would allow greater protection for the character of the geographical area and would protect important features. The Cabinet Member placed on record his thanks to officers within the Planning team for compiling the report.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The original consultation for Horbling Conservation Area took place in 2018. A further consultation was carried out due to omissions in the 2018 iteration;
- There would be a reputational risk to SKDC if the special qualities of Horbling Conservation Area were not monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis;
- The boundaries of Horbling Conservation Area appeared unusual and did not match the current footprint of the village; this was because the Conservation Area was there to conserve the older parts of the village and not new build properties.

Having been proposed and seconded, upon being taken to the vote the motion was **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

1. **Approves the formal designation of the Horbling Conservation Area boundary as shown in Appendix C to the report.**
2. **Approves the adoption of the Horbling Conservation Area Appraisal, as part of the Development Plan evidence base and as a material planning consideration; and**
3. **Delegates the decision making to the Assistant Director of Planning to make minor changes, typographical corrections or non-material amendments to the Horbling Conservation Area Appraisal and associated documents prior to formal publication and to undertake the necessary statutory actions to implement agreed recommendations.**

43. Political Proportionality, Allocation of Committee Seats and appointment of Armed Forces Lead Member

A report of the Chief Executive was considered which reported the revised political balance of the Council and allocation of seats to committees following a change to one of the political groups on the Council.

The report also proposed the appointment of Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren to the role of Lead Member for the Armed Forces.

The Leader of the Opposition moved that Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing be added as a member to the vacant seat for the Independent Group on Companies Committee.

The motions were proposed and seconded en bloc. Upon being taken to the vote the motions were **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

- 1. Notes the revised political proportionality and allocation of seats to Committees.**
- 2. Approves the appointment of Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing from the Independent Group to the vacant seat on the Companies Committee.**
- 3. Approves the appointment of Councillor Phil Dilks from the Alliance SK Group on the Licensing Committee and Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committee.**
- 4. Approves the appointment of Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren as the Council's Lead Member for the Armed Forces.**

44. Members' Open Questions

Question 1 – Councillor Jan Hansen to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Hansen asked the Leader of the Council whether he would agree to hold a meeting with Horbling Parish Council to discuss the Horbling Conservation Area.

The Leader of the Council agreed to be involved in a meeting with Horbling Parish Council and extended the invite to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy.

Question 2 – Councillor Paul Wood to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Paul Wood noted the six-month review that had recently been undertaken following the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge and asked the Leader of the Council for feedback.

The Leader explained to members that there had been a six-month review held by the members of the Peer Review Panel. A report was due back in three weeks' time and the details of this would be reported back to Full Council. The Panel were impressed with both the officer and political improvements since their last visit and noted significant progress across a number of areas of the Council.

Question 3 – Councillor Phil Dilks to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy

Councillor Dilks congratulated the villages of Ropsley and Welby for their recent success in South Kesteven District Council's Best Kept Village competition. He asked the Cabinet member why Deeping St. James had been banned from the competition and requested assurance that the ban would be lifted.

In reply, the Cabinet Member congratulated all of those villages that had had success in the competition and gave a special mention to those that had received a gold bin. The Cabinet Member highlighted to members that she had inherited responsibility for the Best Kept Village competition from a previous Cabinet Member. The competition was being reviewed and further information would be provided to members when available.

Question 4 – Councillor Chairmaine Morgan to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Morgan highlighted the national cost of living issue and asked for an explanation of why the subject was not included on the agenda for this meeting, how the Council would manage the issue, and whether an extraordinary meeting could be considered.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that the issue was part of the agenda for the postponed Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 October 2022. Additionally, the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities had held a number of working group meetings on this topic.

The Leader of the Council informed members that the cost of living was a priority; the Council was working with a number of community groups across the district. The issue, and the finances around it would also be discussed at the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Note: Councillor Kaffy Rice-Oxley left the Chamber and did not return.

Question 5 – Councillor Lee Steptoe to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Steptoe queried when a bidding based letting system would be introduced for the Council's housing stock.

The Leader of the Council asked for clarification from the Director of Housing and Property, who responded that the timeline would be shared with all members in due course. Currently, his team were looking at IT packages that would allow a choice-based letting system to work.

Question 6 – Councillor Philip Knowles to the Cabinet Member for Waste Services and Climate Change

Councillor Knowles requested an update on the progress of the grounds maintenance contract.

The Cabinet Member informed members that there would be a Joint Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss the continuation of grounds maintenance. There were three options to consider; private providers, in-house provision, or retaining service provision through EnvironmentSK Ltd. Once the options had been discussed at the Joint Meeting, a report would be put to the appropriate decision makers.

Question 7 – Councillor Anna Kelly to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Kelly asked for an update on the Scrutiny Review and asked whether an action plan had been formulated.

The Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive outlined that a draft action plan was on the agenda for Governance and Audit Committee to consider on 28 September 2022.

Question 8 – Councillor Ian Selby to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Selby asked whether communication with the general public could be improved as he had heard several comments from constituents remarking that the standard of communication from officers was poor.

The Leader of the Council replied requesting evidence for this statement, as residents were communicated with on a daily basis across a range of departments and issues. Other work, such as the South Kesteven magazine, and the upcoming Communications Strategy demonstrated officer commitment to good communication with residents.

45. Notices of Motion

(a) Councillor Amanda Wheeler

Councillor Amanda Wheeler proposed the following motion, which had been amended from the printed version available in the agenda pack with the consent of Council. The original wording had been replaced with the following:

Cost of Living

Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 50% in April this year and had proposed increasing the typical household energy bill further to £3,549 from October.

It is noted that the government has now proposed that the household energy bill will be £2,500 from October giving a saving of around £1,000 p.a.

As well as energy bills, food and fuel prices have increased substantially, and inflation is currently running at 10% and expected to rise.

All of this is putting increasing pressure on family budgets, and it is important that the Council do all it can to help its residents.

The Council therefore:

- 1. pledges to improve communication of Housing Benefit and Council Tax support schemes for those on low incomes in order to ensure those who are entitled to additional support are receiving it.*
- 2. resolves to organise a local “Cost of Living Working Group” with key groups including Citizens’ Advice, food banks, local community and business groups and Town and Parish Councils. This is to discuss how it can best support its residents through this current crisis and use its influence and resources to create positive change.*

In introducing the motion, Councillor Wheeler stressed that it was important that the Council did all it could to support local residents with the cost of living by working with local organisations; for example Citizen’s Advice. Examples of the current issues given by Citizen’s Advice were:

- increased calls to the service;
- an increase in food bank referrals and support with energy bills.

Councillor Wheeler highlighted the hard work of the food banks in the Deepings, Bourne, Stamford and Grantham, as well as commending charities, community groups, churches, and officers at the Council.

A dedicated page on the Council’s website had been created to draw all the resources together that assisted with the cost of living, to ensure residents and businesses had a central point of information. Councillor Wheeler re-affirmed that the original motion included in the agenda pack had been amended to ensure cross-party support.

The Chairman of the Council seconded the motion and invited members to debate. The following points were raised during debate:

- The cost of living was already a national emergency and there would be a fiscal event held by the government; it was hoped this event would address some of cost of living issues;
- A Cost of Living Strategic Working Group had already been set up and was chaired by the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities. It met on a weekly basis and was supported by a team of Senior Managers; invites were

also extended to external stakeholders from public, private and voluntary sector organisations;

- It was noted that not all residents would have internet access, and therefore would not be able to access the cost of living webpage. It was likely therefore that word of mouth updates, through Town and Parish Councils would be important to reach these individuals;
- Cost of living 'support events' would be planned in the Deepings, Stamford, Bourne and Grantham, supported by a range of external stakeholders. Further information would be provided at the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 5 October 2022;
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns were paramount, and it would be important to link in cost of living work with the Mental Health Working Group;
- Those residents that were not accessing support that they were otherwise entitled to would be contacted by officers;
- The cost of living was something that would not just affect those vulnerable members of society, it would also touch those on middle incomes. One of the ways in which the Council could provide help was through the use of a 'hub';
- When calling on the help of local charities in the district it would be important that this help was not piecemeal and was available to all, not just those in the towns where the charities were based;
- Cost of living updates would be reported back publicly to the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- The Council had an Employment Committee that looked after the welfare of staff, in addition to the People Panel, which contained staff representatives from all departments of the Council. The People Panel gave staff the opportunity to raise concerns to senior members of staff and members.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was **AGREED**.

46. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 2:39pm.

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Council

Date 24 November 2022

Report of Councillor Adam Stokes,
Deputy Leader of Council

Budget Framework Proposed Amendments 2022/23

Report Author

Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

 r.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the amendments required to the 2022/23 budget framework in response to the current financial climate and the impact on the budgets approved by Council on 3 March 2022.

Recommendations

That Council approves the following amendments to the Budget framework for 2022/23:

1. Increase the following utility budget allocations:

- General Fund – Electricity increase of £199k to be funded from the Inflation Reserve
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Electricity increase of £167k to be funded from the HRA Priorities Reserve

2. Increase the Fuel budget allocation:

- General Fund – increase of £200k to be funded from the Inflation Reserve

3. Increase the General Fund Workshop budget of £280k to be funded from the Local Priorities Reserve.
4. Approves the 2022/23 employee pay award which is in line with the National Employers' agreement, providing an increase of £1,925 on all SKDC pay points from SK1 and above (backdated to 1 April 2022). This will increase the salary costs for 2022/23 in the General Fund by an additional £880k and is to be funded from the Local Priorities Reserve. This will increase the salary costs for 2022/23 in the HRA by an additional £260k and is to be funded from HRA Priorities Reserve.
5. That Full Council delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) to implement the results of the National Pay Negotiations for Chief Executives in respect of the remuneration for South Kesteven District Council's Chief Executive for 2022/23.
6. Approves the budget of £192,630.23, to be met from the Regeneration Reserve, for the additional expenditure incurred in the contract with GF Tomlinson for the demolition works at St. Martins Park Stamford.

Decision Information	
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	All
Which wards are impacted?	All

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 The financial implications are included in the report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 Any amendments to the Council's budget as recommended in this report require the approval of Full Council.

1.3 In relation to the proposed employee pay award, whilst South Kesteven District Council is not part of the national pay bargaining, it has a local agreement with Union Representatives to give due consideration to pay awards made by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The 2022/23 budget proposals were approved by Council on 3 March 2022 and showed a balanced position without any reliance on Council reserves but showed an emerging deficit due to the expected borrowing costs of the significant refurbishment costs for Deepings Leisure Centre and uncertainty with respect to the levels of funding from business rates and Government grants. Since that time a

number of significant external events are occurring that are having a detrimental impact on the Council's financial outlook with escalating inflation, increasing energy prices and employee pay proposals all adding significant cost pressures to the Council's financial position for this financial year and beyond.

These are in the main part caused by national issues, beyond the Council's control, and are impacting all Councils. In addition, the current cost of living crisis has the potential to increase demand for the Council's services by those who rely on the support provided by local government. These unforeseen and unavoidable pressures have seriously impacted the assumptions that underpin the Medium Term Financial Plan that was approved by Council on 3 March 2022.

Furthermore, there still remains uncertainty around the level of funding for local government beyond the current financial year. The Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention Policy remain unresolved, whilst plans for the re-set of the Business Rates tax base originally planned for 2020 are also still unknown. Despite a three-year Spending Review announced for 2022/23 to 2024/25 the Local Government Financial Settlement was for only one year. These reforms create a higher level degree of uncertainty and restrict the Council to set clear medium term financial plans with a degree of confidence.

As a result of these factors, the Council, is now required to update its immediate and medium term outlook within the context of a very uncertain operating environment. Against this backdrop of significant uncertainty and volatility, this report sets out the current financial planning challenges and the actions that will need to be considered to navigate the Council throughout this uncertain period. This medium-term financial planning is critical to ensuring that the Council has an understanding of the likely level of available resources and the potential costs of delivering services, identifying budget shortfalls at the earliest opportunity to ensure appropriate action can be taken in advance.

Based on the current financial assumptions it is estimated that the Council will be facing a 2022/23 operating deficit of 800k. The main headings that are contributing to the forecast deficit are shown as:

Heading	2022/23 £'000	Budget Impact	Comments
Inflationary increases	200	Increase budget from £517k to £717k	Market increases being experienced for the current financial year
Fuel Increases	200	Increase budget from £619k to £819k	Cost per litre approximately 30% higher than budgeted
Workshop cost increases	280	Increase budget from £318k to £598k	Specific Reserve level insufficient to respond to increase demand

Other Pressures	120	Pressures to be offset against investment income	Combination or rising operation costs and reducing income levels
Total	800		

This is an in-year pressure with limited options to respond to the pressure as a balanced position and the tax has been set for the current year. However there are responses that can be considered to reduce the adverse impact on the Council.

As part of the closedown of the 2021/22 financial year a specific reserve was created to respond to the financial challenges and operating risks(as they were known at the time). This is set at £500k. This can accommodate the rising energy and fuel costs but will not be sufficient to respond to the increase in workshop costs and other budgetary pressures being experienced. Therefore it is anticipated that there will be a requirement to use other reserves as set out in the recommendations. However the extent to which the reserve use will be required is unknown at this stage of the financial year. It is hoped that due to a positive increase in interest income levels from investments then the additional income can contribute towards the pressures. Again, the increased total amount will not be unknown until later in the financial year. Therefore in summary the proposed response to the pressures and additional budget requirements will be met by a combination of:

- Inflation Reserve
- Local Priorities Reserve
- Street Scene Reserve
- Additional Investment Income arising from increased interest rates

The continued reliance on the General Fund Local Priorities Reserve is of particular concern as it is the Council's only remaining revenue reserve available that can fund in- year budgetary changes and provide funding for one-off projects and initiatives. The balance on this reserve as at 31 March 2018 was £10.9m and the projected balance as at 31 March 2023 is £4.2m. Going forward and without replenishment of the reserve, this will constrain the Council in providing in-year funding for services and to take on new costs without the removal of costs elsewhere. Examples of the use of the reserve in the past to provide funding has been extensive and varied:

- Providing ongoing funding of capital projects- necessary due to low levels of available capital financing options
- Provided primary funding for the formation of the Big Clean initiative (2018/19)
- Provided primary funding for the formation of InvestSK Ltd (2018/19)
- Provided funding for the leisure centre feasibility studies (2018/19)
- Providing ongoing funding for St Martins Park development
- Providing ongoing funding for the new depot site operational costs and site preparation works
- Providing ongoing funding for the management fee for LeisureSK Ltd

This reserve has always relied on New Homes Bonus receipts as the primary source of keeping the reserve level replenished. However the New Homes Bonus scheme is no longer in place and the Council's future outlook on the reserve shows an ever decreasing balance. Therefore without any obvious means in which to replenish the reserve then the trajectory is one of an ever decreasing balance. Going forward, the capital receipts from the sale of surplus assets is to be the primary source of funding for the Council's capital programme which will ease the pressure of funding being required from the revenue reserves. Cabinet has developed and approved a capital disposal programme and a pipeline of surplus asset disposals has been developed. Over the next 12 months the disposal programme is projected to generate over £2m in capital receipts which will become the primary source of capital financing.

Development of the Budget 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Plan

2.2 As set out earlier in this report, local councils are facing dramatically escalating costs along with rising demand for services. The Council's own financial position is no different to this. The costs associated with rising inflation, energy prices and nationally agreed pay increases have created unforeseen extra cost pressures, which will require budgets to be reset.

These escalating costs are across a number of key areas of which the Council largely has no influence over and these are affecting both operational services and capital investment schemes:

- **Pay inflation** - the proposed pay offer made by the National Employers side, whilst recognising the below inflation pay increases of local government employees in recent years, places a significant additional burden on local authorities. The Council's pay award assumptions over the medium term was based on a 1% increase per annum which was based on inflation at that time and was in line with the national commentary. However this is below where the national settlement has been agreed. Although the settlement is a flat rate of £1,925 per employee, the overall average % increase on the salary costs is 6%. This is the largest cost element of the Council's budgets and therefore any variation greater than the budgeted assumption is a significant financial pressure. For 2022/23 this is recommended to be met from reserves as a one-off but will have an impact on budgets from 2023/24 as the base budgets increase.
- **Gas and Electricity prices** – utility costs have dramatically increased and based on the latest ESPO framework forecasts, gas prices are forecast to rise by 300% from April 2023 and electricity prices are set to increase by 100% from October 2022 and a projected further 10% from October 2023. Whilst the Council seeks to secure economies of scale through the use of framework agreements, it is not immune to the current escalating cost of energy prices. Whilst the Energy Bill Relief Scheme is expected to provide some support, this

is only for a short period of six-months (until March 2023). For 2023/24 these increases are expected to place an additional cost of £1.2m for the General Fund and £795k for the HRA.

- **Construction and capital costs** – the cost of delivering capital schemes is escalating due to inflationary pressures borne by contractors as well as labour shortages, material costs and shortages and supply chain issues. In addition, the cost of borrowing to fund capital schemes is also increasing impacting on the affordability of projects. Therefore it is recommended that only essential capital schemes are put forward for consideration for the next financial year.

These inflationary and service pressures are having a significant impact on the financial resilience of the Council in the short to medium term. In light of developments over the last 12 months there is a need to fundamentally review and reset the assumptions that underpin the MTFP and to address the impact of the new and emerging challenges on the overall level of resources available to support the Council's budget.

At this stage in the development of the budget setting for next year, additional service and demand pressures have been identified broadly within the headings set out above. The intention is though that any new service pressures identified which have not already been taken account of in the revised assumptions will, as much as possible, need to be managed within existing base budgets.

Alongside this the overall level of resources from Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Rents, Government Grants etc will be estimated in line with the information received from Government and current medium term financial forecasts.

2.3 General Fund

As referred to above the preparation of the base budgets and resource levels are based on a range of assumptions for key variables, e.g., inflation, interest rates, council tax base, business rates base etc. These assumptions are reviewed on a continual basis and will be subject to change as the development of future budgets are progressed.

General Fund Emerging Pressures

Heading	2023/24 £000	Comments
Utility Price Increases	1,245	2023/24 based on information from ESPO
Fuel Price Increases	200	
Workshop	150	
External Vehicle Repairs	82	

Pay Award Increases	1,220	2023/24 3%, 2024/25 & 2025/26 1%
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The scale of the budget pressures does not include any assumed borrowing costs for Deepings Leisure Centre as this is subject to a separate decision. Should the decision be taken to proceed with the refurbishment then further annual costs will be incurred (over a 25 year period). The details of the additional borrowing costs are set out in the report elsewhere on the agenda.

In order to respond to the pressures and ensure the Council can be presented with a balanced budgeted position on 1 March 2023 there are a number of actions and options that a combination of previously approved decisions or areas for consideration. This review will continue between this report and the Budget report scheduled to be presented to Council on 1 March 2023. A summary of initial responses to the budget deficit are set out below:

Heading	2023/24 £000	Comments
National Insurance removal	110	Government Policy Decision
Re-location of St Peters Hill offices	400	Reduction in annual operating costs following the move of Offices to St Catherine's Road Grantham
Increase of investment income arising from an interest rate increases and longer term investment periods	400	Seeking longer term investment periods of up to 12 months that attract a higher interest rate but securing investment with financial institutions that meet the Treasury Strategy requirements
1 Year (only) use of reserves to ensure a balanced budget	TBC	The Budget stabilisation reserve will be utilised to ensure a balanced position can be reached for 2023/24

The most critical of the assumption uncertainties is the Local Government Finance Settlement and implementation of the national funding reforms. Whilst it was anticipated that these reforms would be in place, and a two-year settlement announced, it now seems increasingly unlikely that this will be the case, certainly for 2023/24. Therefore the current financial modelling is currently based on a 'standstill' settlement similar to the 2022/23 funding level. However in real terms a 'standstill' settlement would be lower in cash terms as the 2022/23 funding was only a 3% increase (compared to the 2021/22 settlement). With inflation at over 10% a settlement would need to be increased by a similar % to keep pace with costs.

In the absence of additional, ongoing, financial support from the Government, the Council will have little choice but to face some difficult decisions about the size and scope of the essential services it provides. It will need to review and revisit decisions over its investment priorities and will be required to review service delivery in the

context of the refreshed Corporate Plan in order to be able to demonstrate a sustainable financial outlook.

2.4 Pay Award Proposals

The National Employers made a one-year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), pay offer to the unions representing the main local government NJC workforce:

- With effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of £1,925 on all NJC pay points 1 and above
- with effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of 4.04% on allowances
- with effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement
- with effect from 1 April 2023, the deletion of pay point 1 from the NJC pay spine.

Following consultation, this pay offer was accepted by the three unions – Unison, Unite and GMB and will therefore be implemented in the Councils that partake in the national collective pay negotiations.

In line with this offer, South Kesteven therefore proposes:

- With effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of £1,925 on all SKDC pay points from SK1 and above, at an increased budget of £1.140m (please see point 2.5 ref grades SK1-SK7).
- With effect from 1 April 2023, the deletion of pay point SK1 from the pay spine. This would mean employees currently on the SK1 grade would move to SK2 from 1 April 2023.
- There are no applicable allowances at South Kesteven for the 4.04% increase

2.5 At South Kesteven District Council, an increase of 4.2% has already been given to grades SK1- SK7 this financial year. This pay rise was given to take the bottom pay scale to the 2021 Real Living Wage rate.

To account for this, it is proposed that these grades receive the difference of their previous 4.2% award and this proposed award of £1,925. This will mean all SK grades will receive the same £1,925 increase for this financial year (2022/23).

For 2022/23, the proposal will take our lowest grade, SK1, to £10.50/hour which is £1.00 above the current National Living wage and £0.60 above the 2021 Real Living Wage.

The 2022 Real Living Wage was announced in September 2022 at £10.90. It is expected that this will be implemented by May 2023.

There is a continued challenge for South Kesteven District Council in how to deal with the pressure of keeping the bottom pay spine aligned with the Real Living Wage which is rapidly increasing.

Whilst the Council is not part of the national pay award negotiations, we consider the national offers and often align for consistency.

The recommended pay award is also in the context of the wider economic situation with increasing inflation and the continuing increases to fuel, food and energy which are impacting our employees as well as the Council.

The total cost of this pay award is £1.410m. Taking account of the 1% already budgeted, this report seeks approval of an additional one-off budget of £1.140m.

At the time of compiling the report the National Employers final offer to Local Authority Chief Executives has not been accepted by ALACE (Association of Local Authority Chief Executives) and therefore no pay award for the Council's Chief Executive can be implemented at this time. The report therefore proposes a recommendation to delegate authority to the Council's s151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to implement a pay award once the national settlement has been finalised.

2.6 St Martins Park Stamford Remediation Works

At the Cabinet meeting held on:

moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=164&MId=4293&Ver=4

18 October 2022, there was a recommendation made to seek Council approval to amend the budget for the remediation works following unexpected and unforeseen cost changes as summarised below:

Heading	£'000
Remediation scope	78
Bat and Bird Survey	5
Repair works	7
Utility disconnections and investigations	15
Asbestos removal	76
Substation works	5
Demolition resequencing	7
Total as 1 September 2022	193

These additional costs will be met from the Regeneration Reserve that was created specifically to meet the costs of bringing the development to fruition. The project is still forecast to return a significant surplus to the Council once the sales have been completed.

Local Enterprise Partnership

2.7 In February 2019, Lincolnshire County Council as the Accountable Body for grant monies provided by Central Government under the Single Local Growth Fund, awarded a £2,000,000 (£2M) allocation, approved by the Greater Lincolnshire

Local Enterprise Partnership (GL LEP) to South Kesteven District Council. The aim of the project was to enable the delivery of a new local University Technology and Innovation Centre within Grantham Town Centre, on the floor above the cinema. The total project costs were £6,712,529 for which the GL LEP contribution equated to nearly 30%. It was expected that the University of Lincoln would take a lease on the education space to deliver the courses that would focus on addressing the skills needed within the GL LEP's Key Priority Sectors: manufacturing, agri-food, visitor economy, low carbon and health and care, as well as, providing courses to meet the continuing employer needs for employees to obtain strong soft skills such as leadership, management and communication. However, the University were unable to commit, from the outset, to take on a lease pending proof of concept. Following on from the easing of COVID restrictions, the University of Lincoln subsequently confirmed that whilst committed to supporting the learning agenda in Grantham, they do not require the current empty space and would not be willing to take a lease for the Centre.

This newly provided modern work space has been unoccupied since 2019 when the intended occupier stated their intent to pursue a different educational offer. InvestSK sought expert commercial property advice which confirmed there is little demand for office space of the size available in the centre of Grantham, with any rental levels that may be obtained, being low. In response to this, a business case was prepared and subsequently approved to utilise the vacant space by the Council.

The vacant space will now become the new offices for the Council thereby bringing an empty space into use and provide ongoing operational savings to the Council. It has been confirmed by the LEP that a reduced balance of £1.333m of the initial £2m requires repayment by the Council to the LEP. There are currently ongoing discussions with the LEP with respect to the conditions to the repayment period and a subsequent report will be presented to Council on 26 January 2023.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 All key areas are outlined in the report based on the most accurate and up to date information available. It is accepted that the external environment is extremely volatile and therefore it is expected that the outlook will continue to change over the remaining period of 2022/23.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 All options are set out in the report.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The reasons for the recommendations are set out in the report.

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24 November 2022

Report of Councillor Adam Stokes,
Deputy Leader of the Council and
Portfolio Holder for Finance and
Leisure

Deepings Leisure Centre

Report Author

Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure

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Purpose of Report

To determine whether the previously agreed refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre proceeds given the significant changes to the Council's financial outlook, and to withdraw from the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields.

Recommendations

In consideration of this report, it is recommended that the Council:

1. **Does not proceed with the project to refurbish Deepings Leisure Centre given the Council's increasing financial pressures and the additional costs identified.**
2. **Hands back to Lincolnshire County Council the existing Deepings Leisure Centre with no further financial liability or financial risk to South Kesteven District Council.**
3. **Withdraws from the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields and no longer proceeds with an application to the Football Foundation for a 3G pitch with the playing fields being handed back to Lincolnshire County Council at the earliest opportunity.**

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	Appendices Two and Three are not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – financial information.
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Healthy and strong communities High performing Council
Which wards are impacted?	Deeping St James Market and West Deeping

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 At the time South Kesteven District Council (the Council) took the decision to proceed with the refurbishment of the Leisure Centre the following financial position was stated:

'Currently the Council's medium term financial plans cannot demonstrate affordability for any of the new build or refurbishment options as the financial outlook is uncertain primarily due to changes to the national funding arrangements. However, this is regularly reviewed as part of the annual budget cycle and changes both from a local and national context are incorporated into the medium term outlook.'

'It is imperative that the Council undertakes a review of its spending priorities in order to include any borrowing costs into its revenue budgets and therefore enable demonstration of the affordability of undertaking such a large scale of borrowing. The Council will also be aware of other capital investment programmes and the wider national context of funding changes that will impact on the Council finances from 2023/2024 onwards. This structural review of how the Council's finances are allocated and prioritised in the context of the Corporate Plan actions and the inclusion of the borrowing obligations will be required should a decision be taken to proceed with any option'.

- 1.2 On 2 March 2022 the financial implication of the proposed refurbishment was presented in the Council budget report for 2023/2024, this demonstrated the impact of the borrowing costs on the Council's budgets showing an unbalanced budget

from 2024/2025 resulting from interest payable and the MRP (minimum revenue provision). The report stated the following:

The General Fund table shows a balanced position for 2022/23 but emerging deficits from 2023/2024 resulting from a number of variables including uncertainty regarding the levels of funding from a national perspective and the costs that will be incurred for financing the refurbishment programme. From 2024/2025 there is a budgeted increase in both interest payable and MRP to reflect the borrowing costs incurred for the refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre. This has been included in the 2024/2025 budgets, but the timing may vary depending on the completion of the refurbishment works. At Council on 14 December 2021, Council approved the inclusion of the indicative costs for Deepings Leisure Centre and also agreed to develop an affordability plan in response of these new costs. It is important that this budget allocation review is undertaken well in advance to ensure a financially sustainable position is achieved.

- 1.3 Since the time of the financial modelling there have been significant financial events that have fundamentally changed the financial landscape and created a more perilous outlook for the Council. Specifically, these are:
 - Significant utility price increases, ranging from 110% increase for electricity and 300% for gas. Based on the latest ESPO utilities framework forecasts, electricity costs could increase by £1.1m compared to indicative budget, and gas could increase by £149k in the Council's budget for 2023/2024.
 - 30% increase in fuel prices, an increase of £200k compared to indicative budget
 - Employee pay increase beyond budgeted levels, an increase of £880k when compared to indicative budget for 2022/2023 increasing to £1.2m additional budget for 2023/2024.
- 1.4 Since the decision was taken to proceed with developing the refurbishment option further another key element of the financing proposals has been the change to the interest rates. At the time of the reports to Council, the financial modelling based on the prevailing interest rates (based on a 25-year asset life repayment period) was 2% equating to an annual interest rate charge of £205k and an annual MRP of £428k, therefore a total of £633k additional cost per annum for 25 years.
- 1.5 Since that time there have been significant national and international events that have had a major and detrimental impact on the interest rates and the medium-term forecasts. The updated borrowing rate for the same period, at the same level of borrowing, is now circa >5.0% thus increasing the annual interest rate charge to £620k and a revised annual charge of £1.048m per annum (based on 25 years) a 48% increase.
- 1.6 **Table One** overleaf identifies the current projected pressures on 2023/2024 indicative budgets:

Table One – Budgetary Pressures for 2023/2024

Heading	2023/2024 Indicative budgets £'000
Updated Pressures:	
Utility costs:	
Electricity	1,100
Gas	149
Pay Award	1,200
Fuel	200
Borrowing Costs:	
Interest rate increase	415
Updated Projected Deficit	3,064

- 1.7 This level of deficit is extremely challenging and whilst there are some short-term solutions such as temporary use of the budget stabilisation reserve and offsetting some cost pressures against the windfall gain in additional investment income as a direct benefit of improved interest rates this is not a sustainable position. However, without significant structural changes to the budget framework and service provision that results in a reduction in the Council's expenditure and shows a financial outlook that can clearly demonstrate affordability in a sustainable way, it is not currently possible to demonstrate affordability of this scheme.
- 1.8 In terms of the broader leisure portfolio there are other ongoing financial responsibilities that will require consideration, including the increasing likelihood that LeisureSK Ltd will require a management fee for 2023/2024 due to the increase of utility costs and the implementation of the maintenance works arising from the recent comprehensive building condition surveys. These are considerations currently being modelled in the context of budget setting proposals and will put further pressure on the revenue and capital budgets.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance and S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.9 Deepings Leisure Centre and associated land are owned by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). The majority of Linchfield Road Playing Fields are also owned by LCC, with a small section of the land belonging to Deeping St James Parish Council and being leased to LCC.
- 1.10 The Council has previously received advice that, in the absence of any formal arrangements (a formal lease from LCC to the Anthem Trust, and a subsequent sub-lease from the Anthem Trust to South Kesteven District Council), it has been occupying Deepings Leisure Centre as 'tenants at will'. As such the Council has no legal interest in the building and has been advised that, despite the Council being historically responsible for repairs and maintenance, there is no ongoing obligation for this to continue.

1.11 Some council services and functions are discretionary, and therefore are services a council can choose to provide yet does not have to. There is no legal or statutory requirement for South Kesteven District Council to operate leisure centres.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance.

Health and Safety

1.12 The Council has a statutory duty under health and safety law to ensure that any premises and equipment used are safe. Due to the age and condition of Deepings Leisure Centre, and in the interests of public safety, the Council previously decided to close the facility in July 2021.

1.13 In its current condition Deepings Leisure Centre represents a significant ongoing health and safety risk, especially if unauthorised access is gained by members of the public. Measures have been taken to introduce periodic building checks, and all alarm systems have been maintained to prevent trespassers, but this remains a risk for the Council whilst it remains responsible for its management.

1.14 If the decision is made to hand the existing leisure centre back to Lincolnshire County Council these arrangements should be made as soon as practicably possible.

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead

Diversity and Inclusion

1.15 An Impact Equality Assessment has been conducted to assess the impact on individuals with protected characteristics should a decision be made to permanently close Deepings Leisure Centre and withdraw from the management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields. The results of the assessment are provided at **Appendix One Deepings Leisure Centre Equality Impact Assessment**.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

Human Resources

1.16 Deepings Leisure Centre has been closed since July 2021. As part of the arrangements staff have already either been redeployed or have left LeisureSK Ltd. Therefore, a decision to permanently close the Deepings Leisure Centre would have no impact on the existing workforce.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt, HR Manager

Climate Change

- 1.17 The Council's four leisure centres previously accounted for 41.5% of the Council's carbon emissions. A permanent closure of Deepings Leisure Centre would result in an ongoing carbon saving for the Council.
- 1.18 Although the refurbishment plans included replacement of the plant equipment to include more efficient boilers, as there is no gas feed to the leisure centre, the boilers would still be oil fed. Despite having a higher energy content, the use of oil does result in particulate emissions 130 times higher than burning natural gas.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Climate and Sustainability Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2023 there is a key priority of building 'Healthy and Strong Communities' which includes an ambition to invest in the health of our district by improving leisure provision. However, this ambition must be balanced with the Council's other key priority of being a 'High Performing Council' ensuring that our finances and assets are managed appropriately.
- 2.2 In 2018 the Council announced plans for an ambitious leisure investment programme to significantly improve the Council's leisure facilities across the district. The plans included the potential development of three new build leisure centres in Grantham, Stamford and The Deepings and a refurbishment of Bourne Leisure Centre.
- 2.3 Following the announcement of this ambition, Mace Ltd were commissioned to undertake an initial assessment of the existing leisure facilities and develop a range of options for the leisure improvements identified. As a result of the feasibility work undertaken, the minimum level of capital investment required was assessed and reported to be £55.5 million.
- 2.4 Investment of this scale was deemed unaffordable by the Council in 2020, as a result Paul Weston Architect was commissioned to provide a check and challenge to the Mace feasibility work, and to explore further options which could prove more affordable.
- 2.5 As part of this work options were explored to provide a new build leisure centre for the Deepings at several locations including:
 - Linchfield Road Playing Fields, jointly owned by LCC and Deeping St James Parish Council
 - Millfield Road, as part of a joint housing and leisure scheme with LCC
 - The Landis & Gyr site in Market Deeping, a privately owned site.
- 2.6 Despite extensive feasibility work, the option of a new build leisure centre in The Deepings remained unaffordable for the Council. As any capital investment would

need to be funded by prudential borrowing, this would result in significant financial pressure on the Council's ongoing revenue budgets.

Management of Deepings Leisure Centre

- 2.7 The existing Deepings Leisure Centre was built in 1974. The leisure centre building and associated land are owned by LCC. Linchfield Road Playing Fields are located across the road from the leisure centre site and are jointly owned by LCC and Deeping St James Parish Council. However, LCC has a legal interest in the whole of the site as they benefit from a lease between themselves and Deeping St James Parish Council.
- 2.8 Since 1974, and until Deepings Leisure Centre was closed in July 2021, the Council were responsible for managing the leisure centre and playing fields, the Anthem Trust (the Trust) having had exclusive use of the sports hall, swimming pool and playing fields during the day term-time. Although this was a long-standing arrangement no formal Lease had ever been entered into.
- 2.9 Deepings Leisure Centre was closed in July 2021 due to significant health and safety concerns relating to its age and condition. The building had suffered significant water ingress and damage due to the failure of the roof, and a structural survey confirmed the roof structure was compromised, and as a result it was unsafe for the Council to continue to operate the building.
- 2.10 Until 2014 LCC made an annual contribution of circa £124,000 towards the maintenance and upkeep of Deepings Leisure Centre. In 2014 the Council received notification that this contribution was being withdrawn as it was the intention of LCC to transfer the leisure centre land and building, including the Linchfield Road Playing Fields, to the Anthem Trust when it became an Academy Trust organisation. This proposed transfer being in accordance with the provisions of the Academies Act.
- 2.11 As a separate arrangement the Trust paid a financial sum to the Council to contribute towards their use of the building and playing fields. In 2020/2021 this amounted to £35,600. Since July 2021 the Trust have continued to pay a contribution towards the maintenance and upkeep of the playing fields and associated sports pitches in the sum of £4,800.
- 2.12 In financial year 2021/2022 it was identified that, although Deepings Leisure Centre produced a small surplus, considering the Council's wider costs this resulted in an operating deficit. A breakdown of how the deficit was calculated is provided in **Appendix Two – Exempt Information.**
- 2.13 Despite numerous attempts to agree the terms of a lease between LCC and the Anthem Trust since 2014, the Lease has never been finalised as the Trust have remained reluctant to take on the liability of an aging asset. As a result, this has meant the Council have been unable to secure a legal interest in the leisure centre and associated land.

Refurbishment Plans

- 2.14 Following the closure of Deepings Leisure Centre in July 2021, the Council explored a range of options to refurbish the centre and extend its life by 25 years. The feasibility work undertaken included a business case for each option which identified the likely annual cost to the Council considering the cost of the capital works, the resulting uplift in income, and the cost of borrowing.
- 2.15 Before the Council could invest capital into the existing leisure centre, it was identified it would be necessary to secure a leasehold interest in Deepings Leisure Centre to protect the significant investment which was required. This would require LCC and the Trust entering into a head lease, with the Trust subsequently granting a sub-lease to the Council. Such an arrangement would require approval from the Department for Education (DfE).
- 2.16 As a result of the work undertaken, at an extraordinary meeting of the Council on 14 December 2021 the decision was made to approve Refurbishment Option C at a cost of £10.663 million, this being subject to the results of meaningful community consultation.
- 2.17 On 19 April 2022, following analysis of the results of the meaningful community consultation, Cabinet approved the final scheme of refurbishment being Option D at a cost of £10.55m. The recommendations within the report provided that the refurbishment works could only commence upon the finalisation of a Service Level Agreement and sub-lease between South Kesteven District Council and the Anthem Trust.

Progress to Date

- 2.18 Since the decision made by Cabinet on 19 April 2022 significant progress has been made on the refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre project. This has included the appointment of Paul Weston as Project Manager and Caston Cost Consultants as Quantity Surveyors.
- 2.19 The terms of a Service Level Agreement have been agreed between the Council and the Trust. This has involved protracted discussions on the sharing of utility costs and joint agreement on the use of shared areas to ensure the refurbished leisure centre would meet fire safety regulations.
- 2.20 Legal teams have been commissioned, and a significant amount of work has ensued to enable South Kesteven District Council to secure a leasehold interest in Deepings Leisure Centre. Heads of Terms have been agreed between LCC and the Trust for the head lease. Furthermore, the Heads of Terms for an Agreement for Lease between the Trust and the Council, including the subsequent sub-lease to be entered into, have been agreed in principle.
- 2.21 The respective Heads of Terms documents and Service Level Agreement have been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) for approval. To date no formal response has been received from the DfE.

- 2.22 Following a successful procurement exercise Jackson Design Consultants have been appointed as the preferred design team and lead architect, with R G Carter being awarded the first of a two-stage construction contract. The two companies have begun to work collaboratively to progress the design approved by Cabinet to provide certainty on the costs. As per the resolution made at Council on 14 December 2021, once the costs are known, further approval is required by Council before the main contract can be entered into.
- 2.23 To date, since the final scheme of refurbishment was approved in April 2022 the total external costs incurred to date amount to £61,165.

Areas to Resolve

- 2.24 Despite extensive conversations LCC have confirmed there will be no financial contribution from them to contribute to the refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre.
- 2.25 Additionally the Trust remain unwilling to enter into the head lease with LCC as they do not want to take on responsibility for the leisure centre should the refurbishment not proceed. Consequently, the Trust have requested inclusion of a clause to the head lease to provide comfort that South Kesteven District Council would fund any demolition costs should the project not proceed.
- 2.26 Following this request, discussions took place between the Council and LCC, the Council informing LCC that, as the owner of the building, any costs relating to demolition should fall to them.
- 2.27 To date there has been no agreement on the cost of demolition with LCC only offering to meet half the cost should the refurbishment project not proceed, the remaining 50% being assumed by LCC to be provided by the Council.
- 2.28 Because of this, and in the absence of the necessary approval being received from the DfE, legal work to develop the head lease between LCC and the Trust, and sub-lease between the Trust and the Council, has been paused.
- 2.29 To ensure the project timeline was not further compromised the Council continued to appoint the preferred design team and main contractor to progress the project. Until legal agreements are signed, and approval has been received from the Department for Education, this work has been undertaken at risk.

Market Volatility

- 2.30 The impact on construction prices because of the COVID-19 pandemic are well documented. In addition to the rising cost of development, the resulting increased demand is having an unprecedented impact on the availability and cost of materials and has resulted in shortages in the labour market.
- 2.31 The impact of this has been further exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and soaring inflation, because of which the cost of raw materials in the UK are now predicted to more than treble during 2022.

2.32 The original costings for Option D refurbishment included a provision for inflation and contingency at £2.089m, which represents approximately 20% of the total project cost of £10.55m. Intelligence from the marketplace, and conversations with other public sector organisations, suggest the uplift in cost is more likely to be in the region of 40%.

National context

2.33 Along with other public authorities, the current financial outlook remains very challenging for the Council. Whilst the advantages of providing publicly accessible leisure facilities are widely acknowledged, many Councils across the country are having to make the difficult decision to either temporarily or permanently close their leisure facilities.

2.34 In September 2021 a collaborative report on leisure facilities was published by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA). The report was titled 'Securing the Future of Public Sport and Leisure Services' and detailed the challenges being faced across the leisure estate in terms of aging facilities and rising costs, as a result of which it was reported that one in four Councils were considering closing some of their leisure facilities.

2.35 UKactive is a national leading organisation in the leisure industry which promotes the interests of commercial and community leisure facilities and gathers intelligence from their 3500 plus membership base. They have reported 1 in 6 pools have either temporarily or permanently closed their doors as of March 2022, and further predict as many as 79% of facilities could be forced to close within the next six months considering the rising cost of utilities, the cost and availability of staff, and the changing behaviour of fitness users post-pandemic.

2.36 In November 2022 the Local Government Association (LGA) reported updated findings from UKactive that 40% of Council areas are at risk of losing their leisure centres within just five months. The LGA are calling on Central Government to provide funding to stabilise and support the leisure sector, as without this support many Councils will be faced with a decision whether new facilities are opened, or operational facilities are closed.

2.37 Swim England also concur with the findings of UKactive. In a recent report they identified as many as 2000 pools could be lost by the end of the decade.

2.38 Leisure operators nationally are requesting additional support from Central and Local Government to cover the increased operational costs being incurred. From conversations with other local authorities the Council is aware that leisure management companies are suggesting to Councils they will 'walk away' from contracts if additional financial support cannot be provided.

Leisure Centre Maintenance

2.39 LeisureSK Ltd took over operational responsibility for the management of the Council's leisure facilities from 1 January 2021. Prior to this the leisure facilities were managed on the Council's behalf by 1Life Management Solutions (1Life), a

contractual arrangement being in place between the Council and 1Life for more than 20 years.

- 2.40 As part of this contractual relationship responsibility for repairs and maintenance was split between the Council and 1Life. On the expiry of the contract, it became clear the leisure centres had not been appropriately maintained, this failure being down to several factors including the absence of effective contract monitoring, and both the Council and 1Life not fulfilling their respective maintenance obligations.
- 2.41 As a result in March 2022 the Council commissioned full structural surveys on the three operational leisure centres (Bourne, Grantham and Stamford) together with the stadium facility in Grantham. The results of the condition surveys provide indicative costs for the next 30 years to address the identified issues and extend the life of the buildings. The works have been given an A (i.e., In good condition) to D (ie. Items at end of life or urgent risk of failure) rating.
- 2.42 A summary of the condition survey works identified is provided in **Appendix Two – Exempt Information**.
- 2.43 The figures identified are estimates based on cost book prices for the repairs and maintenance items identified only, and do not include for any enhancements to the facilities.
- 2.44 Detailed reviews of the survey results have taken place between the Council's Leisure and Property teams, with some of the urgent remedial works having already been commissioned. Procurement exercises are ongoing in relation to the remainder of the identified urgent works.

LeisureSK Ltd Financial Position

- 2.45 For the current financial year trading conditions for LeisureSK Ltd are challenging and will remain so for 2023/2024. The company is facing significant financial pressure in relation to rising utility costs and being able to provide cost of living salary increases for the staff. Membership numbers have not reached pre-pandemic levels and are currently at 72% recovery, nationally fitness membership levels are not forecasted to exceed 80% of pre-COVID levels.
- 2.46 Of particular concern is the current volatility in the energy market, especially as it is not anticipated prices will settle soon, and industry experts are predicting further increases. After staffing outlays, energy is the second highest cost for LeisureSK Ltd, these costs being further exacerbated by the Council having aged facilities which are energy inefficient. It is widely acknowledged nationally that leisure providers (both in-house and externally commissioned) are being adversely impacted by high energy demands of leisure centres, especially those with swimming pools.
- 2.47 When LeisureSK Ltd was established, the company signed up to the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) Framework. This has enabled the company to purchase utilities at the same competitive rates as the Council does for its own property portfolio.

- 2.48 Currently LeisureSK Ltd is signed up with ESPO until 2024 for electricity and 2027 for gas. Electricity prices were originally scheduled to rise 80% from October 2022, with gas prices being projected to rise approximately 300% from April 2023. For 2023/24 it is anticipated this will increase the utility costs for LeisureSK Ltd by approximately £563,000. The Government have pledged support to businesses for an initial six months and therefore the full impact of the price rises still needs to be determined, however the current projection is that the company will require a management fee for 2023/24 as the increased costs will not be covered by income.
- 2.49 As indicated earlier the largest area of expenditure for LeisureSK Ltd is staffing costs. The staff previously employed by 1Life were transferred to LeisureSK Ltd under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE), most being on national minimum wage. In addition, there was no clear pay policy or staffing structure, which as well as causing some anomalies, resulted in staff retention issues and it being difficult to recruit to vacant roles. In response the Board of Directors for LeisureSK Ltd subsequently commissioned a full pay review and restructure, which is now in place.
- 2.50 In light of the current cost of living pressures a further piece of work is underway to identify a suitable pay award for the employees of LeisureSK Ltd. Although at an early stage, this is likely to add in a further £180k pressure on the budget for 2023/24.
- 2.51 The Board of Directors for LeisureSK Ltd remain committed to ensuring the company can mitigate some of the staff and utility increases and are exploring a range of opportunities to increase charges and reduce energy consumption. However, there needs to be due care when considering any action given the potential for a drop off in users resulting from the cost of living crisis and individuals having less available income for leisure related activities.
- 2.52 The revised financial outturn for 2022/23 shows a deficit of £138,000 and projections for 2023/2024 demonstrate that LeisureSK Ltd will require financial support of circa £500,000, all of which relates mainly to the uplift in utility costs.

Revised Business Plan

- 2.53 Sports and Leisure Consultancy (SLC) were originally commissioned by the Council to develop operational business plans for each of the refurbishment options considered. As such they assisted the development of the original business case to support Refurbishment Option D, which was approved by Cabinet in April 2022.
- 2.54 To establish the current position, SLC have been commissioned to review the existing business plan to take into account the increased operational costs and current information on the recovery of the leisure sector post pandemic. A copy of the report is provided at **Exempt Appendix Three, Deepings Leisure Centre Refurbishment Business Plan Review, October 2022**.
- 2.55 The projected income and expenditure has been recalculated over a ten-year period. As before, this includes some phasing of income in the early years to allow

usage of the centre to build up and, although inflation is currently running much higher, this has been included at 2% to allow a like for like comparison with the previous business plan.

2.56 To assist SLC they were provided with access to the Moving Communities data which is collected by LeisureSK Ltd and reported to Sport England. Moving Communities is a national database of income and usage information which was established to provide a national picture of how the leisure sector is recovering, data being drawn down automatically from LeisureSK Ltd's booking system at the three operational leisure sites.

2.57 In reviewing the business plan SLC have amended the income and expenditure projections considering national trend information and the Moving Communities data from Bourne, Grantham and Stamford Leisure Centres. The main changes to the business plan are:

- Sports hall income has been reduced to account for slow recovery in demand for indoor activities.
- Casual swimming and swimming lesson income has been increased to account for the strong demand currently being demonstrated at the other sites.
- Fitness memberships and casual fitness income have been reduced in line with slow recovery in demand and the national trend.
- Income from fitness classes has been similarly reduced.
- A 10% uplift has been applied to salaries and wages to account for increases in the national minimum wage and cost of living pressures.
- Utility costs have been increased by 30% to take account of current market volatility.

2.58 Details of the revised costs in relation to Option D over a ten-year period, including the increased cost of borrowing, and the review of the business plan are provided in **Appendix Two – Exempt Information**.

Linchfield Road Playing Fields

2.59 In parallel with discussions around leisure centre provision in the Deepings area, the Council have been in talks with the Football Foundation (the Foundation) around a grant funding bid for a 3G pitch to replace the existing end of life artificial surface which was closed in January 2020. The Deepings had already been identified as a priority area for investment by the Foundation.

2.60 Originally it was proposed that the Foundation could provide a grant up to £550,000 towards a replacement 3G pitch, the Council being responsible for match funding in the sum of £200,000. The match funding has previously been provided for in the Council's capital budget.

2.61 When it was established that a new build leisure centre on the Linchfield Road Playing Field site was not an affordable option for the Council, the Foundation agreed that an application for funding for a 3G pitch could still proceed, however this would need to include the refurbishment of the existing changing pavilion and increased parking provision.

2.62 Paul Weston Architect and Caston Cost Consultants were commissioned to provide costings for the additional works which have been identified to be £817,000 including fees and a provision for contingency and inflation. This would bring the total project cost to circa £1.567m.

2.63 The Foundation have indicated that an application for match funding for the whole project, to include the 3G pitch, changing pavilion and car parking, could be made. However, this would increase the anticipated match funding required from the Council from £200,000 to £480,000.

2.64 In order to draw down any funding there would need to be a lease in place for at least 25 years on the Linchfield Road Playing Field site. Therefore, this would still require the Anthem Trust to proceed with the lease from LCC, and then enter a sub-lease with the Council for the playing fields site.

2.65 If Members decide that a refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre is no longer a viable option for the Council, then the development of a 3G pitch in this area would be a stand-alone facility, which would present operational management issues. Bookings could be taken and managed by the team at another LeisureSK Ltd facility, however the opening and closing of the pitch, undertaking safety inspections, pitch set up, changeovers, and cleaning and maintenance would be an issue if there was no on-site team.

2.66 Currently the grass pitches are managed by LeisureSK Ltd who maintain the bookings and receive an income from the various clubs and organisations who use them. The maintenance of the pitches is currently carried out by EnvironmentSK Ltd.

2.67 A breakdown of the anticipated income and grounds maintenance costs for 2023/24 in relation to Linchfield Road Playing Fields is provided in **Appendix Two – Exempt Information**.

2.68 Should the Council decide to cease the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields, either LCC or the Trust could continue to maintain and manage the playing fields and could approach EnvironmentSK Ltd to undertake this on their behalf. They could also proceed with an application to the Football Foundation for a replacement 3G pitch and associated facilities.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 The challenges being faced by the leisure sector are unprecedented. Like most Councils and leisure operators, the Council is facing significant inflationary pressures relating to the management of its leisure facilities. This is compounded

by the age of the remaining leisure facilities, and the level of investment identified within the building condition surveys undertaken.

- 3.2 Across the country many Councils are being faced with the prospect of providing their operators with significant financial support or face the possibility of them 'walking away' from contracts. Inflationary cost increases are being further compounded by a slow recovery from the pandemic. As detailed previously, nationally leisure centres are attracting 72% of pre-pandemic levels and are not forecast to reach over 80% in the longer term.
- 3.3 The COVID-19 pandemic has changed customer behaviours immeasurably, with many users making the switch to outdoor or informal activities. In addition, there has been a growth in on-line digital fitness content which users can access at a time convenient to them, often at little or no cost.
- 3.4 The current cost of living crisis will undoubtedly have a further impact on the usage of leisure centres, given that people will generally have less available income to spend on leisure activities.
- 3.5 When Deepings Leisure Centre was closed in July 2021, LeisureSK Ltd wrote to all users to provide them with the opportunity of continuing their activity at another of the three centres within the district. To date 228 pupils have been incorporated into the Swim School sessions at Bourne and Stamford and 66 fitness users have also transferred over.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council could choose to proceed with a refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre and continue to operate the Linchfield Road Playing Fields, including the development a 3G pitch and ancillary facilities. However, given the budgetary pressures already identified for 2023/24 and beyond, significant savings would need to be identified from other service areas to offset the resulting expenditure.
- 4.2 The option to delay a refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre until the financial climate has improved has been considered. However, this has been discounted due to the significant deterioration of the building since the options were originally assessed. By way of example, as part of the refurbishment plans it was hoped that some of the flooring could be retained and be refurbished rather than replaced. However, the significant ingress of water to date has resulted in deterioration to such a level that this will not be possible.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Since the decision was made by Cabinet in April 2022 to refurbish Deepings Leisure Centre at a cost of £10.55m the Council's financial situation has changed considerably. At the time the scheme was approved it was highlighted that

efficiencies would need to be sought from future years' budgets to offset the increased expenditure resulting from the significant cost of borrowing.

- 5.2 Whilst achieving savings at the level previously identified would have been challenging enough, the Council is now facing increased financial pressure from existing services. This, together with the increased costs of the refurbishment, and the higher subsidy which would be required on an annual basis, has resulted in the refurbishment being a significantly less affordable proposition for the Council.
- 5.3 The Council has no legal interest in Deepings Leisure Centre, and the legal advice received has confirmed that there is no ongoing obligation for the Council to continue to maintain the leisure centre or be responsible for its demolition. As the legal owners of the building these responsibilities fall to LCC, who to date have confirmed they will not provide any financial support in relation to the refurbishment and have only accepted responsibility for half the cost of demolition should a refurbishment not proceed.
- 5.4 The Council is currently operating the Linchfield Road Playing Fields on a deficit funding basis. This is not a sustainable position for the Council given its wider financial challenges. In addition, the amount of match funding required for a 3G pitch has risen significantly, and as a standalone facility without the support of leisure centre staff, this would pose serious operational difficulties.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Deepings Leisure Centre Report, Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 14 December 2021.
[\(Public Pack\) Agenda Document for Council, 14/12/2021 10:30](https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/141221/1030)
[\(southkesteven.gov.uk\)](https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/)

7. Appendices

- 7.1 **Appendix One** – Deepings Leisure Centre Equality Impact Assessment.
- 7.2 **Appendix Two** – Exempt Information
- 7.3 **Exempt Appendix Three** – Deepings Leisure Centre Refurbishment Business Plan Review



SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality Impact (Initial Analysis)

Deepings Leisure Centre and Linchfield Road Playing Fields

Service Area: Leisure	Lead officer: Michael Chester Assessors: Karen Whitfield Neutral Assessor: Carol Drury	Date of Meeting 26/10/22
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1. Name and description of policy/service/function/strategy

The proposal under discussion is to permanently close Deepings Leisure Centre and not proceed with the planned refurbishment project. Due to the Council's challenging financial outlook, and the increased costs in relation to the refurbishment works and cost of borrowing, the project is no longer an affordable proposition.

Connected to this proposal is the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields.

Although there are no formal arrangements in place the Council has been responsible for the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields. Should the decision be made not to proceed with the refurbishment Members are being requested to consider whether the Council should also cease the management of the playing fields and not pursue an application to the Football Foundation for funding to provide a 3G pitch.

If these proposals are supported this would mean that the leisure centre and Linchfield Road Playing Fields would be handed back to Lincolnshire County Council (LCC).

Background:

Deepings Leisure Centre and the playing fields have been managed by South Kesteven District Council since 1974 as dual use facilities, the Anthem Trust (Trust) having sole use of the swimming pools, sports hall and playing pitches during the day term-time. The building and playing fields are owned by LCC.

The Deepings Leisure Centre was temporarily closed under health and safety grounds in July 2021 by the Chief Executive of the Council, following major signs of deterioration. The most significant issue was the failure of the roof, as a result of which the leisure centre had suffered from water ingress throughout the building. Since its temporary closure this has continued to impact on the centre and the condition has deteriorated further with the leisure centre remaining closed to this day.

To date the Council has explored a range of options to refurbish the centre and extend its life by 25 years. The feasibility work undertaken included a business case for each option which identified the likely annual cost to the Council considering the cost of the capital works, the resulting uplift in income and the borrowing costs.

Before the Council could invest capital into the existing leisure centre it was identified it would be necessary to secure a leasehold interest in Deepings Leisure Centre to protect the significant investment. To facilitate this LCC and the Trust would need to enter a head lease with the Trust subsequently entering into a sub-lease between the Trust and the Council.

Such an arrangement would require approval from the Department for Education (DfE). Although the DfE have confirmed receipt of all the information they need they are yet to provide a formal response.

In April 2022, following analysis of the community consultation, Cabinet approved the final scheme of refurbishment being Option D at a cost of £10.55m, with a recommendation that works could only commence upon the finalisation of the SLA and sub lease between the Council and the Anthem Trust.

Since the approval by Cabinet in April 2022, there have been significant changes to the financial landscape with increases to utility prices, materials prices, interest rates and overall cost of living. The business case to support the investment into Deepings Leisure Centre has also been reviewed and now presents additional financial pressure given the reduced take up of memberships after the pandemic and increasing costs of running leisure centres.

Given these significant increases, and the resulting increased budgetary pressures faced by the Council, it is no longer an affordable option to refurbish Deepings Leisure Centre without making significant financial savings elsewhere or reducing services. In addition, the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields results in the Council providing deficit funding.

The provision of leisure is a discretionary service. Should the Council decide to proceed with a refurbishment significant savings would need to be found from other Council services which could impact the delivery of statutory services.

Whilst it is acknowledged that a permanent closure would have a negative impact on the building's former users the sites discussed could be operated by their owner, LCC.

The area and villages around Deepings have community facilities which could be utilised for fitness activity. In addition the Council is implementing a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and is exploring, in partnership with LeisureSK Ltd and other health providers, outreach activity across the district.

Is this a new or existing policy?	New
2. Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc.	New

 2. Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc. |

Equality Group	Does this policy/service/function/strategy have a positive or negative impact on any of the equality groups? Please state which for each group	Please describe why the impact is positive or negative. If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic please explain why
Age	Negative	<p>The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields impacts on a variety of age groups who previously used the leisure centre. This includes programmes which were specifically targeted at certain age groups e.g. youth activity, junior gym, children's summer events, adult swimming lessons etc. In addition, a high proportion of previous daytime exercise classes were utilised by customers of retirement age.</p> <p>Several clubs currently use the playing fields for a variety of activities across different age groups.</p>
Disability	Negative	<p>The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields will negatively impact on people with disabilities. Whilst there were no group activities specifically for disabled users, individuals previously taking part in general programmed activity will be unable to reengage with this locally.</p>
Race	Negative	<p>The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields would negatively impact across the</p>

		protected characteristics of its identified user groups. This impact relates to activity that previously took place and will no longer be available locally.
Gender Reassignment	Negative	The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields would negatively impact across the protected characteristics of its identified user groups. This impact relates to activity that previously took place and will no longer be available locally.
Religion or Belief	Negative	The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields would negatively impact across the protected characteristics of its identified user groups. This impact relates to activity that previously took place and will no longer be available locally.
Sex	Negative	The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields would negatively impact across the protected characteristics of its identified user groups. This impact relates to activity that previously took place and will no longer be available locally.
Sexual Orientation	Negative	The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields would negatively impact across the protected characteristics of its identified user groups. This impact relates to activity that previously took place and will no longer be available locally.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Negative	The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields would negatively impact across the

		<p>protected characteristics of its identified user groups. This impact relates to activity that previously took place and will no longer be available locally.</p> <p>Pregnant women will not be able to access services previously available in the facility to improve their health and wellbeing. This extends to parent and baby swimming lessons.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Relates specifically to employment law however, persons of all protected characteristics will be negatively impacted	The permanent closure of the Leisure Centre and cease in management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields would negatively impact across the protected characteristics of its identified user groups. This impact relates to activity that previously took place and will no longer be available locally.
Carers	Negative	Anyone with caring responsibilities that previously utilised the Leisure Centre or playing fields to aid the physical and mental wellbeing of those they care for will be impacted negatively by the permanent closure of the facility and the cease in management of the playing fields.
Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past) *(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation)	Negative	Those on low income or without access to transport will experience a negative impact due to the permanent closure of the venue and the potential inability to access alternative council-owned leisure facilities within the district.

General comments	Whilst accepting that the minimum distance to the next available council-owned leisure venue is 11 miles and that limited public transport opportunities exist, the district does have three other leisure centres available for use by the residents of South Kesteven on the same terms as the facility in Deeping St James. Whilst this may not be the preferred option for the existing users of the venue in Deepings it does, in some part, go towards mitigating the impact.
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3. What equality data/information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy/service/function/strategy? (Note any relevant consultation who took part and key findings)

Following the temporary closure of the leisure facility on health and safety grounds, all users of the leisure centre were contacted and kept up to date with developments, including those with the protected characteristics of age and disability. Assistance has been provided around the use of alternative facilities and provision since the temporary closure.

Should the decision be made to hand back the leisure centre and playing fields to LCC the Council will write to all affected parties and continue to offer assistance to find alternative facilities and provision.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

Since the initial closure, the management team from LeisureSK Ltd have undertaken individual consultation with users who have relevant protected characteristics to determine and mitigate the impact on them. Any unidentified negative impact identified through this consultation will be further investigated through a stage 2 analysis assessment.

4. Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made): Please check one of the options.

a)	No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option a) you can now send this form to the Lead Officer and your Neutral Assessor for sign off</i>		

b)	Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions b.1 and b.2</i>		
c)	Adverse impact but continue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option c) you will need to answer questions c.1</i>		
d)	Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful	<input type="checkbox"/>

b.1 In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?

b.2 Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

If you have checked option b) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis

c.1 Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy/function/service/strategy.

The results of a building condition survey have confirmed that Deepings Leisure Centre requires significant investment to rectify the current issues in the building. Given the current state, and level of deterioration, the building must remain closed to protect the health and safety of customers and staff.

Deepings Leisure Centre is owned by Lincolnshire County Council and managed by South Kesteven District Council. South Kesteven District Council have previously agreed to refurbish the leisure centre, however due to rising costs and a change in the Council's financial situation, this is no longer affordable without major reductions in Council budgets or services.

Should Members agree not to proceed with the refurbishment it is the Council's intention to return the building and playing fields to Lincolnshire County Council for them to decide on the future of the leisure centre and management of the playing fields.

If you have checked option c) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Signed (Lead Officer):
(Name and title)

Michael Chester
Team Leader – Leisure and Open Spaces

Date completed: 26/10/22

Signed (Neutral Assessor):

Carol Drury
Community Engagement Manager
27/10/22

Date signed off:

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Appendix Two

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Appendix Three

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Council

24 November 2022

Report of Councillor Linda Wootten
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing

Statement of Licensing Principles 2023-2026

Report Author

Heather Green, Licensing Team Leader

 licensing@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The Gambling Act 2005 requires the Council, as the Licensing Authority, to review and publish a Statement of Principles every three years. This report presents the draft Gambling Statement of Principles 2023-2026 for approval and adoption.

Recommendations

That Council

1. Considers the proposed updates to the Gambling Statement of Principles 2023-2026 and consultation feedback.
2. Approves the adoption of the revised South Kesteven District Council Gambling Statement of Principles 2023-2026.

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Healthy and strong communities
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, 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 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report. The costs associated with delivering the Licensing service are recovered through licensing fees which are reviewed annually by the Council.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Section 349 of the Act requires the Council to prepare a Statement of Principles to cover each successive period of three years. The Statement must contain the principles that it proposes to apply in exercising its functions under the Act during that period. The Council must then publish the Statement.
- 1.3 In preparing its Statement the Council must have regard to the Statutory Guidance. This Guidance cannot anticipate every set of circumstances that may arise, and licensing authorities may depart from it where they consider it would be right to do so. However, there should be strong reasons for doing so which will need to be clearly expressed and explained if a licensing authority is to avoid judicial review or challenge on appeal for failing to take the Guidance into account.
- 1.4 The Act specifies that the Statement of Principles must be agreed by Council and cannot be delegated to the Licensing Committee (section 154 of the Act).

Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 An initial equality impact assessment has been undertaken and reviewed following the consultation, no significant negative impacts have been identified. This is attached in Appendix 5.

Community Safety

1.6 It is important that the public, businesses in the locality and those using establishments where gambling is available can do so safely. The Statement outlines requirements stated within the Gambling Act and Local Authority Guidance that puts into place conditions and standards to protect users and those identified as vulnerable.

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The Council is the Licensing Authority for the purposes of the Gambling Act 2005, “the Act” and is responsible for licensing gambling premises and issuing a range of permits to authorise other gambling activities in the district.

2.2 Under the Act, the Council is responsible for publishing a Statement of Principles (the “Statement”) on or before each successive period of three years, that they propose to apply in the exercise of their functions under the Act and to publish that Statement. The last Statement was published in January 2020.

2.3 In formulating the Statement, the Authority must have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Gambling Commission. Once adopted, the Statement is the guiding principle for Members and Officers when applying the Act.

2.4 The Statement sets out the general approach the Council will take when carrying out its regulatory role under the Act and promoting the three licensing objectives:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime;
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way;
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

2.5 The current Statement has been reviewed to ensure it reflects the current local profile and guidance and continues to be fit for purpose whilst promoting improvements. There are no changes proposed to the intent or direction of the Statement.

2.6 The draft Statement is at Appendix 1, with proposed revisions to the current Statement in **red** text. Appendix 2 outlines the proposed changes in detail.

2.7 The process for reviewing the Statement and the requirements to consult and advertise are outlined in the Act and supporting Regulations. Public consultation was undertaken from 22 August 2022 to 18 September 2022 and Public Notices published in the Grantham Journal and Stamford Mercury.

- 2.8 The draft Statement was considered by Licensing Committee on 19 August 2022 as part of the consultation process, with no adverse comments.
- 2.9 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Statement and results of the consultation on 11 October 2022. The Committee agreed that the draft Statement should be presented to Cabinet.
- 2.10 Cabinet considered the draft Statement and accompanying documentation on 8 November 2022 and recommended that it was suitable for presentation to Council for adoption.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 There are no changes proposed to the intent or direction of the Statement of Principles.
- 3.2 The review has been undertaken in line with legislative requirements and to ensure that it reflects the current local profile and continues to promote improvements, whilst continuing to be fit for purpose.
- 3.3 Failure to review the Statement and agree a new 3 year Statement would mean that the Council would not be fulfilling its statutory obligations.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Failure to undertake a review of the Statement would mean that this aspect of the Licensing Authority's operation is not compliant with legislative requirements.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 To ensure that the Council meets its obligations under Section 349 of the Act to review the Statement every 3 years.
- 5.2 The development of the revised Statement has been overseen by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the involvement of the Licensing Committee. Public consultation has demonstrated support for the revised document.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 As required by the Act, a range of "Responsible Authorities" and other "Interested Parties" were consulted on the proposed revisions, as outlined. Details of the consultation were placed on the Council's website; a Public Notice was placed in the Grantham Journal and Stamford Mercury along with promotion via the Council's social media channels.

6.2 The public consultation focused on gambling permit/licence holders, other relevant stakeholders and the public. A list of consultees can be found in the consultation feedback report at Appendix 3.

6.3 In determining the Statement, the Statutory Guidance requires that the Licensing Authority give appropriate weight to the views of the consultees. In deciding what weight to give, the factors to be considered include:

- who is making the representations, the nature of their interest and their expertise
- relevance of the factors to the licensing objectives
- how many other people have expressed the same or similar views
- how far the representations relate to matters that the licensing authority should be including in its statement.

6.4 13 replies were received

- Residents	7 responses
- Town and/or Parish Councils	5 responses
- Representing another group or organisation	1 response

No responses were received from Statutory Consultees or anyone identifying as an existing Licence Holder.

6.5 A consultation report has been produced (Appendix 3). This shows overall support for the draft Statement. Where comments have been made these are provided in Appendix 4 with associated responses. One amendment to the Draft Statement of Principles is proposed as a result of the consultation and is shown in **green** text.

7. **Background Papers**

7.1 [Gambling Statement of Principles 2019 – 2022](#)

7.2 [Non Key Decision - 18 July 2022. Approval to commence consultation on the revised Gambling Statement of Principles](#)

7.3 [Licensing Committee - 19 August 2022.](#)

7.4 [Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 11 October 2022](#)

7.5 [Cabinet - 8 November 2022](#)

All reports above are available on the South Kesteven website.

8. **Appendices**

Can be viewed at <https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk>

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Gambling Statement of Principles
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Proposed revisions to the Gambling Statement of Principles 2020-2023
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Consultation Feedback Report
- 8.4 Appendix 4 – Responses and proposed amendments following consultation
- 8.5 Appendix 5 – Initial Equality Impact Assessment



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Council

24 November 2022

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive

Political Proportionality, Allocation of Seats on Committees and Appointment to an Outside Body

Report Author

Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

 Graham.watts@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide Full Council with an update on the political proportionality and allocation of seats on Committees since the last meeting, taking into account the results of two by-elections held on 10 November 2022 and notification of a resignation.

To provide Full Council with an opportunity to appoint a Member onto the Joseph Clarke's (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation to fill a vacancy.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. Notes the revised political proportionality and allocation of seats to Committees
2. Approves the appointment of the nominations from the Conservative Group for two seats on the Planning Committee
3. Approves the appointment of the nomination from the Alliance SK Group for a seat on the Companies Committee
4. Approves any other nominations from Political Groups to make appointments or changes to the membership of Committees
5. Approves the appointment of a Member of the Council to sit on the Joseph Clarke's (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation to fill a vacancy

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	High performing Council
Which wards are impacted?	All or insert specific ward(s)

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 There are no financial or procurement implications arising from this report.

Reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Reviewed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 By-elections for seats in the Bourne East and Grantham St Wulfram's Wards were held on 10 November 2022.
- 2.2 Councillor Julie Reid was elected to represent the Bourne East Ward.
- 2.3 Councillor Mary Whittington was elected to represent the Grantham St Wulfram's Ward.
- 2.4 The necessary notice has been provided that Councillors Reid and Whittington have joined South Kesteven District Council's Conservative Group.

- 2.5 Councillor Jan Hansen resigned as a Councillor on 1 November 2022 meaning that there is a vacancy on the Council. The Notice of Election for Toller Ward has been published and, if contested, a by-election will be held on 15 December 2022.
- 2.6 A revised calculation of the Council's political proportionality and allocation of Committee seats is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.7 The Conservative Group has gained one seat from the Independent Group on the Planning Committee.
- 2.8 Councillor Nick Robins recently resigned from the Planning Committee, meaning that there are now two vacant seats for the Conservative Group on the Planning Committee. The Conservative Group is therefore invited to nominate two Councillors to fill these vacancies.
- 2.9 The Alliance SK Group has gained one seat from the Independent Group on the Companies Committee. The Alliance SK Group is therefore invited to nominate one Councillor to fill this vacancy.
- 2.10 The Alliance SK Group currently has vacancies on all other Committees where it is allocated seats, apart from the Licensing Committee and Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committee. The Alliance SK Group is invited to nominate Councillors to fill these vacancies.

Joseph Clarke's (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation

- 2.11 A vacancy has arisen on the Joseph Clarke's (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation following the resignation of Councillor Jacky Smith.
- 2.12 The Joseph Clarke's Foundation was founded by Will dated 6 November 1717 and on 25 January 1960 the Minister of Education made a scheme under the Charitable Trusts Act for the Foundation and its endowment to be administered as two separate Foundations, one of which being the Joseph Clarke's (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation.
- 2.13 Full Council is therefore invited to appoint a Member to fill a vacancy on the Foundation.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 As set out above. No further decision is required by the Council regarding membership of Committees at this stage.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 To make any other changes to the membership of Committees.
- 4.2 To propose other nominations for the role of Joseph Clarke's (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 To ensure that the Council has sufficient representation on Committees and in other roles deemed necessary or appropriate.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A – Political balance and allocation of seats to Committees

Political balance of the Council

Group	Seats	%
Conservative	39	71%
Independent	9	16% (<i>including 2 Liberal Democrats aligned with the Independent Group</i>)
Alliance SK	3	5%
Unaligned	4	7% <i>Unaligned councillors are not entitled to a seat as the calculation is based on political groups</i>

Committees of the Council

Planning Committee

Total seats

13

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	9.218181818	10
Independent	2.127272727	2
Alliance SK	0.709090909	1
Unaligned	N/A	
		13

Governance & Audit Committee

Total seats

7

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	4.963636364	5
Independent	1.145454545	1
Alliance SK	0.381818182	1
Unaligned	N/A	
		7

Employment Committee

Total seats

7

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	4.963636364	5
Independent	1.145454545	1
Alliance SK	0.381818182	1
Unaligned	N/A	
		7

Licensing Committee & Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committee

Total seats

11

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	7.8	8
Independent	1.8	2
Alliance SK	0.6	1
Unaligned	N/A	
		11

Constitution Committee

Total seats

7

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	4.963636364	5
Independent	1.145454545	1
Alliance SK	0.381818182	1
Unaligned	N/A	
		7

Companies Committee

Total seats

8

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	5.672727273	6
Independent	1.309090909	1
Alliance SK	0.436363636	1
Unaligned	N/A	
		8

Political Balance: November 2022

Overview & Scrutiny Committees

Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Total seats

9

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	6.381818182	6
Independent	1.472727273	2
Alliance SK	0.490909091	1
Unaligned	N/A	
		9

Culture & Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Total seats

7

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	4.963636364	5
Independent	1.145454545	1
Alliance SK	0.381818182	1
Unaligned	N/A	
		7

Other

Chief Executive's Appeals Panel

Total seats

3

Group	Proportional entitlement	Entitlement rounded
Conservative	2.127272727	2
Independent	0.490909091	1
Alliance SK	0.163636364	0
Unaligned	N/A	
		3



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Council

24 November 2022

Karen Bradford
Returning Officer

Interim Review of Polling Places

Report Author

Julie Edwards, Electoral Services Manager

 julie.edwards@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report details proposals for changes of some polling places following an interim review of polling places and polling stations.

Recommendations

That the Council:

1. Approves the proposals setting out changes to polling places detailed in Appendix 1, recommendations 1 to 9
2. That the approved revised polling places take effect from 1 December 2022

Decision Information

Does the report contain any
exempt or confidential
information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate
priorities?

High performing Council

Which wards are impacted?

Bourne East, Grantham Barrowby Gate, Grantham
Earlesfield, Grantham Harrowby, Grantham
Springfield and Isaac Newton 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 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. The proposals seek to relocate polling places from one venue to another with no additional polling stations identified.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Assistant Director of Finance

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Council has a legal duty under the Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 to undertake a compulsory review of polling districts and polling places every five years. The last review was carried out in 2018 and the next full review is due to be undertaken between October 2023 and January 2025.
- 1.3 In the period between compulsory reviews, the Council is required to keep polling arrangements under review. This review seeks to review polling stations in certain wards in advance of the elections taking place in May 2023.
- 1.4 The review has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act 1983 and guidance issued by the Electoral Commission.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 To ensure inclusivity, access audits and consultation should be carried out on all venues proposed as polling stations. This review concentrates on a number of changes of location for polling stations and discussion during the equality impact assessment process gave assurances of physical access to all proposed sites. People who are unable to vote at a polling station have alternative means of voting available to them – postal or proxy votes. An impact assessment has been completed.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

2. Background to the Report

2.1 A polling place review seeks to establish the most suitable voting arrangements for electors. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council has a duty to divide the District into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each of these districts.

2.2 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 also requires the Council to undertake compulsory reviews every five years. The Council reviewed all polling districts and polling places as part of a compulsory review in 2018 and must complete the next full compulsory review between October 2023 and January 2025.

2.3 In the period between compulsory reviews, the Council is required to keep polling arrangements under review.

2.4 This interim review has been undertaken to consider any changes that may be necessary in advance of the District and Town/Parish Council elections taking place in May 2023.

2.5 At the County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner elections held in May 2021 it was necessary for a number of polling places to be temporarily changed. These changes were made by the Chief Executive using powers under electoral law and the Council's Constitution. The changes were necessary either due to venues no longer being unavailable or as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to minimising the use of schools and sheltered housing community rooms.

2.6 This interim review focused solely on the areas where a temporary change was made in 2021 and proposes to permanently relocate a number of these polling stations for future elections.

2.7 All new proposed venues are considered to have worked well as polling stations in 2021.

2.8 Recommendations to change the polling place for nine polling districts are proposed for the following areas:

WARD AND POLLING DISTRICT	PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS
Bourne East Ward Polling District BNK1	Bourne Corn Exchange replaces Meadow Close Communal Room as the polling place.
Bourne East Ward Polling District BNM1 (Twenty)	Bourne Corn Exchange replaces Twenty Village Hall as the polling place
Grantham Barrowby Gate Ward Polling District GBA1	Grantham and District Indoor Bowling Club replaces Poplar Farm School as the polling place

Grantham Barrowby Gate Ward Polling District GBB1	Grantham and District Indoor Bowling Club replaces the Table Tennis Centre as the polling place
Grantham Earlesfield Ward Polling District GEA1	Grantham West Community Centre replaces the Table Tennis Centre as the polling place
Grantham Harrowby Ward Polling District GHA1	The Church of the Ascension Hall replaces the Canterbury Close Communal Room as the polling place
Grantham Harrowby Ward Polling District GHC1	The Church of the Ascension Hall replaces the Central Place Communal Room as the polling place
Grantham Springfield Ward Polling District GSC1	The Bethesda Evangelical Church replaces the Walton Academy as the polling place
Isaac Newton Ward Polling District INH1 (South Witham)	South Witham Village Hall replaces the Children's Centre as the polling place

2.9 It is proposed that the polling places for all other polling districts will remain unchanged.

2.10 Full details of the proposals for the polling districts listed in paragraph 2.8 above where changes are recommended, together with details of responses received during the consultation, are included in **Appendix 1**.

2.11 A list of all polling districts and polling places, including those areas where no change is being proposed, is included at **Appendix 2**.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 The polling places for all nine polling districts outlined in paragraph 2.8 above and within Appendix 1 were temporarily changed for the 2021 elections using the Chief Executive's powers under electoral law and the Council's Constitution to select an alternative where necessary in the lead up to an election.

3.2 At the 2021 elections, no complaints were received in relation to any of the temporary changes or venues used. The changes being proposed in this report, if approved, will implement permanent changes for future elections from May 2023 onwards.

3.3 The Elections Act 2022 will introduce the requirement for electors to show an approved form of photo identification before voting in a polling station with effect from the May 2023 elections. Polling stations will need to have sufficient space to be able to provide a private area to allow electors to choose to have their identification viewed in private. This may be achieved through privacy screens requiring a larger space to be made available within the polling station.

3.4 The Council must have regard to the guidance for polling place reviews and ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting and that every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled as far as is practicable.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The options considered during the review include retaining the current polling places where available or relocating to the alternative proposed venues as detailed in Appendix 1.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 The Council must keep polling districts and polling places under review. The recommendations have been prepared based on the feedback provided both during the review and at the elections held in May 2021 when the changes were made on a temporary basis.

5.2 The arrangements proposed in the review enable the Council to designate the most appropriate polling places and polling stations for voters that provide suitable access, space and facilities for voting.

6. Consultation

6.1 Public notice of the review was given on 8 September 2022 and full details of the review were published on the Council's website. A press release was issued supplemented by social media posts in September and October 2022.

6.2 Prior to the commencement of the review, initial consultation was undertaken of the existing polling places and any suggested changes with all current District Councillors.

6.3 Draft proposals were prepared and published on 12 September 2022. A public consultation was undertaken from 14 September to 7 October 2022. The consultation also invited comments from all District and County Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and local political parties.

6.4 The Notice of Review, which invited comments, was also sent to Parish and Town Councils for display on their notice boards.

6.5 A total of 17 responses to the consultation have been received and these have been summarised and incorporated into both Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Comments received are listed against the relevant Ward.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Electoral Commission Guidance on the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/returning-officer/polling-place-reviews>
- 7.2 Notice of Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places and draft proposals www.southkesteven.gov.uk/pollingreview

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Schedule of polling place changes
Appendix 2 - Full list of polling districts and proposed polling places.

Appendix One

APPENDIX 1

INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

GRANTHAM AND STAMFORD PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

BOURNE EAST WARD / BOURNE SOUTH AND THURLBY COUNTY DIVISION

Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
BNK1	Bourne East No.2	Meadow Close Communal Room, Meadow Close, Bourne, PE10 9EL	Bourne Corn Exchange, 3 Abbey Road, Bourne, PE10 9EF	1352
Submissions received:				
None				
Returning Officer's Proposal:				
At the elections held in May 2021, the polling station was temporarily relocated from the Meadow Close Communal Room to the Bourne Corn Exchange due to concerns over the health and wellbeing of residents on site during the Covid-19 pandemic. Positive feedback was received.				
The proposed venue is suitable for all electors to access, is in a good location within the polling district and has good parking facilities and is considered the most appropriate polling place for future elections.				
1.	Recommendation: Bourne Corn Exchange replaces Meadow Close Communal Room as the polling place for BNK1 Bourne East Ward.			

Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
BNM1	Bourne East No.4 Twenty	Twenty Village Hall, Station Road, Twenty, Bourne, PE10 0AZ	Bourne Corn Exchange, 3 Abbey Road, Bourne, PE10 9EF	134
Submissions received:				
None				
Returning Officer's Proposal:				
Twenty Village Hall has closed and is no longer available. At the elections in May 2021, voters in BNM1 polling district voted at the Bourne Corn Exchange. No other locations are available in the polling district of Twenty following the closure of the Village Hall.				
The proposed venue is suitable for all electors to access, has good parking facilities and is considered the most appropriate polling place for future elections.				
2.	Recommendation: Bourne Corn Exchange replaces Twenty Village Hall as the polling place for BNM1 Bourne East Ward.			

INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

GRANTHAM BARROWBY GATE WARD / GRANTHAM WEST COUNTY DIVISION

Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
GBA1	Grantham Barrowby Gate No.1	Poplar Farm School, Helmsley Road, Grantham, NG31 8XF (currently two stations, shared with part of Grantham Arnoldfield Ward)	Grantham and District Indoor Bowling Club, Trent Road, Grantham, NG31 7XQ (2 stations)	1710

Submissions received:

Local resident:

I entirely accept that there isn't a "ready-made" polling station in GBA1 but has the council considered the use of an accessible portacabin in the car park at the back of Tesco Express just off Carlisle Close? This would be very central to the polling district and accessible to all. Using Google Maps this would be no more than 19 minute walk from the most western house in the district, an 11 minute walk from the most eastern house and a 5 minute walk from the most southern house.

Another alternative would be the Miller and Carter, either using a room in the pub/restaurant itself or the car park to house an accessible portacabin. This is immediately adjacent to the polling district unlike either the school or the bowls club. This would be an 18 minute walk from the most western house, an 11 minute walk from the most eastern house and a 14 minute walk from the most southern house.

I feel the above proposals would serve a far greater proportion of the polling district than the school or bowls club, both of which will inevitably lead to far more car journeys being required.

The school is a 22 minute walk from the most western house, an 11 minute walk from the most eastern house and an 18 minute walk from the most southern house. The bowls club is a 29 minute walk from the most western house, a 21 minute walk from the most eastern house and a 10 minute walk from the most southern house.

It's clear that the bowls club is the option that will result in the most car journeys and inconvenience to voters which is contrary the council's frequently stated policies on climate change and democratic engagement.

If the bowls club ends up as the final polling station, could the council please put considerable effort into telling residents in GBA1 about the change as many voters may not realise the change has happened until they go to vote and it is a 27 minute walk from the school to the bowls club so it is more likely than not they will just not bother voting.

Finally, could the council please highlight this change and the time it will take to vote in person as a way to proactively encourage voters to register for postal votes in GBA1?

Returning Officer's Proposals

The polling station has been located in the neighbouring ward of Grantham Arnoldfield, most recently at the Poplar Farm School and prior to this at the Newton House Care Home. There are no suitable polling station venues within the polling district. Poplar Farm School is also the polling station for an area of the Grantham Arnoldfield Ward resulting in two polling stations being necessary at the school. The room used at the school is no longer large enough to accommodate the growing number of voters in these areas. Currently voters in polling district GBA1 have to cross the busy Barrowby Road to access the school.

At the elections held in May 2021 the polling station was temporarily relocated to the Grantham Indoor Bowls Club within the neighbouring Grantham Earlesfield ward to reduce the number of voters attending the Poplar Farm School premises due to the pandemic.

The suggestion of siting a portacabin in the car park at the back of the Tesco Express off Carlisle Close has been considered as part of this review. Unfortunately despite several attempts it has not been possible to make contact

INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

with the management company of the car park. Siting of a portacabin for use as a polling station is a very costly option involving the hiring and siting of the mobile unit for a 3 day period and would result in the car park being unavailable to shoppers, businesses and residents during this period.

The Miller and Carter has been considered previously but unfortunately does not have a separate room which could be used as a polling station without the closure of the premises for the day. The car park is operated by a private management company and again we have been unable to make contact to discuss the use of part of the car park.

The Bowling Club is located just outside the Barrowby Gate Ward in the Grantham Earlesfield Ward and provides good access with a large car park for voters and offers sufficient space to accommodate two stations. It is acknowledged that both options of remaining at the school and relocating to the bowling club are a distance for some voters in the polling district to travel on foot. Voters will be notified on their polling card of the location of their polling station and also have the option of applying to vote by post. It is also proposed that a separate communication be sent to all properties in this polling district to highlight the location of the polling station in advance of the poll cards.

3.	Recommendation: Grantham and District Indoor Bowling Club replaces Poplar Farm School as the polling place for GBA1 Grantham Barrowby Gate ward and that a letter be sent to the occupiers of all properties within this polling district to advise of the change of polling place in advance of the elections taking place in May 2023.
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Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
GBB1	Grantham Barrowby Gate No.2	Table Tennis Centre, The Meres Leisure Centre, Trent Road, Grantham, NG31 7XQ (currently two stations, shared with part of the Grantham Earlesfield Ward)	Grantham and District Indoor Bowling Club, Trent Road, Grantham, NG31 7XQ (2 stations)	1355

Submissions received:

None

Returning Officer's proposals:

There are no suitable polling station venues available within the polling district, the polling station has been located at the Table Tennis Centre within the neighbouring Grantham Earlesfield ward. As a result of the Table Tennis Centre being used as the Covid-19 vaccination centre the polling station was temporarily relocated to the Bowling Club at the elections in May 2021. The Table Tennis Centre remains unavailable.

The proposed venue is located near to the Table Tennis Centre and is suitable for all electors to access, provides sufficient space to accommodate two polling stations, has good parking facilities and is considered the most appropriate polling place for future elections.

4.	Recommendation: Grantham and District Indoor Bowling Club replaces the Table Tennis Centre as the polling place for GBB1 Grantham Barrowby Gate Ward.
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INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

GRANTHAM EARLESFIELD WARD / GRANTHAM BARROWBY COUNTY DIVISION

Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
GEA1	Grantham Earlesfield No.1	Table Tennis Centre, The Meres Leisure Centre, Trent Road, Grantham, NG31 7XQ (currently two stations, shared with part of Grantham Barrowby Gate Ward)	Grantham West Community Centre, Trent Road, Grantham, NG31 7XQ	1666
Submissions received:				
None				
Returning Officer's Proposals:				
As a result of the Table Tennis Centre being used as the Covid-19 vaccination centre the polling station was temporarily relocated to the Grantham West Community Centre at the elections in May 2021. The Table Tennis Centre currently remains unavailable.				
The Grantham West Community Centre is already used as the polling station for polling district GEB1 and is located 0.4 mile along Trent Road from the Table Tennis Centre. The Community Centre is of sufficient size to accommodate the two polling stations for polling districts GEA1 and GEB1 and has off road carparking. It is proposed that the polling station be relocated to the Grantham West Community Centre for future elections.				
5.	Recommendation: Grantham West Community Centre replaces the Table Tennis Centre as the polling place for GEA1 Grantham Earlesfield Ward.			

INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

GRANTHAM HARROWBY WARD / GRANTHAM EAST COUNTY DIVISION

Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
GHA1	Grantham Harrowby No.1	Canterbury Close Communal Room, Canterbury Close, Grantham, NG31 9RE	The Church of the Ascension Hall, Edinburgh Road, Grantham, NG31 9QZ	900
Submissions received:				
None				
Returning Officers Proposals:				
The proposed venue (Church of the Ascension) was used at elections held in May 2021 due to the Canterbury Close Communal Room being unavailable during the pandemic. The current location in Canterbury Close is located on a fairly narrow road with a one-way system and limited number of parking bays. The Church of the Ascension is located centrally in the polling district, a 3 minute walk from the current venue at Canterbury Close and has off-road parking, excellent facilities and good access. It is proposed that the polling station be relocated to the Church of the Ascension for future elections.				
6.	Recommendation: The Church of the Ascension Hall replaces the Canterbury Close Communal Room as the polling place for GHA1 Grantham Harrowby Ward.			

INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

GRANTHAM HARROWBY WARD / GRANTHAM EAST COUNTY DIVISION

Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
GHC1	Grantham Harrowby No.3	Central Place Communal Room, Central Place, Grantham, NG31 9NX	The Church of the Ascension Hall, Edinburgh Road, Grantham, NG31 9QZ	812

Submissions received:

Councillor Selby, member for Grantham Harrowby Ward

Reference the proposed change for Central Place Communal Room, Central Place, Grantham, NG31 9NX to be relocated to the Church of Ascension. I am in disagreement with this suggestion. It is a long way for many of the residents that would find it difficult to attend at the Church. Central Place has always been a convenient polling station for many years.

Returning Officer Proposals:

At the May 2021 elections, the polling station for GHC1 was temporarily relocated to the Harrowby Lane Methodist Church due to the Central Place Communal Room being unavailable during the pandemic. The current venue at Central Place is located at one end of the polling district, on a cul-de-sac with only residents parking available. The Church of the Ascension is located nearby with a large off-road parking, excellent facilities and good access and provides a large hall for voting to accommodate both GHC1 and GHA1 polling districts.

Although the Church of the Ascension is further for a small number of residents on the western edge of the polling district, it is felt to offer a larger voting space with good access and car parking facilities.

7.	Recommendation: The Church of the Ascension Hall replaces the Central Place Communal Room as the polling place for GHC1 Grantham Harrowby Ward.
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INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

GRANTHAM SPRINGFIELD WARD / GRANTHAM BARROWBY COUNTY DIVISION

Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
GSC1	Grantham Springfield No.3	Walton Academy, Kitty Briggs Lane, Grantham, NG31 7JR	Bethesda Evangelical Church, Kitty Briggs Lane, Grantham, NG31 7JR	770

Submissions received:

None

Returning Officer's Proposal:

At the elections held in May 2021, the polling station was temporarily relocated from the Walton Academy to the Bethesda Evangelical Church to reduce the number of school premises used during the pandemic.

The Bethesda Evangelical Church is located opposite Walton Academy central to the polling district and provides good facilities and access. Agreement has been made with the management of the premises for the use as a polling station.

It is proposed that the polling station be relocated to the Bethesda Evangelical Church for future elections.

8.	Recommendation: The Bethesda Evangelical Church replaces the Walton Academy as the polling place for GSC1 Grantham Springfield Ward.
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INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

ISAAC NEWTON WARD / COLSTERWORTH RURAL COUNTY DIVISION

Polling District		Existing Polling Place	Proposed Polling Place	Electors (excluding postal voters)
INH1	South Witham	Children's Centre, South Witham Academy, Water Lane, South Witham, NG33 5PH	South Witham Village Hall, Water Lane, South Witham, NG33 5PH	1054

Submissions received:**Councillor Ben Green, member for Isaac Newton Ward –**

At INH1, I fully support the relocation of South Witham's polling place to South Witham Village Hall, which has been used before successfully and is a notable, and known, building in the community with ample car parking.

South Witham Parish Council – in support of change of venue

All are in agreement that we would very much like the venue to change to South Witham village hall for elections, as it has many advantages over the Children's Centre, including parking.

Returning Officer's Proposal:

South Witham Village Hall was used at elections held in May 2021 due to the Children's Centre as an alternative to the Academy premises during the pandemic. Positive feedback was received and the Village Hall has good facilities, access and car parking and is located a short distance from the Children's Centre. It is proposed that the polling station be relocated to the South Witham Village Hall for future elections.

9. Recommendation:

South Witham Village Hall replaces the Children's Centre as the polling place for INH1 South Witham in the Isaac Newton Ward.

INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022

PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES

GRANTHAM BARROWBY GATE WARD PROPOSALS

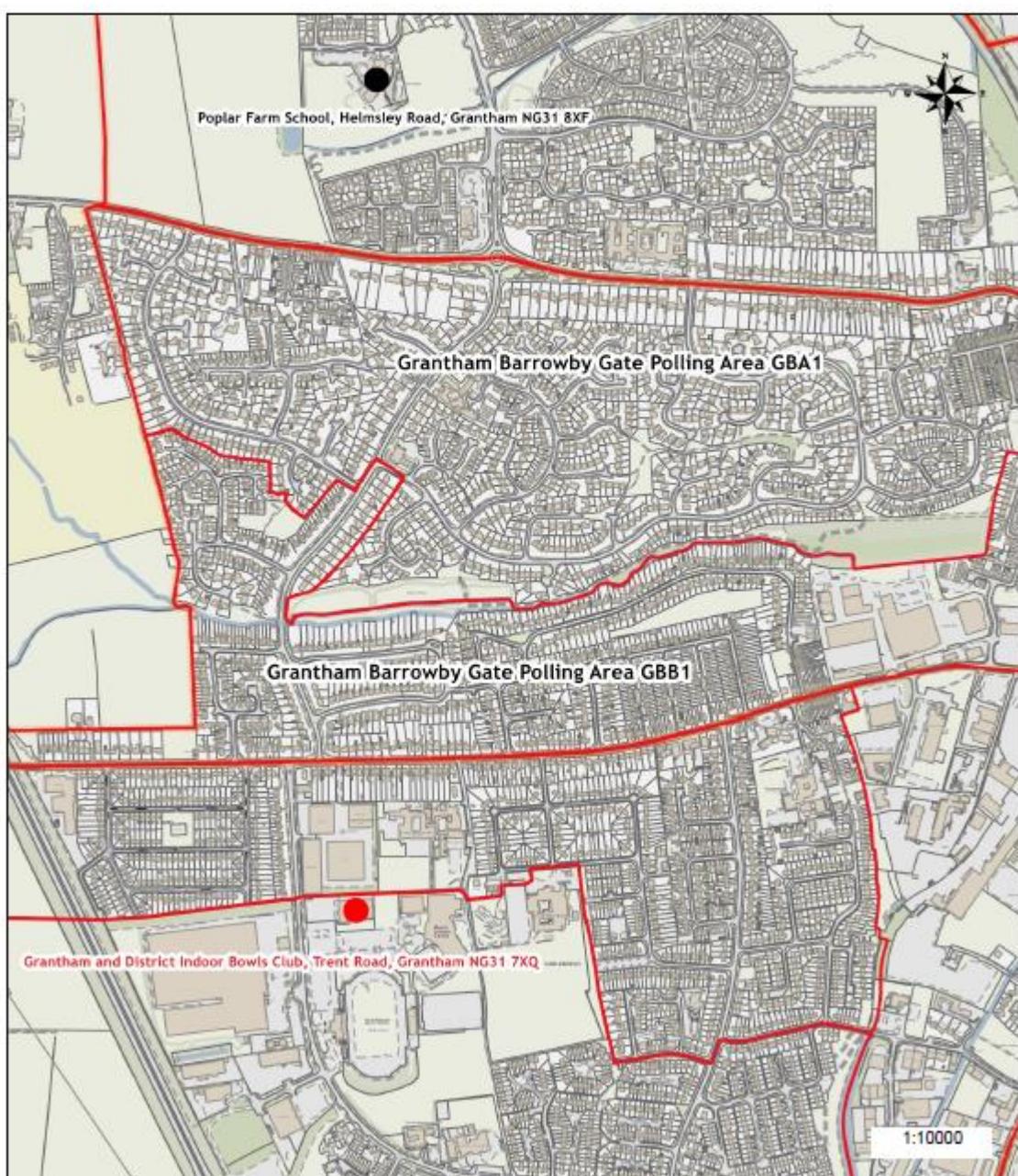


SOUTH
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DISTRICT
COUNCIL



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
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Black Dot current Polling Station
Red Dot proposed Polling Station



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INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022
PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES
GRANTHAM EARLESFIELD WARD PROPOSALS

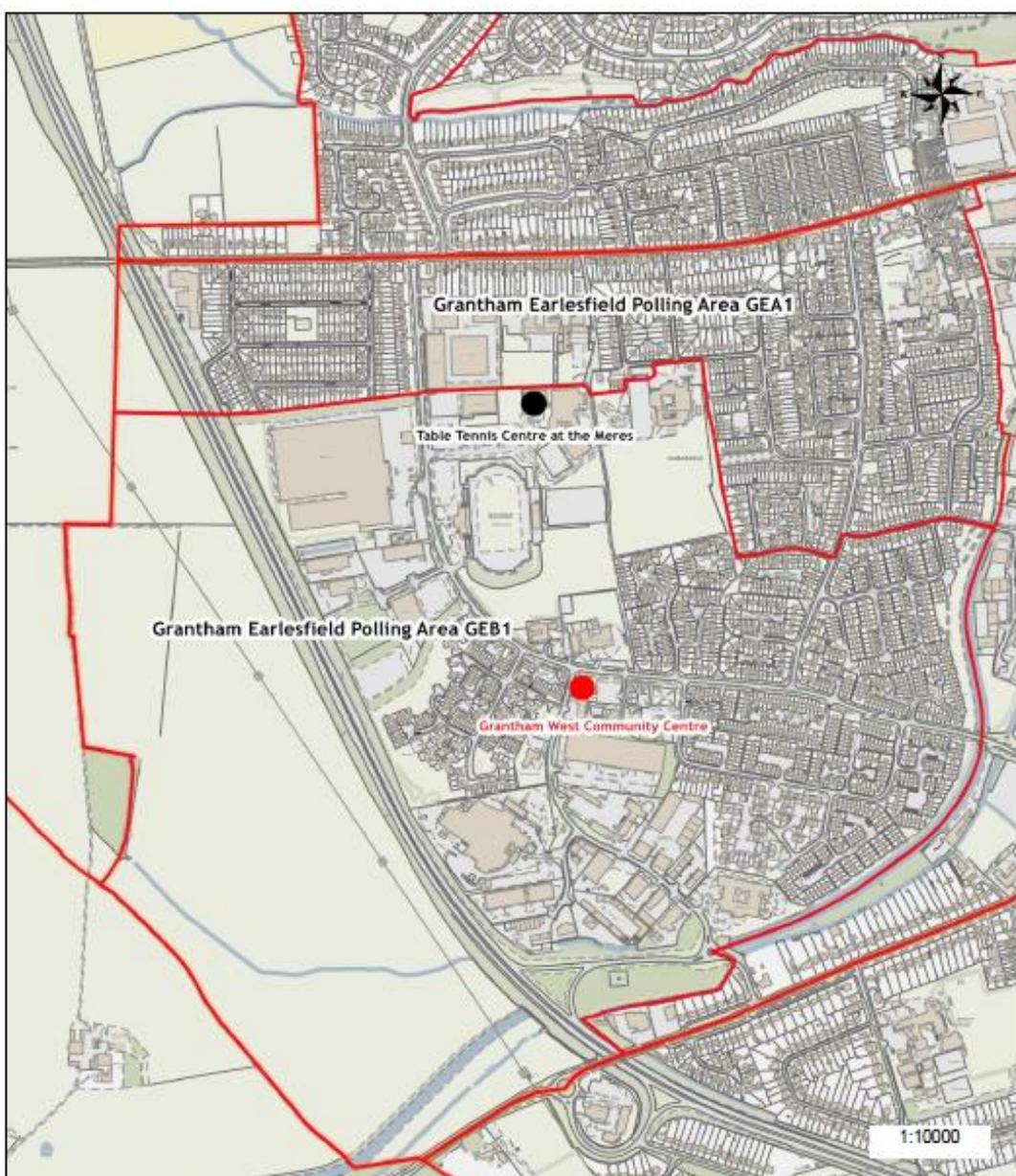


SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



SOUTH
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**Black Dot current Polling Station
Red Dot proposed Polling Station**



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INTERIM POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2022
PROPOSED CHANGES TO POLLING PLACES
GRANTHAM HARROWBY WARD PROPOSALS

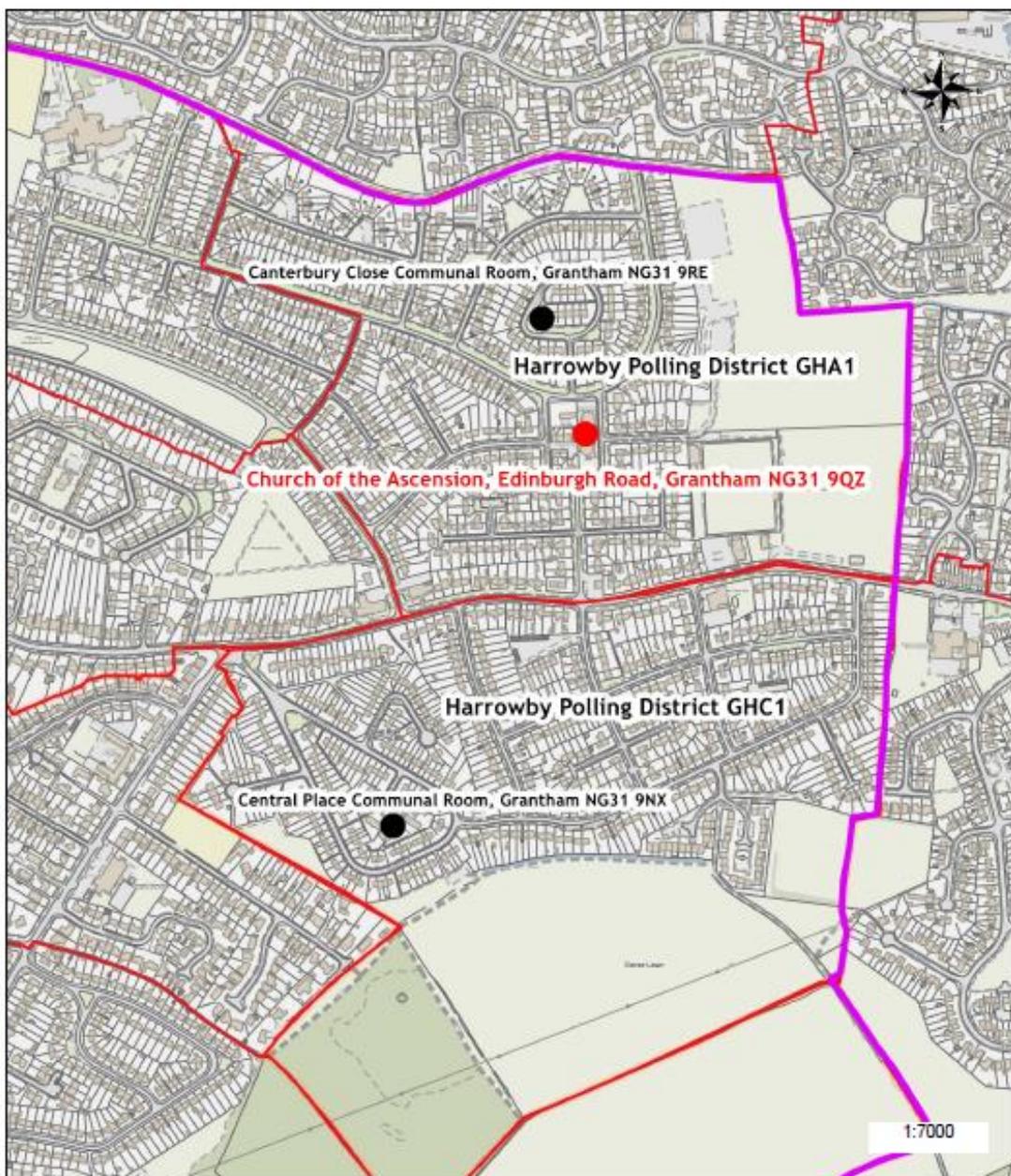


SOUTH
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Black Dots current Polling Stations
Red Dot proposed Polling Station



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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICT, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS 2022

SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED POLLING ARRANGEMENTS – NOVEMBER 2022

**GRANTHAM AND STAMFORD PARLIAMENTARY
CONSTITUENCY**

**SLEAFORD AND NORTH HYKEHAM PARLIAMENTARY
CONSTITUENCY (PART OF)**

**SOUTH HOLLAND AND THE DEEPINGS PARLIAMENTARY
CONSTITUENCY (PART OF)**

POLLING PLACES: OVERVIEW OF RETURNING OFFICER'S PROPOSALS

Aveland Ward						
Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal	
Grantham & Stamford	AVA1	Aslackby & Laughton	187	The Church of St James the Great, Aveland Way, Aslackby NG34 0HJ	No change	
	AVB1	Dowsby	121	Dowsby Village Hall, 23 Main Road, Dowsby PE10 0TL		
	AVC1	Dunsby	103	Dunsby Village Hall, The Cross, Dunsby PE10 0UB		
	AVD1	Haconby & Stainfield	373	The Hare and Hounds Public House, 2 West Road, Haconby PE10 0UZ		
	AVE1	Pointon & Sempringham	334	Pointon Village Hall, Milthorpe Road, Pointon NG34 0LX		
	AVF1	Rippingale	588	Rippingale Village Hall, Station Street, Rippingale PE10 0TA		
Consultation Feedback received:						
None						

Belmont Ward							
Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal		
Grantham & Stamford	BEA1	Londonthorpe & Harrowby Without ('Harrowby & Spitalgate' Parish Ward)	866	Belmont Community Primary School, Harrowby Lane NG31 9LR	No change		
	BEB1		1082				
	BEC1		971	Belton Lane Community School & Children's Centre, Queensway NG31 9PP			
Consultation Feedback received:							
Councillor George Chivers, Member for Belmont Ward -supports making no change to current polling station arrangements. Venues are the most appropriate for polling stations, have adequate parking and are fairly central for everyone.							
Returning Officer's Comments:							
<p>Polling districts BEA1 and BEB1 : At the May 2021 elections, the polling station for polling districts BEA1 and BEB1 was temporarily relocated to Harrowby Lane Methodist Church, Princess Drive which is situated outside of the Belmont ward. It is proposed that the polling station remain unchanged within the ward at Belmont Primary School which is felt to be the most suitable location.</p> <p>Polling district BEC1 : At the May 2021 elections, the polling station for polling district BEC1 was temporarily relocated to the Royal Queen, Belton Lane which is situated outside of the Belmont Ward. It is proposed that the polling station remain unchanged at Belton Lane Primary School for future elections.</p>							

Belvoir Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal	
Grantham & Stamford	BLA1	Denton	195	The Welby Arms, Church Street, Denton, NG32 1LG	No change	
	BLD1	Wyville-cum-Hungerton	38			
	BLB1	Harlaxton	559	Harlaxton Village Hall, 3 Church Street, Harlaxton NG32 1HB		
	BLC1	Woolsthorpe-by-Belvoir	308	Woolsthorpe Village Hall, Main Street, Woolsthorpe by Belvoir NG32 1LX		
Sleaford & North Hykeham	BLE2	Allington	606	Allington Village Hall, Side Street, Allington NG32 2DZ		
	BLF2	Barrowby	1431	The Reading Room, Church Street, Barrowby NG32 1BX		
	BLG2	Sedgebrook	245	Sedgebrook Social Club, Abbey Lane, Sedgebrook NG32 2EY		
Consultation Feedback received:						
None						

Bourne Austerby Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal		
Grantham & Stamford	BNA1	Bourne – 'South Fen' Parish Ward	1203	Darby & Joan Hall, South Road, Bourne PE10 9LY	No change		
	BNC1		638				
	BNB1		1748	The Centre at Elsea Park, 1 Sandown Way, Bourne PE10 0US			
	BND1		1553	The Centre at Elsea Park, 1 Sandown Way, Bourne PE10 0US			
Consultation Feedback received:							
Councillor Paul Fellows, Member for Bourne Austerby Ward - There are no changes for my ward and what seems to be sensible retention or replacement of other wards in Bourne.							

Bourne East Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	BNJ1	Bourne – 'Dyke Fen' Parish Ward	1227	Bourne Youth Centre, Queen's Road, Bourne, PE10 9DX	No change
	BNK1	Bourne – 'North Fen' Parish Ward	1352	Meadow Close Communal Room, Meadow Close, Bourne, PE10 9EL	Bourne Corn Exchange, 3 Abbey Road, Bourne PE10 9EF
	BNM1		134	Twenty Village Hall, Station Road, Twenty, PE10 0AZ	Bourne Corn Exchange, 3 Abbey Road, Bourne PE10 9EF
	BNL1	Bourne – 'Dyke Fen' Parish Ward	230	Dyke Village Hall, Main Road, Dyke PE10 0AF	No change

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Returning Officer Comments:

Polling District BNK1

The polling station was temporarily relocated to the Bourne Corn Exchange at the elections held in May 2021 due to the Meadow Close Communal Room being unavailable during the pandemic. Positive feedback was received. The venue has good facilities, access and car parking and it is **proposed that the polling station is relocated to the Corn Exchange for all future elections.**

Polling District BNM1

Twenty Village Hall has closed and is no longer available. At the elections in May 2021 voters in this polling district voted at the Bourne Corn Exchange and it is **proposed that the polling station be relocated to the Corn Exchange for future elections for both polling district BNM1 and BNK1.**

Bourne West Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	BNR1	Bourne – 'Cawthorpe' Parish Ward	1308	Wake House Community Centre, 41 North Street, Bourne PE10 9AE	No change
	BNS1		1481	Bourne Westfield Primary Academy, Westbourne Park, Bourne PE10 9QS	
	BNT1		440	Manor Court Communal Room, Manor Court, Bourne PE10 9PP	

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Helen Crawford, Member for Bourne West Ward -supports the proposals and in support of the return to Westfield School.

Returning Officer's Comments:

At the May 2021 elections, the polling stations for polling district BNS1 and BNT1 were temporarily relocated to the Bourne Baptist Church Hall, West Street during the pandemic. It is proposed that the polling stations be retained at Bourne Westfield Primary Academy and Manor Court Communal Room as the most suitable locations for voters in these polling districts.

Casewick Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	CSA1	Barholm & Stowe	70	Greatford Village Hall, Carlby Road, Greatford PE9 4PR	No change
	CSC1	Greatford	178		
	CSB1	Baston	1058	Baston Village Hall, The Barn, Main Street, Baston PE6 9PA	
	CSD1	Langtoft	1301	Langtoft Village Hall, 26 West End, Langtoft PE6 9LS	
	CSE1	Tallington	719	Tallington Village Hall, Main Road, Tallington PE9 4RP	
	CSF1	Uffington	440	Uffington Village Hall, 55 Main Road, Uffington PE9 4SN	

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, Member for Casewick Ward -supports the proposals of no change for Casewick ward.

Castle Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	CTA1	Burton Coggles	77	Burton Coggles Village Hall, Post Office Lane, Burton Coggles NG33 4JW	No change
	CTB1	Corby Glen	694	Corby Glen Church Rooms, Church Street, Corby Glen NG33 4NJ	
	CTC1	Edenham	227	Edenham Village Hall, 44 Church Lane, Edenham PE10 0LS	
	CTD1	Irnham	125	The Griffin Inn, 15 Bulby Road, Irnham NG33 4JG	
	CTE1	Kirkby Underwood	149	Kirkby Underwood Village Hall, The Green, Kirkby Underwood PE10 0SF	
	CTF1	Swayfield	243	Swayfield Village Hall, 33 Corby Road, Swayfield NG33 4LQ	
	CTG1	Swinstead	175	Swinstead Village Hall, Bourne Road, Swinstead NG33 4PQ	

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Nick Robins, Member for Castle Ward – supports the proposal of no change to any of the polling stations in Castle Ward which work well.

Deeping St. James Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
South Holland & The Deepings	DJA3	Deeping St James	2053	Deeping Community Centre, 2 Douglas Road, Market Deeping PE6 8PA	No change
	DJB3	Deeping St James	2722 (2 polling stations)	Deeping St James Primary School, Hereward Way PE6 8PZ	

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Judy Stevens, Member for Deeping St James Ward - Methodist Church less disruptive than using the school - I don't think there is anywhere more suitable than the community centre.

Returning Officer comments:

Polling district DJB3

At the elections held in May 2021 the polling station was temporarily relocated from the School to The Deepings Methodist Church due to the pandemic. A change to the Methodist Church was considered during the review however it is considered that the School is more centrally situated within the polling district and **the proposal is for the polling station to remain at the Deeping St James Community Primary School for the present time**. The polling stations will be reviewed again as part of the next full review in 2024.

Dole Wood Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	DWA1	Braceborough & Wilsthorpe	202	Braceborough & Wilsthorpe Village Hall, Braceborough PE9 4NT	No change
	DWB1	Thurlby	1456	Methodist School Room, High Street, Thurlby PE10 0ED	

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Glen Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal	
Grantham & Stamford	ENA1	Careby, Aunby & Holywell	83	Little Bytham Village Hall, Little Bytham, NG33 4QJ	No change	
	END1	Counthorpe & Creeton	56			
	ENE1	Little Bytham	230			
	ENB1	Carlby	344	Carlby Village Hall, High Street, Carlby PE9 4LX		
	ENC1	Castle Bytham	539	Castle Bytham Village Hall, Pinfold Road, Castle Bytham PE9 4RG		
	ENF1	Toft with Lound and Manthorpe	209	Witham-on-the-Hill Parish Hall, Main Street PE10 0JH		
	ENG1	Witham-on-the-Hill	135			

Consultation Feedback received:

Toft cum Lound & Manthorpe Parish Council – supports the proposal for the parish

Grantham Arnoldfield Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	GAA1	N/A	1601	Poplar Farm School, Helmsley Road, Grantham, NG31 8XF	No change
	GAB1	N/A	1777	Grantham Tennis Club, The Old Clubhouse, Arnoldfield, Gonerby Road NG31 8HU	
Sleaford & North Hykeham	GAC2	Great Gonerby (Gonerby Hill Parish Ward)	133	Grantham Tennis Club, The Old Clubhouse, Arnoldfield, Gonerby Road NG31 8HU	

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Grantham Barrowby Gate Ward					
Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	GBA1	N/A	1710	Poplar Farm School, Helmsley Road, Grantham, NG31 8XF	Grantham & District Indoor Bowling Club, Trent Road, Grantham, NG31 7XQ
	GBB1	N/A	1355	South Kesteven Table Tennis Centre, The Meres Leisure Centre, Grantham, NG31 7XQ	Grantham & District Indoor Bowling Club, Trent Road, Grantham, NG31 7XQ
Consultation Feedback received:					
Local resident: I entirely accept that there isn't a "ready-made" polling station in GBA1 but has the council considered the use of an accessible portacabin in the car park at the back of Tesco Express just off Carlisle Close? This would be very central to the polling district and accessible to all. Using Google Maps this would be no more than 19 minute walk from the most western house in the district, an 11 minute walk from the most eastern house and a 5 minute walk from the most southern house. Another alternative would be the Miller and Carter, either using a room in the pub/restaurant itself or the car park to house an accessible portacabin. This is immediately adjacent to the polling district unlike either the school or the bowls club. This would be an 18 minute walk from the most western house, an 11 minute walk from the most eastern house and a 14 minute walk from the most southern house. I feel the above proposals would serve a far greater proportion of the polling district than the school or bowls club, both of which will inevitably lead to far more car journeys being required. The school is a 22 minute walk from the most western house, an 11 minute walk from the most eastern house and an 18 minute walk from the most southern house. The bowls club is a 29 minute walk from the most western house, a 21 minute walk from the most eastern house and a 10 minute walk from the most southern house. It's clear that the bowls club is the option that will result in the most car journeys and inconvenience to voters which is contrary the council's frequently stated policies on climate change and democratic engagement. If the bowls club ends up as the final polling station, could the council please put considerable effort into telling residents in GBA1 about the change as many voters may not realise the change has happened until they go to vote and it is a 27 minute walk from the school to the bowls club so it is more likely than not they will just not bother voting. Finally, could the council please highlight this change and the time it will take to vote in person as a way to proactively encourage voters to register for postal votes in GBA1?					
Returning Officer's Comments					
Polling District GBA1 The polling station has been located at the Poplar Farm School and prior to this at the Newton House Care Home, both situated in the neighbouring ward of Grantham Arnoldfield. There are no suitable polling station venues within the polling district. Poplar Farm School is also the polling station for an area of the Grantham Arnoldfield Ward resulting in two polling stations being necessary at the school. The room used at the school is no longer large enough to accommodate the growing number of voters in these areas. Currently voters in polling district GBA1 have to cross the busy Barrowby Road to access the school. At the elections held in May 2021 the polling station was temporarily relocated to the Grantham Indoor Bowls Club within the neighbouring Grantham Earlesfield ward to reduce the number of voters attending the Poplar Farm School premises due to the pandemic. The suggestion of siting a portacabin in the car park at the back of the Tesco Express off Carlisle Close has been					

considered as part of this review. Unfortunately despite several attempts it has not been possible to make contact with the management company of the car park. Siting of a portacabin for use as a polling station is a very costly option involving the hiring and siting of the mobile unit for a 3 day period and would result in the car park being unavailable to shoppers and residents during this period.

The Miller and Carter has been considered previously but unfortunately does not have a separate room which could be used as a polling station without the closure of the premises for the day. The car park is operated by a private management company and again we have been unable to make contact to discuss the use of part of the car park.

The Bowling Club is located just outside the Barrowby Gate Ward in the Grantham Earlesfield Ward and provides good access with a large car park for voters and offers sufficient space to accommodate two stations. We appreciate that both options of the school and the bowling club are a distance for some voters in the polling district to travel on foot. Voters will be notified on their polling card of the location of their polling station and also have the option of applying to vote by post.

It is therefore proposed that the polling station be relocated to the Grantham and District Indoor Bowling Club for future elections. It is also proposed that a separate communication be sent to all properties in this polling district to highlight the location of the polling station in advance of the poll cards.

Polling District GBB1

There are no suitable polling station venues available within the polling district, the polling station has been located at the Table Tennis Centre within the neighbouring Grantham Earlesfield ward. As a result of the Table Tennis Centre being used as the Covid-19 vaccination centre the polling station was temporarily relocated to the Bowling Club at the elections in May 2021. The Table Tennis Centre currently remains unavailable.

The proposed venue is located near to the Table Tennis Centre and is suitable for all electors to access, provides sufficient space to accommodate two polling stations, has good parking facilities and is considered the most appropriate polling place for future elections.

Grantham Earlesfield Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	GEA1	N/A	1666	South Kesteven Table Tennis Centre, The Meres Leisure Centre, Trent Road NG31 7XQ	Grantham West Community Centre, Trent Road NG31 7XQ
	GEB1	N/A	1612	Grantham West Community Centre, Trent Road NG31 7XQ	No change
	GEC1	N/A	347	Earlesfield Lane Scout Hall, Earlesfield Lane NG31 7NT	No change

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Returning Officer comments:

Polling District GEA1: As a result of the Table Tennis Centre being used as the Covid-19 vaccination centre the polling station was temporarily relocated to the Grantham West Community Centre at the elections in May 2021. The Table Tennis Centre currently remains unavailable.

The Grantham West Community Centre is already used as the polling station for polling district GEB1 and is located 0.4 mile along Trent Road from the Table Tennis Centre. The Community Centre is of sufficient size to accommodate the two polling stations for polling districts GEA1 and GEB1 and has off road carparking. It is proposed that the polling station be relocated to the Grantham West Community Centre for future elections.

Grantham Harrowby Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	GHA1	N/A	900	Canterbury Close Communal Room, NG31 9RE	The Church of the Ascension Hall, Edinburgh Road, NG31 9QZ
	GHB1	N/A	630	Belton Lane Community School & Children's Centre NG31 9PP	No change
	GHC1	N/A	812	Central Place Communal Room, NG31 9NX	The Church of the Ascension Hall, Edinburgh Road, NG31 9QZ
	GHD1	N/A	793	Belton Avenue Communal Room, NG31 9JQ	No change

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Selby, member for Grantham Harrowby Ward

Reference the proposed change for Central Place Communal Room, Central Place, Grantham, NG31 9NX to be relocated to the Church of Ascension. I am in disagreement with this suggestion. It is a long way for many of the residents that would find it difficult to attend at the Church. Central Place has always been a convenient polling station for many years.

Returning Officer comments:

Polling District GHA1

The proposed venue (Church of the Ascension) was used at elections held in May 2021 due to the Canterbury Close Communal Room being unavailable during the pandemic. The current location in Canterbury Close is located on a fairly narrow road with a one-way system and limited number of parking bays. The Church of the Ascension is located centrally in the polling district, a 3 minute walk from the current venue at Canterbury Close and has off-road parking, excellent facilities and good access. It is proposed that the polling station be relocated to the Church of the Ascension for future elections.

Polling District GHB1

At the May 2021 elections, the polling station was temporarily relocated to the Royal Queen Public House, Belton Lane. It is proposed that there should be no change to the polling station and it remain at the Belton Lane Community Primary School for future elections. This polling station accommodates two polling stations – polling district GHB1 for the Grantham Harrowby Ward and BEC1 for the Belmont Ward.

Polling District GHC1

At the May 2021 elections, the polling station for GHC1 was temporarily relocated to the Harrowby Lane Methodist Church due to the Central Place Communal Room being unavailable during the pandemic. The current venue at Central Place is located at one end of the polling district, on a cul-de-sac with only residents parking available. The Church of the Ascension is located nearby with a large off-road parking, excellent facilities and good access and provides a large hall for voting to accommodate both GHC1 and GHA1 polling districts.

Although the Church of the Ascension is further for a small number of residents on the western edge of the polling district, it is felt to offer a larger voting space with good access and car parking facilities.

Polling District GHD1

At the elections in May 2021, the polling station for polling district GHD1 was temporarily relocated from the Belton Avenue Communal Room to the Grantham Christian Fellowship Centre in Belton Avenue due to concerns over the health and wellbeing of residents on site during the Covid-19 pandemic. Both premises offer good access and off road car parking facilities. It is recommended that the polling station remain at the Belton Avenue Communal Room.

Grantham Springfield Ward					
Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	GSA1	N/A	1101	Huntingtower Primary Academy, Extended Provision Building, Huntingtower Road NG31 7AU	No change
	GSB1	N/A	1455		
	GSC1	N/A	770	Walton Girls' High School, Kitty Briggs Lane, Grantham NG31 7JR	Bethesda Evangelical Church, Kitty Briggs Lane, NG31 7JR
Consultation Feedback received:					
None					
Returning Officer Comments:					
<p>Polling District GSC1 At the elections held in May 2021, the polling station was temporarily relocated from the Walton Academy to the Bethesda Evangelical Church to reduce the number of school premises used during the pandemic.</p> <p>The Bethesda Evangelical Church is located opposite Walton Academy central to the polling district and provides good facilities and access. Agreement has been made with the management of the premises for the use as a polling station.</p> <p>It is proposed that the polling station be relocated to the Bethesda Evangelical Church for future elections.</p>					

Grantham St. Vincent's Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal	
Grantham & Stamford	GVA1	N/A	524	Sandon Close Communal Room, Sandon Close, NG31 9AX	No change	
	GBV1		809			
	GVC1		1073	The Annexe, St. Anne's Primary School, Harrowby Road, NG31 9ED		
	GVD1		954	Jubilee Life Church Centre, The Source Room, London Road NG31 6EY		
	GVE1		883			
	GVF1	Londonthorpe & Harrowby Without (Bridge End Parish Ward)	225	Witham Place Communal Room, Witham Place, NG31 6JX		
Consultation Feedback received:						
None						

Grantham St. Wulfram's Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	GBA1	N/A	1524	Cliffedale Primary School, Northcliffe Road NG31 8DP	No change
	GWB1		970	Manners Street Communal Room, Manners Street, NG31 8AY	No change
	GWC1		416	Guildhall Arts Centre – the Newton Room, St Peter's Hill, NG31 6PY	No change
	GWD1		229		
Sleaford & North Hykeham	GWE2	Belton & Manthorpe (Rosedale Parish Ward)	165	Cliffedale Primary School, Northcliffe Road NG31 8DP	No change

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Ray Wootten, member for Grantham St Wulfram's Ward – The polling station situated at the Scout hut, Broad Street, Grantham was not convenient at the County Council elections due to lack of parking spaces and in addition located on a busy junction

There are many elderly residents in the part of Grantham especially from Manners Street, Grantham Almshouses and Premier Court. I request that the original location at Manners Street was a better location and has parking spaces.

Returning Officer comments:

Polling District GWB1

At the May 2021 elections, the polling station for area GWB1 was temporarily relocated to the Second Grantham Scout Group Hall, Broad Street. The Scout Group Hall is located on a busy road junction without any off-road parking and it is proposed that the polling station remain at the Manners Street Communal Room.

Isaac Newton Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	INA1	Colsterworth	1218	Colsterworth Village Hall, Old Post Lane, Colsterworth NG33 5PG	No change
	IND1	Gunby & Stainby	94		
	INB1	Easton	60	St. Andrew & St. Mary's Church, Village Hall, Stoke Rochford NG33 5EB	No change
	INJ1	Stoke Rochford	86		
	INC1	Great Ponton	278	Great Ponton Village Centre, Path via Archers Way, Great Ponton NG33 5DS	No change
	INE1	Little Ponton & Stroxtion	107		
	INF1	North Witham	103	North Witham Village Hall, North Witham NG33 5JY	No change
	ING1	Skillington	229		
	INH1	South Witham	1054	Children's Centre, South Witham Primary School, Water Lane NG33 5PH	South Witham Village Hall, Water Lane, NG33 5PH

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Ben Green, member for Isaac Newton Ward –

At INH1, I fully support the relocation of South Witham's polling place to South Witham Village Hall, which has been used before successfully and is a notable, and known, building in the community with ample car parking.

At INB1 and INJ1, I strongly favour retaining the polling place at St Andrew & St Mary's Church, Stoke Rochford. This is an easily-identifiable building on the village's main road and has, as far as I'm aware, been this community's polling place for a considerable length of time. I am deeply concerned that relocation, to a site much less known and visible, would generate an unacceptable level of confusion and negatively affect turnout. While I am sympathetic with staff encountering the Church's lack of toilet facilities, I would encourage an arrangement be made with the Stoke Rochford Estate, or simply a local resident, to access their's nearby. This would be far less troublesome than wholesale relocation.

South Witham Parish Council – in support of change of venue

All are in agreement that we would very much like the venue to change to South Witham village hall for elections, as it has many advantages over the Children's Centre, including parking.

Stoke Rochford and Easton Parish Council – The Parish Council feel it would be a great pity to lose the Church as a polling station – it is central to the Parish and allows those living in it to be able to vote in their own community, which is vital in our opinion. The Church is always available and a central location. Over half of the Stoke Rochford Village residents average age is 60 plus yrs. and being able to vote locally is a real asset and allows them to still vote; if the location were to be further afield and require transport that may not be the case.

Re Facilities & Heating:- We understand a porta loo is usually supplied on polling day. Unfortunately, the cost of heating the church far outweighs the £200 funding given to use the church.

Returning Officer's comments:

Polling District INB1 (Easton) and INJ1 (Stoke Rochford): During the review, feedback was sought on the availability of other premises that may be considered as an alternative to the Stoke Rochford church.

Following the feedback received and no other venue being available, it is proposed that the polling station remain unchanged and is retained at the Stoke Rochford Church for both the parishes of Stoke Rochford and Easton.

Polling District INH1 (South Witham): At the elections held in May 2021, the polling station was temporarily relocated from the Children's Centre to the South Witham Village Hall during the pandemic. Positive feedback was received. The Village Hall has good facilities, access and car parking and is located a short distance from the Children's Centre. It is proposed that the polling station be relocated to the South Witham Village Hall for future elections.

Lincrest Ward						
Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal	
Grantham & Stamford	LNA1	Boothby Pagnell	93	Boothby Pagnell Village Hall, Ponton Road, Boothby Pagnell NG33 4DH	No change	
	LNB1	Bitchfield and Bassingthorpe	89			
	LNC1	Braceby & Sapperton	44	Ropsley Village Hall, Braceby Road, Ropsley NG33 4BN		
	LNJ1	Ropsley & Humby	562			
	LND1	Heydour	217	Heydour Parish Hall, Green Lane, Aisby NG32 3NE		
	LNE1	Ingoldsby	209			
	LNF1	Lenton, Keisby & Osgodby	99	Ingoldsby Village Hall, Main Street, Ingoldsby NG33 4EJ		
	LNG1	Old Somerby	162	The Conservatory, Fox & Hounds Public House, Grantham Road, Old Somerby NG33 4AB		
	LNH1	Pickworth	113	Pickworth Village Hall, Village Street, Pickworth NG34 0TD		
	LNK1	Welby	112			

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Loveden Heath Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Sleaford & North Hykeham	LVA2	Caythorpe	890	Caythorpe & Frieston Village Hall, High Street, Caythorpe NG32 3DR	No change
	LVB2	Fenton	93	Stubton Village Hall, Fenton Road, Stubton NG23 5DB	
	LVE2	Stubton	143		
	LVC2	Fulbeck	343	Fulbeck Village Hall, Lincoln Road, Fulbeck NG32 3JW	
	LVD2	Hough-on-the-Hill	284	All Saints Church, High Road, Hough-on-the-Hill NG32 2AZ	

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Penny Milnes, Member for Loveden Heath Ward – no problem with the 4 polling stations within the Loveden Heath Ward.

Market and West Deeping Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
South Holland & the Deepings	MDA3	Market Deeping –'Mill Field' Parish Ward	1878	The Green School, Church Street, Market Deeping PE6 8DA	No change
	MDB3	Market Deeping –'Mill Field' Parish Ward	2016	Deeping Community Centre, 2 Douglas Road, Market Deeping PE6 8PA	
	MDC3	Market Deeping – 'Swine's Meadow' Parish Ward	509	Market Deeping Scout and Guide Hall, Wellington Way, Market Deeping PE6 8LF	
	MDD3	West Deeping	191	West Deeping Village Hall, King Street, West Deeping PE6 9HP	

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Ashley Baxter, Member for Market and West Deeping Ward - The Deepings polling places are fine as they are. If ever there was a problem with the Deeping St James venue(s), I would recommend you look at the Open Door Church on Spalding Road. However, election days in the Deepings seem fine as they are, and it's quite handy having two polling stations in the one building.

Councillor Virginia Moran, Member for Market and West Deeping Ward - The polling stations in Market Deeping work perfectly well as they stand, in my opinion. They use the only available space in the area.

Morton Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	MRA1	Morton & Hanthorpe – 'Morton' Parish Ward	1107	Morton Village Hall, High Street, Morton PE10 0NR	No change
	MRB1	Morton & Hanthorpe – 'Hanthorpe' Parish Ward	567	Morton Village Hall, High Street, Morton PE10 0NR	
Consultation Feedback received:					None

Peascliffe & Ridgeway Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Sleaford & North Hykeham	PCA2	Ancaster	1103	Ancaster Village Hall, Ermine Street, Ancaster NG32 3PP	No change
	PCB2	Barkston	321	Barkston & Syston Village Hall, Main Road, Barkston NG32 2NH	
	PCF2	Honington	90		
	PCH2	Syston	91		
	PCC2	Belton & Manthorpe ('Belton' Parish Ward)	142	Manthorpe Playgroup Hall, Low Road, Manthorpe NG31 8NQ	
	PCD2	Carlton Scroop	124	Carlton Scroop Village Hall, Newark Lane, Carlton Scroop NG32 3AR	
	PCG2	Normanton	70		
	PCE2	Great Gonerby ('Gonerby' Parish Ward)	1346	Great Gonerby Social Club, 8 High Street, Great Gonerby, NG31 8JP	
Consultation Feedback received:					None

Stamford All Saints Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	SAA1	Stamford ('All Saints North' Parish Ward)	1568	Children's Centre, Bluecoat Primary School, Green Lane, Stamford PE9 1HE	No change
	SAB1		1013	Malcolm Sargent Primary School, Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SR (2 stations – Stamford All Saints Ward and Stamford St Johns Ward)	No change
	SAC1	Stamford ('All Saints South' Parish Ward)	587	Stamford Rugby Club, Hambleton Road, Stamford PE9 2RZ (2 stations – Stamford All Saints Ward and Stamford St Johns Ward)	No change

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Returning Officer comments:

Polling District SAB1

At the May 2021 elections, the polling station at Malcolm Sargent Primary School was temporarily relocated to the Danish Invader public house but the Danish Invader is no longer available. Locating this polling district at the Malcolm Sargent Primary School at a District election will require 3 polling stations to be located at this venue due to the different Wards (All Saints and St John's Wards). No alternative venues have been identified and it is proposed that the polling stations for the ward remain unchanged.

Stamford St. George's Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	SGA1	Stamford ('St. George's' Parish Ward)	1055	Stamford Free Church, Kesteven Road PE9 1SU	No change
	SGB1		1129	Essex Road Communal Room PE9 1LT	
	SGC1		1041	Edmonds Close Communal Room PE9 1XE	

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Stamford St. John's Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	SJA1	Stamford ('St. John's' Parish Ward)	2371	Malcolm Sargent Primary School, Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2SR (2 stations for Stamford All Saints Ward and Stamford St Johns Ward)	No change
	SJB1		1225	Stamford Rugby Club, Hambleton Road, Stamford PE9 2RZ (2 stations for Stamford All Saints Ward and Stamford St Johns Ward)	No change

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Stamford St. Mary's Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	SMA1	Stamford (current 'St. Mary's' Parish Ward)	624	Stamford Arts Centre, 27 St Mary's Street, Stamford PE9 2DL	No change
	SMB1		888		
	SMD1		325		
	SME1		383		
	SMC1		825	Clare Close Communal Room, Clare Close, Stamford PE9 2QA	No change

Consultation Feedback received:

None

Toller Ward

Councillor Mike King, District Ward Member – Supports the use of the current polling stations in the Ward and added that there are no better known or more convenient alternatives.

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal
Grantham & Stamford	TLA1	Billingborough	915	Billingborough Village Hall, Chapel Street, Billingborough NG34 0QH	No change
	TLB1	Folkingham	526	Folkingham Village Hall, Market Place, Folkingham NG34 0SE	
	TLC1	Horbling	320	Horbling Meeting Room, Spring Lane, Horbling NG34 0PF	

Consultation Feedback received:

Councillor Jan Hansen, Member for Toller Ward - The polling stations within Toller Ward all three appear to operate very well

Viking Ward

Constituency	Polling District	Parish	Polling station electorate	Current Polling Place	Proposal	
Sleaford & North Hykeham	VKA2	Claypole	917	Claypole Village Hall, Main Street, Claypole NG23 5BA	No change	
	VKB2	Foston	354	Foston Village Hall, Church Street, Foston NG32 2LG		
	VKC2	Hougham	131	Hougham & Marston Village Hall, Frinkley Lane, Hougham NG32 2JA		
	VKE2	Marston	259			
	VKD2	Long Bennington	1480	Long Bennington Village Hall, Main Road, Long Bennington NG23 5DJ		
	VKF2	Westborough & Dry Doddington – Dry Doddington	168	Dry Doddington Village Hall, Main Street, Dry Doddington NG23 5HU		
	VKG2	Westborough & Dry Doddington – Westborough	92	Westborough Village Hall, Town Street, Westborough NG23 5HP		
Consultation Feedback received:						
None						

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Council

24 November 2022

Report by Councillor Linda Wootten,
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing

Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman Protocol

Report Author

Graham Watts (Assistant Director of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

 graham.watts@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report provides Full Council with an opportunity to consider a draft protocol for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen, which seeks to set out a clear process for bestowing such an honour.

Recommendations

That Full Council:

1. Approves the draft Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman Protocol, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Amends the Constitution so that reference to Honorary Alderman also includes reference to Honorary Alderwoman.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	High performing Council
Which wards are impacted?	N/A

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 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. The costs associated with delivering the protocol can be met from existing budgets.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Assistant Director of Finance

Legal and Governance

1.2 The procedure associated with appointing Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen is discretionary. There are no further legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Key Considerations

2.1 There is provision within the Council's Constitution for Full Council to confer the title of Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman. However, the Council does not have a prescribed protocol in place to facilitate consideration of nominations for this honour or the process that should be followed to formally confer the title.

2.2 A draft protocol, attached at Appendix 1, sets out a proposed process to be followed should a nomination for Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman be received.

- 2.3 In keeping with other Councils in Lincolnshire, it is proposed that certain criteria must be met for a nomination to be considered valid. For example, it is proposed that a nomination must be submitted by any serving Member of Council within a six-year period of the nominated Member's last day in office at the Council.
- 2.4 Upon receipt of a valid nomination, an Honours Working Group would be established consisting of all political group leaders and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council to consider the nomination.
- 2.5 Subject to meeting the qualification criteria as set out in the protocol, Full Council would consider a recommendation from the Honours Working Group and would determine whether a formal conferment ceremony should take place.
- 2.6 Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen would have no entitlement to any allowances as part of their role and would not have the right to influence committee meetings nor have any voting rights.
- 2.7 The Council's Constitution currently only makes reference to Honorary Aldermen. It is therefore proposed, inline with the Protocol, that reference to Honorary Aldermen in the Constitution also includes Honorary Alderwomen.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The Constitution Committee considered this draft protocol at its meeting on 17 October 2022, where it supported the draft protocol, subject to the nomination deadline being extended to six-years from the nominated Member's last day in office at the Council as opposed to the originally proposed five-year period. The protocol has been amended to reflect this recommendation.

4. Appendices

- 4.1 Appendix 1 – Protocol for appointment of Honorary Alderman and Honorary Alderwoman

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Nomination Procedure for appointment of Honorary Alderman and Honorary Alderwoman

Background

1. In accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may confer the title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman on:
"Persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past Members of that Council, but who are not then Members of the Council."
2. The position of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman is non-political. There must be support for the nomination by the majority of Councillors voting at a Council meeting.
3. Nominations for Honorary Aldermen or Honorary Alderwomen may be made by any serving Member of South Kesteven District Council only by way of a letter or email to the Council's Chief Executive and only once a Member has ceased to be a Member of the Council.

The letter or email must set out the reasons for the nomination being made. Certain criteria must be met as set out in the qualification criteria below.

4. Nominations for Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman may be submitted by any serving Member of the Council within a six-year period of a Member's last day in office at the Council. No public nominations are accepted.
5. Upon receipt of a valid request, the Chief Executive will instruct the establishment of an Honours Working Group in consultation with the Monitoring Officer.
6. The Honours Working Group will consist of the Leader of each political group and the current Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council. The Chairman of the Honours Working Group will be agreed by nomination at the meeting.

Qualification Criteria

7. A former Member should have served a minimum of 12 years' service on the Council, which does not have to be consecutive.
8. No person who meets the above qualification criteria will automatically become an Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman. A nomination must still be submitted for the Honours Working Group to consider the request.

Nomination and Enrolment

9. Each nomination considered by the Honours Working Group shall be made in consultation with the Council's Monitoring Officer. Upon determination of any nomination for Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman the Honours Working Group shall advise Full Council of its recommendations. Full Council will consider the recommendation and determine if a formal conferment ceremony should take place.
10. If so determined, the Monitoring Officer will arrange for a conferment ceremony to be held.

Rights of an Honorary Alderman/Honorary Alderwoman

11. An Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman shall be entitled to the following privileges:
 - To enjoy the courtesy of title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman and to be addressed as such.
 - To be named as an Honorary Alderman/Honorary Alderwoman on the Council's website.
 - To attend, as an observer, meetings of the Council for which a seat will be reserved.
 - To attend civic and social events by invitation and to which Members of the Council are invited, and at the discretion of the Council.
 - To walk in civic procession, as invited by the Council.
12. There is no entitlement to any allowances as an Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman.
13. Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen shall not have the right to influence meetings of the Council or its Committees nor have any voting rights whatsoever.

Withdrawal of the Title

The title of Honorary Alderman or Honorary Alderwoman may be removed and privileges may be withdrawn at any time if the behaviour of an individual may affect the reputation of the Council.

The removal must be agreed by the majority of Full Council on the recommendation of the Monitoring Officer.



24 November 2022

Report by Councillor Linda Wootten,
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing

Proposed amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules and Planning Committee Scheme of Delegation

Report Author

James Welbourn (Democratic Services Manager)

 james.welbourn@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report provides Full Council with an opportunity to consider a recommendation from the Constitution Committee to make an amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules and Planning Committee's Scheme of Delegation.

Recommendations

That Full Council:

1. Approves the inclusion of the following wording as part of Paragraph 5 (Public Speaking) of the Planning Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Constitution:

“The relevant Ward Councillor is defined as Councillors representing those wards in which a planning application falls or adjacent wards”

2. Approves the inclusion of the following paragraph in the Planning Scheme of Delegation set out in Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Constitution:

“(2) Any application at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee in accordance with the Local Code of Good Practice.”

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	High performing Council
Which wards are impacted?	All or insert specific ward(s)

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 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Assistant Director of Finance

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no specific legal and governance implications that have not already been referred to in the body of the report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 At the Council's Annual Meeting on 26 May 2022, the Council adopted a new version of the Authority's Constitution following a comprehensive review of the document.

2.2 During debate on the new Constitution an amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules under Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) was proposed, as follows:

Insert a new paragraph to define the relevant ward Councillor as 'those wards which fall inside or adjacent to the boundary of the planning application in question'

2.3 This amendment was deferred for consideration at the next scheduled meeting of the Constitution Committee, which took place on 18 July 2022. A recommendation was submitted to Full Council to adopt the suggested amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules.

2.4 Full Council at its meeting on 25 July 2022 considered the recommendation of the Constitution Committee and requested that the Committee gave further consideration to the proposed wording in the context of the content of the Local Code of Practice for the Planning Committee, which had also been adopted as part of the new Constitution.

2.5 The Constitution Committee met on 17 October 2022 and re-considered the proposed amendment as requested. It was recommended to Full Council that the following wording be added as part of Paragraph 5 (Public Speaking) of the Planning Procedure Rules:

"The relevant Ward Councillor is defined as Councillors representing those wards in which a planning application falls or adjacent wards".

2.6 A further amendment to the Constitution was proposed at the meeting of the Constitution Committee in respect of the Scheme of Delegation, as set out in Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the document. The Committee agreed that the following new paragraph be inserted in the Planning Scheme of Delegation at 1(a):

"Any application at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee in accordance with the Local Code of Good Practice."

2.7 Taking this recommendation in the context of the whole Scheme of Delegation document, it is suggested that the additional paragraph be added as a new paragraph 2 as opposed to the recommended paragraph 1(a).

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Full Council is invited to consider the recommendations of the Constitution Committee.

3.2 An extract from the draft minutes of the meeting of the Constitution Committee held on 17 October 2022 is attached to this report at Appendix A.

- 3.3 The Local Code of Good Practice document is attached to the report at Appendix B, for information.
- 3.4 Appendix C sets out the Planning Scheme of Delegation, taking into account the recommended amendment and suggested alteration to paragraph numbering.

4 Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Not to make any amendments to the Planning Procedure Rules or Planning Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution.
- 4.2 To make other amendments to the Planning Procedure Rules or Planning Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution. It is usual practice for the Constitution Committee to consider amendments to the Council's Constitution prior to their debate at Full Council.

5 Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix A – Draft minutes of the meeting of the Constitution Committee held on 17 October 2022.
- 5.2 Appendix B – Local Code of Good Practice.
- 5.3 Appendix C – Planning Scheme of Delegation.

Appendix A

Extract from draft minutes

Constitution Committee – 17 October 2022

Proposed amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules and any other amendments to the Council's Constitution

The Democratic Services Manager presented the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing's report on proposed amendments to the Planning Procedure Rules following the motion deferred from the recent Council meeting on an amendment proposed by Councillor Cleaver.

The proposal before the Committee related to the definition of 'relevant Ward Councillor' in respect of those Councillors entitled to speak during consideration of a planning application at the Planning Committee. The Constitution Committee had been asked to re-consider the proposal in the context of the content of the Local Code of Good Practice for the Planning Committee.

The Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee who was substituting on the Constitution Committee proposed an amendment to the definition of 'relevant Ward Councillor' which read:

"The relevant Ward Councillor is defined as Councillors representing those wards in which a planning application falls or adjacent wards where there could be a material impact".

Examples given for material impact were issues such as noise, odour or traffic management.

The amendment was seconded and it was stated that the amendment was a variation of the amendment that Councillor Cleaver had submitted and this had been discussed with Councillor Cleaver. Discussions had also been held with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy about the proposed amendment who had expressed some reservations about the proposal.

A short discussion then followed on how 'material impact' could be subjective depending upon what was being discussed and who made the decision that something had a 'material impact'.

The Assistant Director of Planning offered some technical guidance and stated that there was a long list of what could be classed as material considerations as determined by the courts and general planning good practice. The subjectivity was a concern and who made the decision around that, having the Constitution phased more simply and perhaps giving that discretion to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman would make it less 'wordy', inconsistency in decision making was a great concern and planning was an area where decisions were challenged regularly.

A further amendment was proposed by the original proposer, and seconded, to change the wording to:

“The relevant Ward Councillor is defined as Councillors representing those wards in which a planning application falls or adjacent wards at the discretion of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Planning.

Further discussion followed and one Member referred to the original wording within the Constitution, before the review took place, which allowed for any Councillor to speak on any application and gave examples of adjacent wards where a Councillor would automatically be allowed to speak. He also stated that contiguous would be a better word to use than adjacent.

The Chairman of Planning Committee who was also a member of the Constitution Committee stated that there seemed to be some confusion and misinformation about what was being discussed and what was contained within the Constitution. The Democratic Services Manager stated that Members were discussing the right of Councillors to speak at Planning Committee and the meaning of ‘relevant’.

Following more discussion, it was stated that there seemed to be concern from Members that they would be denied the opportunity or right to speak at a Planning Committee in relation to concerns that would impact local residents.

Currently within the Constitution if they were the Member for the relevant Electoral Ward, they had an absolute right to speak on an application, Section 5.2, Planning Rules of Procedure, all other Members had a discretionary right at the Chairman’s discretion, Paragraph 4.1, Planning Rules of Procedure. If Members wanted to speak on a planning application at Planning Committee, then the Planning Committee should hear those points whether that was under an absolute or discretionary right. Whatever was written in the Constitution needed to be simple.

More discussion followed with further examples of adjacent wards given and who would be notified when an application was submitted. It was proposed that the addition of *“at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman”* did not need to be included as this was already within the Constitution.

Following the proposal, the Chairman read out the amendment before the Committee:

“The relevant Ward Councillor is defined as Councillors representing those wards in which a planning application falls or adjacent wards”.

Reference was once again made to using the word contiguous rather than adjacent in the amendment. However, the amendment as read out by the Chairman was seconded and on being put to the vote unanimously **AGREED**.

Recommendation to Council

The Constitution Committee recommends the addition of the following paragraph to the Planning Procedure Rules as contained within Part 4 of the new Constitution:

“The relevant Ward Councillor is defined as Councillors representing those wards in which a planning application falls or adjacent wards”.

Members then discussed an amendment that Councillor Cleaver had raised at the Constitution Committee on 18 July in relation to the call-in process. The Chairman of Planning Committee had asked for the item to come back to the Constitution Committee as it was felt that all the information had not initially been made available to the Committee members.

When the item had been discussed, the Planning Scheme of Delegation had been included in the pack but not the Planning Local Code of Practice. Some of the detail of the call-in process was in the Members Code of Good Practice and was not obvious in the Planning Scheme of Delegation. Member's attention was drawn to the start of paragraph 6 on page 31 of the agenda pack which stated:

“Where any Councillor considers that an application not in their ward or adjoining their ward should be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision,.....”

This entitled any Member to call-in any application, unfortunately this was not clear in the Planning Scheme of Delegation which was the paper included in the agenda pack.

Discussions had been held with the Assistant Director of Planning and it had been proposed that a second paragraph was inserted after paragraph 1 in the Planning Scheme of Delegation to refer Members to the Planning Code of Good Practice. It was requested that when the item was submitted to Council that the Planning Code of Good Practice and the Planning Scheme of Delegation were both included in the agenda pack. This would enable the Chairman of Planning Committee to make it clear what the process was and that any Councillor could call-in any planning application at the discretion of the Planning Committee Chairman.

The wording to be inserted at 1(a) in the Planning Scheme of Delegation was:

“Any application at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee in accordance with the Local Code of Good Practice.”

The proposed amendment was seconded and on being put to the vote unanimously **AGREED**.

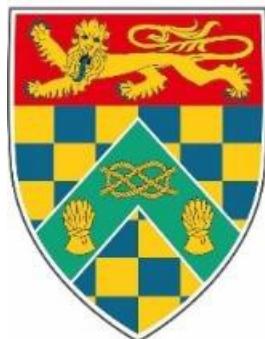
Recommendation to Council

The Constitution Committee recommends that the following new paragraph be inserted in the Planning Scheme of Delegation at 1(a):

“Any application at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee in accordance with the Local Code of Good Practice.”

(It was requested that both the Planning Scheme of Delegation and the Local Code of Good Practice be included with the report for Council)

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SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Guidance For Members and Officers Dealing with Planning Matters

A Local Code of Good Practice

POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT: A GUIDE FOR COUNCILLORS INVOLVED IN MAKING PLANNING DECISIONS - GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE NOTE

SUMMARY

Councillors can involve themselves in discussions with developers, their constituents and others about planning matters. Difficulties can be avoided if you follow these useful general hints.

Do

- involve officers and structure discussions with developers
- inform officers about any approaches made to you and seek advice
- familiarise yourself with the Code of Conduct and follow it when you are representing the Council
- keep your register of interests up to date
- be aware of what fairness and impartiality mean in your role
- be prepared to hold discussions with an applicant and officers before a planning application is made, not just after it has been submitted
- preface any discussion with disclaimers; keep a note of important meetings and calls; and make clear at the outset that discussions are not binding
- be aware of what Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, personal and prejudicial interests are – refer to the Monitoring Officer or the Code of Conduct if you are unsure
- recognise the distinction between giving advice and engaging in negotiation and when this is appropriate in your role
- stick to policies included in adopted plans, but also pay heed to any other considerations relevant to planning
- use meetings to show leadership and vision
- encourage positive outcomes
- recognise that you can lobby and campaign but that this may remove you from the decision making process
- feed in both your own and your local community's concerns and issues
- be aware that you can engage in discussions, but you must have and be seen to have an open mind at the point of decision making.

Do not

- use your position improperly for personal gain or to advantage your friends or close associates
- meet developers alone or put yourself in a position where you appear to favour a person, company or group – even a 'friendly' private discussion with a developer could cause others to mistrust your impartiality.
- attend meetings or be involved in decision-making where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or a prejudicial interest – except when speaking where the general public are also allowed to do so
- accept gifts or hospitality
- prejudge or be seen to prejudge an issue if you want to be a decision maker on a proposal
- seek to influence officers or put pressure on them to support a particular course of action in relation to a planning application
- compromise the impartiality of people who work for the Council
- invent local guides or policies

1. Introduction

This Protocol sets out the practices and procedures that Members and Officers at South Kesteven District Council should follow when determining planning applications.

2. Basic Principles

The basis of the planning system is to manage development in the public interest.

Planning is often very contentious because planning decisions affect the private interests of individuals, landowners and developers. Decisions are taken based on informed judgement with a firm policy basis.

The Planning process relies on transparency in decision making and Officers and Members must act fairly and with integrity.

Development proposals that are policy compliant should be approved without delay.

Members have a duty to represent their constituents but also an overriding duty to the wider community.

3. The role of the Planning Committee

The role of a Planning Committee is to determine major or more complex applications that raise issues of more than immediate local importance. The intention is to allow Councillors to focus on applications needing additional scrutiny where added Member value in balancing conflicting pressures is important. This of course does not mean that minor applications cannot be referred to Committee where they raise issues of more than local importance.

Councillors are encouraged to engage with the planning process early, and often many issues can be resolved without applications needing to be referred to Committee for a decision. For example, by raising issues early it may be possible to address concerns through amendments, additional information and/or planning conditions.

Referral to Planning Committee shouldn't be used to arbitrate between competing interest groups or to put off making difficult decisions. Applications should not normally be referred to Planning Committee simply to allow an objector/applicant an opportunity to air their views in a public forum.

Householder or very minor applications should not normally be referred to Planning Committee and it is expected that Councillors will work with Officers to resolve any concerns arising from the proposal.

4. Your Role as a Member of the Planning Authority

To make planning decisions openly, impartially and with sound judgement for justifiable reasons.

5. Relationship to the Members' Code of Conduct

Do apply the rules within the Members' Code of Conduct first as these must always be complied with.

The guidance in this note seeks to explain and supplement the Members' Code of Conduct for the purposes of the Planning system. If you do not abide by this Code of Local Practice you may not necessarily have breached the Members' Code of Conduct but you may put the Council at risk of proceedings regarding legality or maladministration of the related decision.

6. Development Proposals and Interests under the Members' Code of Conduct

Members should declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct. These should be declared at the beginning of the meeting and not at the start of the discussion on any particular matter. However, if you become aware of a DPI after the start of the meeting you should declare it as soon as possible.

Where you have a DPI you should not participate, or give the appearance of trying to participate in the decision making process.

The Monitoring Officer will be able to provide you with any specific guidance or discuss any particular concerns with you ahead of any meeting.

7. Fettering Discretion in the Planning Process

Members making a decision on any planning application as part of the Planning Committee must ensure that they have not already fettered their discretion. This means that you should come to any Planning Committee meeting with an open mind. Whilst you should familiarise yourself with the application and the reports ahead of the Committee, it is important that you haven't made your mind up on how you will vote at the meeting of the Planning Committee (or Full Council) until you have heard the Officer's presentation and all of the evidence and arguments on both sides.

If you have fettered your discretion, it is important that you do not speak and vote on a proposal.

The Monitoring Officer will be able to provide you with any specific guidance or discuss any particular concerns with you ahead of any meeting.

8. Lobbying of Councillors

Lobbying is a normal and perfectly proper part of the political process and those who may be affected by a proposal will often seek to influence the decision by approaching their local Councillors or Members of the Planning Committee.

Members of the Planning Committee are free to listen to any point of view about a particular planning application, however they should avoid expressing an opinion which may indicate that they or the authority has reached a final conclusion until all of the relevant arguments and evidence has been put before the Planning Committee.

Advice to the public should be restricted to procedural matters, including making the relevant Officer aware so that material opinions can be reflected in the report.

Where a member of the Planning Committee goes on record in support of a particular outcome, or campaign actively for it, it will be difficult for that member to argue convincingly that they have attended the Committee with an open mind. If there is an appearance of bias or pre-determination then the decision may be vulnerable to a challenge by way of a Judicial Review.

9. Lobbying by Councillors

Members will be able to speak on behalf of a body of opinion, however the Committee should be made aware as to such opinion as distinct from personal views.

There should be no party-political grouping on how to vote on applications prior to a Planning Committee meeting, or similar voting because an application is moved by a member of the same party.

Members should not lobby or trade with other Committee Members for a particular outcome.

Whilst a Member can speak on behalf of a body of opinion, they should not personally be involved in organising support for or against that opinion.

Members not serving on the Planning Committee may speak to the Committee in accordance with Standing Orders, however, the Member attending shall not take part in the voting on any item.

10. Public Speaking at Meetings

Any member of the public, Parish or Town Council has the right to speak in accordance with the public speaking rules set out in the Planning Procedure Rules at Part 4 of the Constitution. Their views, insofar as they are material planning considerations, should be taken account of with other available information and evidence.

11. Decision Making

Members should determine applications in accordance with advice given, including verbal updates to reports, unless they have good planning reasons to the contrary and in the knowledge of all the available information and evidence.

Decisions on planning applications have to be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In determining any application the Committee is not bound by the recommendation of their officers. This means that the Committee is entitled to decide the weight to be attached to the various planning considerations that are relevant to the applications. This can sometimes result in a decision which is contrary to the recommendation of Officers (an Overturn).

For example, the Committee could decide any of the following:

- To refuse planning permission where Officers have recommended approval;
- To approve planning permission where Officers have recommended refusal;
- Agree with Officers that planning permission should be refused but for different reasons; or
- Grant permission subject to different conditions or legal requirements to those recommended.

Where Members wish to determine an application contrary to the recommendation, they should indicate the material reason(s) for doing so at the meeting and these will be detailed in the minutes to the meeting. Where a motion is put forward that is contrary to the Officer recommendation, the Chairman will ensure that the planning reasons for reaching this motion are clear.

If the Committee is minded to make a decision contrary to the recommendation, the relevant Officer (including Legal) will be given the opportunity to outline the implications for the Committee of such a decision.

If the Committee wish to add or amend conditions, an Officer will be invited to draft such a condition. A detailed minute of the reasons for the Committee's action should be made.

Where a motion is proposed and seconded for a decision that would differ from the Officer's recommendation it is important that the Members voting for that motion are clear what it is. For example, in the case of an overturn where the motion is to refuse an application recommended for approval, Members must be clear as to the reasons for refusal. This means that Members are clear as to the substance of the reason(s) for refusal including the policies that the proposal is contrary to. If Members are not clear they should ask for clarification before voting.

Officers may make slight amendments to the wording of any new reasons for refusal or conditions following Committee although they will not alter their meaning.

Members should not vote on a proposal unless they have been present to hear the entire debate including the Officer's introduction and presentation on the application.

Minutes will relate to the planning reasons for the decision specifically whether:

- It is in accordance with development plan policies, or
- Other material considerations indicate otherwise (and what they are)
- In the case of an approval, the relevant matters to be addressed by planning conditions

12. Training

As set out in the Constitution, Councillors can only sit on the Planning Committee where they have received the mandatory training.

Officers will ensure that annual training is provided and this will be available to all Councillors; it is each Councillor's individual responsibility to ensure that they attend this training.

In addition to the annual mandatory training session Officers will provide other training sessions throughout the year on a variety of topics. Members are encouraged to attend as many of these training sessions as possible.

Members are encouraged to identify any topics that they would like to have training on.

Annually, the Committee will visit a sample of implemented permissions to assess the quality of those decisions. These will take place at six monthly intervals.

The outcome of appeals will be reviewed by Planning Committee at six monthly intervals to outline feedback and lessons learned.

13. Process

All Members will be notified by email of individual applications within their wards. Where an application site straddles a ward boundary, Councillors from all of the wards concerned will be notified. Where a site is located adjacent to the boundary of a ward, the adjoining ward Councillors will be notified.

All Councillors will continue to receive the weekly list setting out applications validated by the Council. Members will also receive updates relating to enforcement cases where it has been established that there is a breach of planning control.

Members are encouraged to view the plans online and contact the Case Officer if there are any queries or matters they wish to discuss.

Officers are encouraged to contact Councillors where they feel that a matter may be contentious and this should be done as soon as possible in the process.

If a ward Councillor or adjoining ward Councillor wishes any application to be considered by the Planning Committee they should advise the Case Officer in writing and clearly state the planning issues that give them concern. The Councillor making this request must also demonstrate that the proposal would have such a prejudicial impact or effect on the area of district or its residents to warrant determination by Planning Committee. This should be done as soon as possible and within 21 days of first being notified of the receipt of the application.

Where any Councillor considers that an application not in their ward or adjoining their ward should be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision, that Councillor should first discuss this matter with the ward Councillor(s). If the ward Councillor(s) doesn't respond or disagrees with the request, then the matter can be escalated to the Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee however it must be demonstrated that the initial discussion has taken place along with the reasons for the escalation and any response from the ward Councillor(s).

It is understood that sometimes there may be extenuating circumstances where it was not possible to make a request to call an application to Committee within the initial 21 day notification period. For example this could be due to additional information coming to light after the notification period. If this is the case Councillors should submit their request in writing providing the reasons for the late request along with the planning reasons for the call-in. The request will need to be agreed with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee in consultation with the Assistant Director of Planning; if they disagree with the call-in request the Member will be informed. Councillors are however encouraged to make any request to call an application to Committee as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary delays in the determination of applications.

Where a request for an application to be considered by the Planning Committee is agreed by the Chairman of the Planning Committee then the reason given for the referral will be included in the report.

Where a request for Committee referral is not agreed with, the ward Councillor(s) making the request will be informed.

It is expected that if the concerns that gave rise to the Committee referral request are addressed through amendments to the application or conditions, the referral request will be withdrawn.

14. Reports to Committee

The advice from the Courts and Ombudsman have determined Officer reports on planning applications must have regard to the following points:

- reports should be accurate and cover, amongst other things, the substance of any objections and the views of those consulted;
- relevant information should include a clear exposition of the development plan; site or related history; and any other material considerations;
- reports should have a written recommendation of action. Oral reporting (except to update a report) should be avoided and carefully minuted when it does occur;
- reports should contain technical appraisals which clearly justify a recommendation;
- if the report's recommendation is contrary to the provisions of the development plan, the material considerations which justify the departure must be clearly stated. It is particularly important to do so, not only as a matter of good practice, but because failure may constitute maladministration, or give rise to judicial review on the grounds that the decision was not taken in accordance with the provisions of the development plan and the council's statutory duty under s38A of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004

15. Decisions contrary to Officer Recommendations and subsequent Appeals

In determining planning applications, the Planning Committee is entitled to decide the weight to be attached to the various planning matters (benefits and harms) that are relevant to the application. This may lead to a decision that is different to the recommendation of the Officers.

In these circumstances, it is essential that reasons for the difference of opinion are clear in the minds of the Committee Members.

Where an appeal to the Secretary of State is subsequently lodged against a decision made contrary to the Officer's recommendations, Planning Officers (and other Officers as appropriate) will normally act as professional witnesses to present the Council's case at public inquiries and local hearings. However, where this would prejudice the outcome, the Assistant Director of Planning may ask Members to conduct the appeal¹. In this instance the Planning Committee will need to be prepared to identify a Councillor(s) to support the case at a public inquiry or local hearing. This would normally be the Councillors who proposed and seconded the reasons for the refusal. The Assistant Director of Planning and the planning team will support the Members in the preparation of the case as appropriate.

16. Site Visits

Members can make site visits. However, they must avoid contact with the applicants/objectors and maintain probity during the process of determination. Members will decline invitations from developers to attend private site visits where additional information may be presented prior to Committee.

¹ *In public inquiries Officers can only give evidence based upon their professional beliefs. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Code of Conduct does not allow its members to make or subscribe to any statements or reports that are contrary to their own bona fide professional opinions.*

Health and Safety & Lone Working considerations are the responsibility of the Member. Members do not have rights of access upon private land and such visits must be undertaken from the public highway or via public rights of way.

Ward Members and/or members of the Planning Committee will be able to request a site visit for any application that is being referred to Planning Committee for a decision. If any other Councillor considers that a site visit should be carried out, they should discuss this with the Ward Councillor and the Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee. Councillors should give reasons for the site visit so that Officers and Councillors are clear what elements of a proposal or site need to be viewed. Where a request is made, site visits will be agreed for inclusion by the Assistant Director of Planning in consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee; site visits will take place where it is clear that the visit will add value to the consideration of the application.

Site visits will be led by a Council Officer who will explain the proposals in the context of the site. They will also explain the reasons why the site visit has been called.

Any third party at the site visit including the applicant will not be permitted to address Councillors. On occasion, it might be necessary to ask a point of clarification or fact of a third party however this will be at the Lead Officer or Chairman's discretion.

Details of the site visit including who attended will be recorded by the lead Officer in attendance.

The purpose of the site visit is to establish facts about the site and its surroundings. No decisions will be made at the site visit.

Ideally site visits should be requested pre-committee to avoid delays in the decision-making process. However, the Committee may resolve that a decision is deferred pending a Member site visit. This must be moved and voted upon in the usual way during Planning Committee at any time after the Officer's presentation. The reasons for the site visit must be established and clearly recorded in the minutes.

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PLANNING SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Development Management

All decisions, responses or determinations arising in relation to applications, approval of reserved matters, prior approvals, certificates, consents and consultations, submitted to or received by the Council in accordance with all Town and Country Planning, Listed Building and related or associated legislation (including subordinate legislation and any consolidation, re-enactment or amendment thereto) shall be delegated to the Authorised Officer(s) as specified above, except the following:

1. In respect of any particular ward: any application for planning permission, approval of Reserved Matters, Conservation Area Consent, tree works approval or Listed Building Consent where a Councillor from that ward or an adjoining ward has requested, in writing within 21 days of being notified of the application, that the application be considered by Committee. Any request will be accompanied by a statement setting out the relevant substantive material planning reason that the application be determined by the Planning Committee and the referral is agreed by the Chairman of the Planning Committee. Any call-in request received after the initial 21-day notification period will be accompanied by a statement setting out the extenuating circumstances why the request could not have reasonably been made within the notification period; any such late requests must be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee.
 - a) any application at the discretion of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee in accordance with the Planning Local Code of Good Practice.
2. Any application which is a departure from the Local Plan must be taken to the Planning Committee where it is the Officer's recommendation to approve the application. Where the Local Plan is silent on matters, but a proposal is in conformity to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), then an application can be determined through the Scheme of Delegation.
3. Applications that the Assistant Director for Planning considers that the application/notice/matter should be considered by Planning Committee.
4. Applications for Reserved Matters where the original outline planning permission was determined by the Planning Committee¹
5. Applications submitted on behalf of the Council or where the Council has an interest in the development and/or land.
6. Applications submitted by (includes where they may be acting as an agent), or on behalf of a District Councillor (or his/her spouse or partner or immediate family).
7. Applications where a District Councillor lives in an adjoining property, a property opposite the application site or a property either side.

¹ In cases where the outline planning application was not determined by the Planning Committee, Councillors will need to use the "call-in" procedure should they wish to request that the Committee makes a decision on any Reserved Matters application.

8. The applicant or agent is a member of staff within the Authority.
9. Where an Officer who is a member of the Council's Senior Management Team or a member of staff within the Planning Service or any member of staff within the Authority who could be seen as having a direct input to, and therefore influence on, application decisions, lives in the adjoining property, a property opposite the application site or a property either side.

Where there are statutory time limits for making decisions or taking action where non-determination within a set period automatically gives consent (e.g. agricultural buildings, demolitions and telecommunications determinations and notifications of works to trees in a conservation area), the Assistant Director of Planning or other appropriately qualified and trained Officers authorised by them in writing, may determine the applications. The authorised Officer will consider any objections received and, at their discretion, efforts will be made to resolve the objection before the expiry period. The existence of an objection will not alter the Officer's authority to make a decision in these instances.

The Assistant Director of Planning and other appropriately trained and qualified Officers authorised by them in writing, may also exercise the following functions:

- Accepting material minor amendments (Section 73 applications) and/or non-material minor amendments (Section 96a Applications) to approved plans
- To adopt screening and scoping opinions under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations
- To carry out and adopt Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations.
- To make non-material additions, deletions, or amendments to the conditions to be attached to the grant of planning permission, Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent, Hazardous Substances Consent or Advertisement Consent, authorised by the Planning Committee or Council
- To respond to notifications for proposed works to trees in conservation areas
- Issuing hedgerow retention notices and general discharge of duties under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997
- To determine applications relating to the High Hedge Legislation
- Authorising powers of entry in respect of complaints and appeals under Antisocial Behaviour Legislation
- Entering into a Section 106 Agreement on a delegated planning application approval where no financial contributions are required.
- Entering into planning performance agreements on behalf of the Council as the Local Planning Authority
- Entering premises for statutory purposes
- To determine the reasons for which planning permission, Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent, Hazardous Substances Consent, or Advertisement Consent, would have been refused where this is relevant to appeals against the non-determination of applications
- On a without prejudice basis in relation to appeals in the event that the Secretary of State or the appointed Inspector is minded to grant permission;
 - To suggest appropriate conditions be imposed on planning permission, Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent, Hazardous Substances consent or advertisement consent; and
 - To approve/make comments on the terms of Section 106 Agreements or Unilateral Undertakings

Planning Service: enforcement

The Assistant Director of Planning is authorised to carry out, and authorise in writing other Officers with necessary training and qualifications, the following functions:

- Administer cautions in respect of breaches of advertisement control and in other cases where, following authorisation, court proceedings are considered appropriate.
- To make determinations that it is not expedient to take enforcement action
- To remove or obliterate unauthorised placards or posters or display structures under the Town and Country Planning Act.
- To serve Requisitions for Information requiring information as to interests in land or, if related to a planning contravention notice, activities carried out on the land
- To serve Planning Contravention Notices on owners and occupiers of land where it appears that a breach of planning control has taken place
- To serve the following notices following consultation with the Assistant Director of Governance:
 - Enforcement notice
 - Breach of condition notice
 - Section 215 notice under the Town and Country Planning Act
 - Listed building enforcement notice
 - Hazardous substance Enforcement notice
 - Discontinuance Notices under the Control of Advertisement Regulations
 - Stop notice
 - Temporary stop notice
- To accept or reject such offers to remedy a breach of control as are made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- To authorise the institution of legal proceedings in respect of any matter within the terms of reference of the Planning Committee and following consultation with Legal Services
- To authorise the institution of legal proceedings for failure to respond to, or to give satisfactory information required by Requisitions for Information or Planning Contravention Notices.

Listed below are the circumstances where enforcement matters will be presented to the Planning Committee. All other matters will be dealt with by the Assistant Director of Planning, or other duly authorised Officer:

- i. Where the case involves a Member of the Council (or an immediate relative) or any employee of the Council (or an immediate relative).
- ii. Where there is a contravention of planning control involving the Council's own development that is unresolved through the planning system.
- iii. Issues of significant public interest.

Street Naming and Numbering

The Assistant Director of Planning and other Officers appropriately qualified, trained and authorised by them in writing, have authority to determine uncontested street naming and numbering applications.

Planning Policy

Following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and the local Ward Councillor(s), the Assistant Director of Planning is authorised to make decisions on the following:

- Applications to designate a Neighbourhood Forum
- To accept or decline repeat proposals for a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order
- The validity and acceptance of proposals for a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order
- Appointing a person to carry out the examination of a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order
- Decisions in respect of action to be taken in response to recommendations included within the Examiner's Report and whether to modify the Plan or Referendum Area prior to submitting it for referendum

The Assistant Director of Planning has delegated authority to determine applications for grant aid in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas with the following **exceptions**:

- New applications which would commit the District Council to expenditure in excess of £1,000
- Applications for supplementary grant which would commit the District Council to further expenditure in excess of £500
- Applications where an applicant has requested reconsideration of a decision by the Assistant Director of Governance.

After consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, to respond to policy and other planning documents relevant to the Council, prepared by other bodies.