

Minutes

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Thursday, 28 March 2024, 2.00 pm

**Council Chamber – South
Kesteven House, St. Peter's
Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ**

Committee Members present

Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)

Councillor Pam Byrd

Councillor Robert Leadenham

Councillor Virginia Moran

Councillor Habibur Rahman

Councillor Vanessa Smith

Councillor Sarah Trotter

Councillor Tim Harrison

Councillor Peter Stephens

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter (Leader of the Council)

Councillor Rhys Baker (Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste)

Councillor Phil Dilks (Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing)

Councillor Phillip Knowles (Cabinet Member for Governance and Licensing)

Councillor Rhea Raysia (Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste)

Other Members present

Councillor Ian Selby

Officers

Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive, S151 Officer)

Alison Hall-Wright (Director of Housing)

Sarah McQueen (Head of Service - Housing Options)

Gyles Teasdale (Property Services Manager)

Carol Drury (Community Engagement Manager)

Ayeisha Kirkham (Head of Service – Public Protection)

Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance)

Peter Harrison (Safer Streets Coordinator)

Kati Conway (Senior Neighbourhoods Officer)

Charles James (Policy Officer)

Mieke Alcock (LGA Graduate Trainee)

55. Public Speaking

There were none.

56. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Steve Cunningham and Councillor Penny Milnes.

Councillor Peter Stephens substituted for Councillor Penny Milnes.

Councillor Tim Harrison substituted for Councillor Steve Cunningham.

57. Disclosure of Interest

There were none.

58. Minutes from the meeting held on 1 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 were proposed, seconded, and **AGREED** as a correct record.

59. Updates from the previous meeting

Members noted the updates from the previous meeting.

The Chairman confirmed that the action from the 'Cost of Living' item was complete.

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

There were none.

61. Changing Places Update

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste introduced the report.

In July 2021 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced the opening for Expressions of Interest bids for a share of a £30M pot to provide Changing Places toilets in existing, publicly accessible buildings.

Changing Places toilets were larger accessible toileting facilities for severely disabled people, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches and space for carers.

In March 2022 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) informed the Council that its bid had been successful and that it had been awarded the maximum £160,000. This was reported at Cabinet on 29 March 2022.

The funding is awarded to cover a two-year period for completion of the project. DLUHC has confirmed that the works will need to be completed by 31 March 2024 to avoid any of the funding being returned.

Rural and Communities were previously provided with an update on this project at their meeting on 11 October 2023. Since then, there had been significant progress made at the locations in Grantham and Bourne but sadly there will be no facility at Stamford.

An updated position for each identified location was provided:

South Street Bourne

The facility had been introduced within the closed former public conveniences at South Street, Bourne and the building has been modified to include a full changing places facility which are equipped with ceiling track hoists, privacy screens, support rails and height-adjustable, adult-sized changing benches. The facility also included reconfiguration of the former public conveniences and was scheduled to be completed and open from the end of March 2024.

Wyndham Park Grantham

This facility had been introduced within the Memorial Arch building at Wyndham Park which was being used as a grounds maintenance as an informal storage area. The new facility included a fully compliant Changing Places provision and was scheduled to open from Monday 5th February 2024.

Grantham Meres Leisure Centre Grantham

This facility had been introduced utilising a former medical space at the Meres Leisure Centre, which had been relocated as part of the works and had been operational since April 2023.

In all cases, the design and layout had complied with the Changing Places standard which has enabled the grant to be awarded to contribute towards the funding of the 3 locations.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the Government, whilst recognising that the allocated £40,000 per location does not meet the actual costs of installing the facility, had been unable to offer additional funding and therefore the financial shortfall has had to be met by the Council's own budgets as Stamford Town Council were unable to do so. The Officer confirmed that if there was a further phase of grant support, sites would include Stamford and the Deepings.

This report provided the final position of the Changing Places project and brings it to a conclusion. Should any further Changing Places funding announcements be made then the Committee would be notified accordingly.

Members raised the following points during discussion:

- Could the funds that were unable to be used in Stamford now be made available to assist in the refurbishment of toilets on Conduit Lane, Grantham?
- A Member noted that there were no sites at the Deepings within this project as the site previously confirmed was within the Deepings Leisure Centre.
- A Member confirmed that the Deepings Community Centre Trust were willing to upgrade their facilities, should a second phase of funding become available.
- Finding further funding remained a priority and it was unfortunate that Central Government were unable to provide enough funding at this time.

The Senior Assets Officer informed the Committee that that the funds were to be allocated by 31 March 2024 and that unfortunately there was insufficient time to incorporate the Conduit Lane refurbishment.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste confirmed that all areas within the district were to be considered where further funding streams became available. The Deepings and Stamford will be prioritised as it should not be that people are excluded from their communities.

That the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed and noted the outcomes achieved from the Changing Places Toilets facilities project.

62. Crime Disorder and Local Partnership working update

The Head of Service for Public Protection introduced a joint presentation which included Lincolnshire Police as well as South Kesteven District Council.

The key officers within the Partnership and their roles were confirmed along with the multi-agency approach which was to consist of joint patrols and visits and a shared system of case management. CCTV played a crucial role in the partnership, particularly working to avoid criminal activity.

Quarterly Partnership meetings were held alongside regular specific group meetings.

The Committee were informed of the breakdown of Enforcement actions taken over the last year.

ECINS was a county-wide partnership case management and intelligence database. It was a secure and confidential way of sharing information across teams and the wider partnership. Multi-agency meetings were coordinated on ECINS with the use of a tasking function to support accountability and ownership. It supported compliance with Standard Operating Procedures agreed by the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership and enabled seamless partnership working as both South

Kesteven and the Police used this as the primary case management system for anti-social behaviour cases.

The Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 provided a wide range of tools and powers that Police, local authorities and other agencies were able to use. This included civil and criminal remedies, such as a Criminal Behaviour Order or Public Spaces Protection Order. It promoted a victim focused and harm centred approach and incorporated the corporate Enforcement Policy to ensure our approach was proportionate.

The Senior Neighbourhoods Officer informed Members of the following case studies:

Terrys was a restaurant in a prime location in the centre of Grantham with residential flats above. As part of Op Disputes, Police identified through intelligence the premises were allowing illegal activities to take place.

A multiagency investigation commenced to disrupt the activities at the location and safeguard vulnerable people.

During the course of the investigation, a warrant was executed and 7 people were arrested including a young person. As a result of the evidence obtained, a Full Closure Order was secured for the commercial premises, Terry's, and a Partial Closure Order was obtained for the residential flat. Further safeguarding, disruption and positive interventions have taken place for the young person and other vulnerable people linked to the premises.

In another case study anti-social behaviour centred around 3 addresses on Eastwell Place, Grantham was reported to both South Kesteven District Council's Housing Team and Neighbourhoods Team and the Police.

Occupants and visitors to the 3 addresses had no regard for the other residents in the area. Their behaviours took place at all times of day and night and included shouting, screaming, fighting, drug use, street drinking, criminal damage and loud music. They also included threatening and intimidating behaviour directed at other residents. As a result of a multiagency investigation, following the Anti-Social Behaviour Incremental Approach, the following actions were taken:

- 5 CPN (Community Protection Notice) Warning's served.
- 5 CPN's served.
- 3 NOSP's served.
- 2 Full Closure Orders.
- 1 Partial Closure Order.

Due to the successful partnership working, this case is now closed.

Inspector Mark Hillson provided an overview of the crime data from the last year, confirming that shoplifting had seen the most significant increase. Crime was

reducing overall although business crime had seen a national increase. Police had been working with partners to target prolific offenders and support crime prevention. The use of face-recognition was supported by the partnership.

The Senior Neighbourhoods Officer informed Members of 'County Lines' investigations where vulnerable properties and vulnerable people were targeted. This involved developing intelligence and disrupting any activity to safeguard those who were vulnerable to exploitation. Public Protection Officers received professional curiosity and county lines training. A new 'missing and child exploitation intelligence' procedure had been introduced and that information could be used to disrupt future disappearances of young people who had gone missing regularly. A campaign involving taxi drivers to 'look closer' had sought to educate drivers to spot vulnerable young people as part of safety patrols.

17 joint visits with the Police were undertaken and 3 Section 8 warning notices were issued under the Misuse of Drugs Act. This process allowed an opportunity for the behaviour to stop before future enforcement action was taken.

The Head of Service for Public Protection informed the Committee on the progress of the Safer Street Initiative. South Kesteven had been successful in the Safer Streets Round 5 Bid from the Home Office via the Lincolnshire Office of Police and Crime Commissioner. The grant received was £172,000 with South Kesteven match funding £93,000.

The grant and match funding was to pay for:

- Upgrade of CCTV cameras, approved by Cabinet in March 2024
- New radio system for Licensed Premises and Retail Stores
- Self-defence classes for anybody over the age of 13 have already started
- Information boards in Parks regarding Safer Routes were to be erected shortly
- Promotion of the Ask Angela campaign
- Increased CCTV staffing at weekends
- Patrols of the Nighttime Economy and disrupt potential Anti-Social Behaviour

A Safer Streets Co-ordinator had been appointed to manage the project going forward.

CCTV had been successfully audited and verified against the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and British Standards and had been involved in 13,435 incidents since 1 April 2023.

The following points were raised by Members during discussion:

- How effective were the Community Protection Notices?

- Were the properties at Eastwell Terrace council-owned or private?
- How many police were on foot patrol at any one moment?
- Some of the crime overview figures were concerning, especially the rise in drug trafficking and possession of weapons.
- How efficient and timely was the process to remove tenants from their properties?
- When was the CCTV relocation to the Police Station expected to be complete?
- Were all ATMs covered by CCTV with the ability for a quick response if targeted? A recent target in the Deepings had received a less than prompt response recently.
- Did the crime data include rural communities? Many residents pay a higher percentage of Council Tax – what were they getting for their contributions?

The Senior Neighbourhoods Officer informed the Committee that the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 gave the Council civil powers. In terms of evidence in an offence, the balance of probability is used rather than proof beyond a reasonable doubt. An incremental process was undertaken. If behaviours continued, the Council could look to prosecute or seek a civil injunction. Warnings were used to mitigate further enforcement action. The Officer confirmed that the Eastwell Terrace properties were privately owned and the partnership teams had to work together to solve the issues. The Officer continued that Notices of Seeking Possession were submitted for a variety of tenancy issues as a warning. Closure Orders were to be issued at any property – whether Council-owned or private where anti-social behaviour was disruptive within the local community. Enforcement action would commence once a breach had occurred.

Inspector Hillson confirmed that there were 182 Officers within Lincolnshire as a whole and there were not enough Officers on foot patrol – the exact number was not known. There were 2 PCSOs in Grantham town centre as well as a Beat Manager. The increase in proactivity and safeguarding contributed to the increase in recorded crime. Burglaries and detection rates were reduced due to increased home security. Crime data was also influenced by the nature of evidence proving an offence had been committed and covered the whole of the district. It was acknowledged that crime levels were lower in rural areas.

The Head of Public Protection confirmed that the relocation of CCTV to the Police Station was expected to be complete within the next 4-8 months. Meetings were due imminently to start the process. Members were welcome to attend the new location in limited numbers once relocated.

The Senior Neighbourhoods Officer confirmed that not every ATM was covered with public CCTV but places that had ATMs installed had their own CCTV. The responsibility was on the owner of the ATM to protect their asset.

The Chairman thanked the Public Protection Team for their hard work and thanked Inspector Hillson for attending.

63. Draft KPIs

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing introduced the report and began by thanking the team for their hard work – naming the Corporate Policy Officer and the Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance.

The Corporate Plan 2024-2027 was adopted by Council on 25 January 2024.

Once approved, reporting on the KPIs were to be a regular part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees workplans. Mid-year (quarter 2) and end-of-year (quarter 4) reports would be presented to the OSCs. Quarterly reports were to be presented to Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).

Effective performance management was essential to the success of the Plan. It established how delivery was to be monitored, improvements driven, and open and transparent accountability upheld.

An effective KPI suite must be able to perform three functions:

- Measure activity and performance.
- Understand experiences and outcomes.
- Use evidence to inform and drive improvement.

Meeting these functions had underpinned the approach to developing the KPI suite. To do this, two basic foundational principles had been observed:

- The selected metrics must be wholly within the Council's control, so offering accountability and stimulating continuous improvement.
- The selected metrics must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Timely).

The draft KPIs had been developed in close consultation with the relevant Officers for each service. It was expected that the KPI suite will experience a degree of evolution over the next four years. This improvement was to be prompted by the needs of decision makers and the scrutiny committees, and further consideration of how to best meet those needs by Officers.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Some of the targets were not able to be adequately measured in terms of high amounts. For example, housing adaptations may have limited applications but the target could be that 100% of applications received were concluded.
- A Member asked that a specific target be set for safeguarding as it was a statutory responsibility and essential for protecting communities.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing clarified that Members of the Committee were able to set the KPIs as they decided to be appropriate and had the facility to change any targets set.

The Head of Public Protection clarified that the KPI for adaptations related to privately-owned homes. 100 adaptations as a target was deemed reasonable by Officers and the Team would be happy to consider a trial period working to that target.

Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance informed Members that the KPI for Safeguarding came under the remit of Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was acknowledged that safeguarding was about people and communities and the Officer informed the Committee that the Safeguarding targets could, with the agreement of the Housing Committee Chairman, be moved to within the remit of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. .

It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED that the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- 1. Approved the key performance indicators it wished to review associated with the actions in the Corporate Plan 2024-27.**
- 2. Noted that key performance indicators will be monitored throughout the year as determined by the Committee in agreeing its work programme.**
- 3. Noted that the KPI suite will be reviewed and if necessary revised as part of the annual review process with the safeguarding KPI to be brought under the remit of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

64. Safeguarding Annual Report

The Cabinet Member for People and Communities presented the report that provided an update on the progress of the review and the updated Safeguarding Policy 2024 – 2027 for review.

The Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 placed responsibilities on the Council to safeguard vulnerable people from harm. As a District Council there was a general duty of care and statutory requirements in relation to the safeguarding of both children and adults. Safeguarding was the responsibility of all staff and elected members, so the Council had to ensure that staff and members had access

to support, were trained, were able to recognise signs of safeguarding issues and, most importantly, act upon concerns.

In October 2023 the Council identified the Head of Housing Services as the Designated Lead for Safeguarding.

The Community Engagement Manager informed Members that the policy had a timescale of three years and should however, be reviewed annually to ensure that it remained up to date and even more frequently if required to embed any changes to legislation. The policy was made up of 11 chapters. Updates included:

- Amendments had been made throughout Chapter 3 Safeguarding Children and Young People to reflect updates to statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- The chapters relating to Domestic Abuse (Chapter 5) and Prevent (Chapter 6) had been updated in relation to the introduction of, or changes to, the law.
- Amendments had been made to Chapter 11 – Transient Families
- Appendix B – Training Structure and Programmes had been updated to meet the requirements of the 6 year training pathways of the LSCP and the LSAB to ensure we meet national competency standards.

Working Together to Safeguard Children was statutory guidance updated in December 2023 – it was last updated in 2018. Many of the changes to Working Together related to partner organisations such as Lincolnshire County Council – Social Care, Care Leavers, Child protections etc and Health including changes around procedures relating to child death, for example.

The importance of multi-agency working was highlighted to ensure successful outcomes for children and young people. This would relate to cases of early help through to child protection.

The Domestic Abuse Act brought in a number of changes most of which related to criminal behaviour and therefore within the responsibility of the Police. From the perspective of the Council it created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse was not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse.

Other changes were brought in that related specifically to housing and duties around providing accommodation-based support to victims of Domestic Abuse and their children.

The Safeguarding Policy covered Domestic Abuse in generic terms. It provided the definition, outlined signs of and types of abuse and gave guidance on what to do if anyone had a concern.

Any housing related responsibilities connected to the Domestic Abuse Act were covered in housing policies and the housing-specific Domestic Abuse Policy.

The Prevent Duty for local authorities had been updated. Prevent fell within the safeguarding arena. The Council's responsibilities included helping to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This was the safeguarding equivalent of grooming. The updated Duty included the need to tackle ideological causes of terrorism by limiting exposure to radicalising narratives, both online and offline and to create an environment where radicalising ideologies were challenged and not permitted to flourish. This was known under the Duty as reducing permissive environments.

This duty extended out beyond the Safeguarding arena and into other areas of Council function. For example, we needed to ensure that the Council was not hiring a venue to a group that espoused a terrorism-related narrative and Officers also needed to ensure the Council's IT could be used to access information related to terrorism or proscribed organisations.

The Council had, separately, put together a venue hire policy that met the requirements of the Duty and were consulting with colleagues on this now and IT was working with our firewall provider to ensure we can block access to information relation to proscribed groups.

Previously the Prevent Duty had referred to vulnerable people being radicalised but it was now recognised that people didn't need to be what we would define as vulnerable in terms of safeguarding to fall victim to radicalisation. The definition now discussed people that are susceptible to radicalisation.

Chapter 11 of the Policy –titled Transient Families was previously known as Mobile Families. The basic content of this chapter was much the same as it was before, however, the title had changed and there was now a wider list of children and families that would fall within the definition of Transient Families. Transient families were identified as those who experienced frequent changes of address and included those who are in temporary accommodation.

The content was taken directly from the LSCP's policy and procedures manual which now listed children and families who moved most frequently between local authorities as:

- homeless families
- asylum seekers and refugees
- gypsy and traveller families
- looked after children
- people in the criminal justice system
- families experiencing domestic abuse

- families who move to coastal areas for the summer
- families that move within the private rented sector
- military families.

This policy of the LSCP was introduced as a direct response to a Serious Case Review which involved a Lincolnshire family.

Appendix B of the Policy related to training. This had, as previously stated, been updated to reflect training requirements outlined in the 6-year training pathways of the LSCP and the LSAB to ensure the Council met national competency standards. There were four levels of training.

This was broken down to show who, from within the Council should undertake which level of training. Those listed in group A were required to attend briefings. These were generally provided in house.

There were then 3 further lists of training related to groups:

B – Officers with limited or no direct contact with the public. This comprised a 3-year pathway. These officers required less training.

C – Officers with regular contact and likely to make referrals. This was the training undertaken by community facing/visiting officers. Statistics relating to the completion of training by these officers determined the % of completed training by 'relevant' officers in the KPIs reported to this committee.

D – Training required by Safeguarding Leads within the organisation.

Both of these follow the 6-year pathway, which included a requirement to refresh training on a three-yearly basis.

The requirements listed in the training policy had been reproduced into spreadsheets that can be used by individual officers and had been shared with managers to cascade to their teams. Managers had been requested to build Safeguarding training requirements into the appraisal process so that each year's appraisal provided a reminder to staff to complete their training and provide evidence of completion to the officer maintaining the central training map for safeguarding.

It was confirmed that there were 63 relevant officers across Housing, Public Protection and Revenues and Benefits. The current percentage of relevant officers having completed or who were undergoing year 1 training now stood at 84%.

Lincolnshire was currently in the process of its 3-yearly Section 11 Safeguarding Children Audit. This related to the Children Act 2004. It placed a statutory duty on key organisations to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they had regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Audit had 11 sections, comprising 39 questions. The Council was required to provide an overview narrative and supporting evidence for all of these questions to prove its compliance.

The Audit had two stages – a self-assessment which was completed by the end of February. Evidence was uploaded onto a web-based toolkit and RAG rated. This was followed by peer moderation which took place in March 2024. This provided the opportunity for our self-assessment to be challenged if the moderator felt we had not provided sufficient evidence. The moderator also interviewed a member of staff to question their understanding of safeguarding, data protection, whistleblowing and information sharing procedures.

A further update to this Committee was to be provided once official confirmation of our status was received.

Members raised the following points during discussion:

- The report was welcomed and the team were thanked for their work.
- It was acknowledged that safeguarding was everyone's responsibility.
- How was the Council able to keep track of transient families?

The Community Engagement Manager confirmed that a multi-agency approach was essential in assisting transient families.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that the Committee:

- 1. Noted the contents of the report and the updated Safeguarding Policy**
- 2. Recommended to Cabinet the approval of the updated Safeguarding Policy**

65. Change4Lincs update

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning.

Change4Lincs was an initiative which had been set up to tackle rough sleeping across Lincolnshire for South Kesteven, North Kesteven, West Lindsey and South Holland. The scheme was hosted by South Kesteven District Council and was

delivered in partnership with North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council from pooling the Rough Sleeper Initiative 48 funding to create this scheme. The initiative was launched in October 2020 and funding was secured until March 2025.

Regular Change4Lincs Strategic Partnership Meetings had been initiated, the last meeting took place on 21st February 2024.

Rough sleepers could be referred by each local authority as well as the general public who may have concerns about a known rough sleeper. The outreach team then sought to visit the rough sleeper onsite to capture all relevant information discuss their options and pass on to the support workers.

The package of support provided by the team was a bespoke package for each client dependant on their need. Support included help with budgeting, benefit claims, signposting to mental health services and substance misuse services. Support had the clear aim of supporting clients back into settled accommodation. As funding was only currently in place to run this service until March 2025, discussions were being held with districts in relation to the future of this service and whether the partnership will continue in its current format. Central Government were yet to announce Rough Sleeper initiative funding for 2025/2026 so once this was announced, it will be at this point that the four districts will decide if a joint bid will be submitted.

Over the past years, the number of rough sleepers had increased by 70% locally, similar to the national trend, as confirmed by the Housing Options Manager. There were many complex issues that led to rough sleeping. The solution involved more than finding accommodation. There was a small budget available to assist rough sleepers in finding accommodation but Central Government had yet to announce funding in the longer term.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Was the Council able to identify genuine rough sleepers and were dogs a hinderance to someone securing accommodation?
- The work was welcomed as essential.

The Housing Options Manager confirmed that the daytime identified those who begged on the street, some of whom were accompanied by dogs but the night-time helped to identify rough sleepers through consistent engagement with the outreach team and safeguarding officers.

It was AGREED that the Committee noted the latest update for the Change4Lincs partnership initiative.

66. Work Programme 2023-24

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

The Chairman informed Members that a report on CCTV would be scheduled after the relocation had been completed.

To be scheduled within the next meetings were the following reports:

- Car Parking
- Prevent Update
- Police and Crime Panel Update
- SK Community Fund

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

There were none.

68. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 16:05.