

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Thursday, 21 March 2024 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House,
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Members: Councillor Virginia Moran (Chairman)
Councillor Lee Steptoe (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey, Councillor Emma Baker, Councillor Anna Kelly,
Councillor Zoe Lane, Councillor Penny Milnes, Councillor Habibur Rahman and
Councillor Paul Wood

Agenda

This meeting can be watched as a live stream, or at a later date, [via the SKDC Public-I Channel](#)

- 1. Public Speaking**
The Council welcomes engagement from members of the public. To speak at this meeting please register no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting via democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Disclosure of Interest**
Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2024** (Pages 3 - 15)
- 5. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

Published and dispatched by democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk on Wednesday 13 March 2024.

01476 406080

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
www.southkesteven.gov.uk

6. **Housing Regulatory Compliance Update** (Pages 17 - 23)
To update the Committee on actions to ensure regulatory compliance of the Council's social housing landlord function following the non-compliance notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing.

7. **Earlesfield Project update** (Pages 25 - 33)
To update the Committee on the progress of the Earlesfield Project, providing an overview of the project position, completed works and project timescales.

8. **Building and Acquisitions update** (Pages 35 - 41)
To provide the Committee with an update on the Housing Revenue Account New Build programme including acquisitions.

9. **Mutual Exchange Procedure** (Pages 43 - 54)
To notify the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the updated Mutual Exchange Procedure.

10. **Garage Sites and development** (Pages 55 - 59)
To provide the Committee with an update on South Kesteven District Council's garage site and building stock and sets out next steps to take forward the garage sites identified for development.

11. **Voids Performance and Update** (Pages 61 - 75)
To update Members on the progress of the Council's void properties and current performance measures.

12. **Corporate Plan 2024-2027: Key Performance Indicators** (Pages 77 - 105)
To present the proposed key performance indicators (KPIs) for the Corporate Plan 2024-2027, to be monitored by this Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

13. **Choice Based Lettings update** (Pages 107 - 110)
To give an update on the progress of the implementation of Choice Based Lettings allocations system.

14. **Sheltered Housing Workshop update**
The Committee to receive an update on the recent Sheltered Housing Workshop.

15. **Work Programme 2023/24** (Pages 111 - 114)

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

Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 22 January 2024, 2.00 pm



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Virginia Moran (Chairman)
Councillor Lee Steptoe (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Zoe Lane
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Paul Wood

Other Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Ian Selby

Cabinet Members

Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning
Councillor Rhea Rayside, Cabinet Member for People and Communities

Officers

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Jodie Archer, Head of Housing
Nick Thacker, Interim Head of Technical Services
Sarah McQueen, Housing Options Manager
Andre Ford Hamilton, Tenancy Services Manager
Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change
Suniel Pillai, New Build Project Officer
Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) Monitoring Officer
Ayeisha Kirkham, Public Protection Manager
Tom Amblin-Lightowler, Environmental Health Manager – Environmental Protection & Private Sector Housing
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

42. Public Speaking

A question was received but was referred to Housing Officers and subsequently the question was withdrawn.

43. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Emma Baker and Councillor Habib Rahman.

44. Disclosure of Interest

None disclosed.

45. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2023

The minutes from the meeting held on 16 November 2023 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED**.

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

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning referred to the number of items on the agenda for consideration by the Committee and how important the creation of a standard alone Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been. The reports before the Committee showed how the Housing service was being improved but there was still a long way to go.

The Chairman introduced Nick Thacker to the Committee who was the Interim Head of Technical Services (Housing) who had joined South Kesteven District Council just before Christmas.

The Chairman also commented on the discussion that had taken place at the last meeting and stated that she objected to the criticism of Officers within a public meeting.

The Member concerned stated that he felt that the minutes hadn't reflected the discussion but they had been agreed. He asked the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning to clarify "a long way to go" to which the Cabinet Member responded that although they had come out of special measures, there were still challenges ahead but steps were being made to improve these areas such as voids.

47. Private Sector Housing Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the report which concerned a Private Sector Housing, Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Policy. There was no requirement for the Council to have a policy, however it was good practice to have a policy. The Policy would provide clear operational guidance, provide Officers with a clear working reference document and the clear legal requirements around the licensing of these premises and also the statutory requirements under the Housing Act 2004. There were currently 56 of these type of properties within South Kesteven. The policy covered licensing and the various checks and suitability of premises and the length of the licence. He asked the Committee to recommend adoption of the Policy to help clarify the Council's procedures and position in respect of these properties.

The following questions/comments were made during debate:

- Number of tenants per type of premise – average was 5 or 6.

- The Council was required to keep a public register of HMO properties which detailed the number of bed spaces.
- Current number of tenants within the district was approximately 200.
- How many HMO were used by the Council to house homeless people and were they used to house children.
- One unit on Thames Road was used for temporary accommodation, a further unit that was also used but this was currently void and only single people would be housed there.
- It was not good practice to house families within these properties and if families with children were within HMO, then stricter regulations were in place.
- A question was asked in respect of Planning Permission on HMO properties and that a licence could be granted for a short period of time whilst Planning Permission was sought. It was stated that only HMO properties with seven or more required Planning Permission anything that was six or less was classed as permitted development. If Planning Permission was refused than any license in place would be revoked or reduced in length.

Members welcomed the policy before them and it was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to recommend the Policy for adoption by Cabinet.

Recommendation

1. ***The Committee notes the proposed Private Sector Housing Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy is in line with best practice and will provide clear operational guidance.***
2. ***The Committee recommends the Private Sector Housing Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy for adoption by Cabinet.***

48. South Kesteven District Council Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the report which concerned a new draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy which addressed how the Council would manage any anti-social behaviour of occupants of Council owned housing stock.

The Cabinet Member referred to the wide legal definition of anti-social behaviour which was outlined within the report. The policy covered issues such as neighbourhood disputes, high hedges and car parking. The policy aimed to tackle the causes and the impact of anti-social behaviour in respect of housing. To improve public perception and also build confidence and support victims and vulnerable people and detailed how the Council would manage anti-social behaviour. The policy also aimed to promote the wellbeing, safety and health of its tenants. It was stated that incidents of anti-social behaviour within the district were low compared to other areas of the country.

The Safer Lincolnshire Partnership was as countywide multi agency initiative whose approach recognised that no one organisation alone could deal with anti-social

behaviour in isolation and therefore partnership working was central to the approach required. The new policy sets out how anti-social behaviour could be reported and the powers and tools that the Council had at its disposal such as acceptable behaviour contracts and injunctions.

Consultation on the draft policy had been carried out in December 2023.

A question was asked in respect of the number of cases of anti-social behaviour that the Council had prior to the new policy and the routes that had been taken in respect of the behaviour.

The Head of Housing stated that she didn't have the information to hand but she could bring back to the Committee that information.

➤ **Action**

That information in respect of the number of cases of anti-social behaviour be reported back to the next meeting of the Committee.

The request for information in respect of anti-social behaviour was echoed by the Vice-Chairman who was keen to see the information. He stated that he was often given anecdotal reports of anti-social behaviour on the estate that his Ward covered.

A comment was made that the policy did not mention shared facilities and various examples were given, the Member wanted to know whether specifics were included in tenancy agreements about how communal areas should be used.

It was noted that the new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy under pinned the policy framework within housing. It complimented other policies with regard to the management of tenants and would include other documents such as the Tenancy Agreement and also the Tenancy and Estates Management Policy which was the next item on the agenda. Alongside that was support from the Neighbourhoods Team and other areas such as lease holders, private rented areas and owner occupiers to work together with the tools available to deal with issues.

The Tenancy Services Manager stated that there were other tools such as Good Neighbourhood Agreements which were voluntary agreements signed at the start of a tenancy where people agree to a set of behaviours in addition to those within a Tenancy Agreement.

Members welcomed the policy and supported its recommendation to Cabinet for adoption.

A question was asked in relation to anti-social behaviour when it occurs in social media, did the policy cover this aspect of anti-social behaviour. Technically the policy could be amended to encompass this aspect however, it was very difficult to police. The Housing Team would work alongside the Police if an issue was raised but action would be pursued through the civil courts.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning stated that any instance of anti-social behaviour would be taken seriously. The Policy gave clear guidance of how anti-social incidents would be dealt with and what the Council would do. A question was asked about the timeframe, 10 days, to which it was stated that where possible a response would be given sooner rather than later.

Members welcomed the draft Policy and noted the content. It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to recommend the draft Policy to Cabinet for adoption.

Recommendation

That the Housing OSC recommends the draft South Kesteven District Council Anti-Social Behaviour Policy to Cabinet for adoption.

49. Estate and Tenancy Management Policies

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the report which considered a Tenancy Management Policy which outlined the circumstances in which changes to a tenancy may happen and any possession action which could be taken, why this could happen and the tenancy support which would be offered. The second policy was in respect of an Estate Management Policy and set out the Council's approach to the delivery and management of estate services to internal and external communal areas.

Comments were made in respect of the communal areas and mobility scooters and the paying of electricity bills, it was felt that it was unfair that other people were paying for the electricity for mobility scooters. This point was echoed by other Members with other examples being given.

The Head of Housing stated that a wider programme of work was being done in respect of storage areas. A rent setting and service charge policy was currently being worked on and this would come to a future meeting of the Housing OSC.

Following the comments made in respect of where mobility scooters were stored, the floors that people lived on who used mobility scooters and service charges it was stated that the mobile scooter policy would be reviewed.

A question was asked about the number of inspections carried out and who undertook the inspections. Inspections were carried out quarterly by Housing Officers, a formal inspection programme was currently being compiled.

Questions were asked about the eviction process and homelessness to which the Head of Housing replied. A query was asked about the Tenancy Support Service referred to within the draft policy and it was confirmed that the service currently existed.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that both the draft Tenancy Management Policy and the draft Estate Management Policy be recommended to Cabinet for adoption.

Recommendation

That the Housing OSC recommends to Cabinet the draft Tenancy Management Policy and the draft Estate Management Policy for adoption.

50. Housing Regulatory Compliance Update

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the report which updated the Committee on actions to ensure regulatory compliance of the Council's social housing landlord function following the non-compliance notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing which was lifted in October 2023.

The Council's compliant position was now better than a lot of other authorities within the Country.

Reference was made to the red areas (lifts and gas) and paragraph 3.1.6 in respect of lifts. It was confirmed that since the report had been compiled the inspections had been carried out and the certificates had been issued for the lifts which were now at 100% as were Fire Risk Assessments, Asbestos and Smoke and CO₂ alarms.

In respect of gas checks there were currently a small minority of cases where access to the properties had presented a challenge and court action was being taken to address this. Regular updates would continue to be brought to the Committee and the next one would come to the March meeting of the Committee.

The Chief Executive stated that the scrutiny around the figures was critical and she met with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and the Leader of the Council every month to look at the figures before they came before the Committee for scrutiny. The Chief Executive made reference to recent lift certifications but stated that there were still problems with one of the lifts which had necessitated the requirement of new parts which were on order.

In respect of the gas checks there were still 50 outstanding, but the courts had a ceiling to the number of court orders to gain access to properties which was 20 per month, the orders had been going through Lincoln Court but were now going through Boston Court. Meetings were being held with the Cabinet Member to discuss more extreme action, once the cold period had passed. Where gas servicing was done externally the Council could look at capping the gas off to force the tenant to allow the Council access to service the gas appliances including boilers within the house.

The Chairman indicated that she was impressed with the figures before the Committee but dismayed that tenants would not allow access to have their gas appliances serviced.

Other Members echoed the comments made and asked for clarity in respect of the difference in figures between gas and electricity which was down to the tolerance given to each. A comment was also made about those with mental health issues and allowing access to properties. It was stated that the Housing Compliance

Team did review the individual profile of tenants and worked with Social Services were there were vulnerable tenants involved.

The Interim Head of Technical Services stated that a new gas contract would be in place from 1 April 2024 and that working together between all the relevant teams would be a lot more seamless.

Further concern was expressed in respect of vulnerable tenants and whether they should have gas appliances. It was stated that gas supplies were legislated and that if people smelled gas, they should report it immediately to the National Gas Emergency Service.

Further discussion followed in respect of getting access to properties and the safety of tenants and who was responsible in respect of gas leaks. It was reiterated that the Council was doing all that it could to gain access to properties to service all necessary appliances. The responsibility for cost and gas leaks was between the tenant and the gas supplier.

Members noted the report.

51. Total Housing Compliance Policy

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the report which concerned a new Total Housing Compliance Policy. The Policy presented a framework for the monitoring of key consumer standards.

Reference was made to the Council coming out of National Special Measures and the new Policy was a vital tool in how the Council would deliver its legal requirements to ensure that the Council stayed legally compliant.

A full audit was required to be considered by the Housing Regulator before the notice was lifted. The audit made recommendations regarding the implementation of key policies relating to compliance.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning stated that the new Policy incorporated previous guidelines, management plans and protocols into a transparent policy framework complimented by best practice and legislation. The Policy defined who was responsible for delivering a safe housing environment and managing risks such as, water, water hygiene and Raddon. The document also detailed a clear path in respect of access to properties to meet legal requirements and the legal implications if secure access could not be found. It reassured tenants that the property that they lived in was compliant with the laws and current standards and was well managed.

The Chairman stated that a massive amount of work had gone into the document and congratulated Officers. The Interim Head of Technical Services thanked the Health, Safety and Compliance Officer for his help in putting the document together.

A question was asked in respect of legal challenges to which the Chief Executive replied, a further question was asked about the legal requirements and

maintenance to which the Interim Head of Technical Services replied with details around the major and minor repairs programme and how stock condition survey data fed into the programme.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to recommend the Total Housing Compliance Policy to Cabinet for adoption and to scrutinise the procedures and management plans associated with the Total Housing Compliance Policy as part of the Committees ongoing work programme.

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the content of the Policy and recommend its approval to Cabinet and that the procedures and management plans associated with the Total Housing Compliance Policy form part of its ongoing work programme.

(An adjournment took place between 3:15 – 3:30)

52. Update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund wave 2.1

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning presented the report which provided an update on the ongoing Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund project to upgrade South Kesteven District Council owned properties with energy efficiency measures. The cost of the programme was £7.62m and was funded 50/50 by Government and the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The programme would make significant improvements to the Council's most carbon emitting properties. The programme would improve the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of council properties from a D to C rating by 2030.

Currently the Council had 200 properties with coal fires and wave 2.1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund aimed to upgrade the energy performance of the Council properties over the next year with targeted energy efficiency and low carbon heating with renewable energy. The programme had three phases:

- i) Installation of solar panels - 148 properties
- ii) Air source heat pumps - 180 properties
- iii) External wall insulation - 39 properties

The project had been slow to start but since November 2023, 66 measures had been put in at 49 properties. The scheduled 367 measures should be completed by March 2025. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the Decarbonisation Project Manager, Peter Park to the Committee.

The Decarbonisation Project Manager stated that the Council's delivery partner was EON and the project would be overseen by himself together with a retrofit inspector and an administrator who would check that funding criteria was met.

A question was asked in respect of the properties done to date and it was confirmed that the project was fabric first to ensure that the insulation measures were in place before any heating source was installed.

The Chairman asked when it was perceived that all properties would reach the C EPC rating level. It was confirmed that by the end of March next year for this particular programme, the properties should be at C or above. There was a caveat that if properties reached a higher rating level than C then the funding criteria would ask if more money was being spent on a property than was necessary. Reference was made to the D properties and it was felt that these could be rated up to a C by 2030.

The Chairman asked about those properties that were F and G rating. It was stated that there were currently around 19 G properties. G, F and E properties were being tackled as part of the programme with the worst performing properties being those with solid fuel and these were being incorporated in to the funding.

It was asked if future funding would be available to which the Decarbonisation Project Manager stated that the Council wasn't eligible for wave 2.2 funding as they were in receipt of wave 2.1 funding but the Council should be eligible for wave 2.3 funding, different funding streams were being looked at constantly.

A question was asked about whether there would be sufficient funding to ensure all the Council's housing stock would be able to be C or above rated by 2030 or whether the Council would have to supply the funds. It was stated that this did depend on the funding criteria in respect of wave 2.3 funding.

Discussion on the subject followed and it was suggested that six monthly updates on the project be added to the Committee's work programme.

➤ **Action**

Add Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund update to Work Programme, next update in six months.

Further discussion followed and covered what insulation measures took place, where the solid fuel properties were located (these tended to be in rural areas), who undertook the EPC rating of the Council properties was it internal or external. The Chairman of Environment OSC who was in attendance stated that he would be inviting someone to speak about EPC's and their benefits to a meeting of the Environment OSC and he invited Members of the Housing OSC to attend. It was confirmed that EPC ratings were undertaken by an external contractor.

More discussion on what stock conditions surveys were carried out and the Chief Executive responded that 20% of the housing stock had surveys carried out each year and stock condition surveys were carried out every five years. A question was asked whether having all properties at an EPC C rating by 2030 was an aim or aspiration. It was an aspiration to have all properties at an EPC rating of C before 2030 but this was limited to what funding and investment was available to the Council through the HRA.

Further comments were made in respect of whether properties that were G rated were worth being upgraded and kept. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning indicated that Best Value for Money was always being considered and it if was in the best interests to sell a property and reinvest the money that would be considered.

Members noted the report.

53. Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 Mid-Year (Q2) Report

The Committee had been circulated with a report on the Mid-Year update of South Kesteven District Councils performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from April 2023-October 2023. A copy of the KPI's were circulated to Members at the Committee.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that item 10 on Healthy and Strong Communities, which was red was not under the remit of the Housing OSC. The red item shown under Housing that meets the needs of all Residents was and she asked the Housing Options Manager to speak on this item.

The Housing Options Manager stated that the red didn't reflect poor performance within the Team but reflected the pressure that increased homelessness was having on the Team.

Sometimes homelessness was not preventable and she gave examples of this such as people having to leave asylum accommodation and the Ukraine cohort which was not preventable. She felt that the target of 50% prevention was not an accurate target and this would be reviewed as the KPI did not reflect the hard work that was undertaken by the Team, but more the pressures that the Team were under.

Reference was made to the homelessness duty cases which was currently at 205 compared to 104 the previous year. Increased pressures were the cost of living and less landlord accommodation available in the private sector. Accommodation that was available was becoming more unaffordable. It was hoped that the Local Housing Allowance increase from April would have an effect. She concluded by stating that prevention and relief options were limited and that Quarter 1 data could be supplied if required.

The Vice-Chairman agreed with what had been said and felt that central government had a huge role to play and massive investment in social and council housing was required to address the homelessness issue. This was echoed by other Members of the Committee.

The Team was congratulated on the work that they did.

It was stated that following the Cabinet's agreement in respect of the new Corporate Plan and a new suite of KPI's would be drafted which measured impacts and had more meaningful targets. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning stated that the new KPI's would come before the Committee for them to comment

on and for any suggestions. He also commented on the amount of work that the Homelessness Team carried out.

More discussion followed in respect of homelessness to which the Housing Options Manager replied.

Members noted the report.

54. Build and Acquisitions update

Members received an update in respect of the new build housing pipeline and also properties that had been acquired using the Local Authority Housing Funding. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning stated that it was necessary to have a robust housing growth strategy in place with a range of ways to acquire properties to help mitigate the sale of Council houses through the Right to Buy scheme and also to increase the Council's housing stock.

Currently contractors were on site at Swinegate, Grantham building 20 apartments which should be completed in February 2025. Further work had started in Stamford on a former garage site at Elizabeth Road for four apartments which were due to be completed at the end August 2025.

The Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change referred to the funding received from phases 1 and 2 of the Local Authority Housing Fund which had enabled 21 units to be purchased as outlined within the report with phase 1 funding, 8 units were due to be delivered under phase 2 funding. The Council had met the local need for the Local Housing Authority Fund and therefore no bid was being considered for phase 3 funding.

Members noted the update.

55. Earlesfield Programme update

The Committee received a report which gave an update on progress with the Earlesfield Project in Grantham. The project covered 154 homes on the Earlesfield Estate. The initial project was to remove asbestos from properties but this progressed to whole house modernisations due to the type of properties and whilst the tenants were vacant from the property.

There had been concerns before Christmas due to the slow delivery of the project but a meeting had been held at the beginning of January with the contractor, Chief Executive and the Interim Head of Technical Services and improved monitoring had been agreed.

The Vice-Chairman, who was one of the Ward Councillor for the Estate stated that the project was fantastic and had a positive impact on those living on the Estate. He asked if the documents referred to in paragraph 2.5 had been sent through.

The Chief Executive stated that the meeting had taken place with the Contractor and two new project Managers had been appointed. There had been issues with the sub-contractors but these had been addressed and monthly meetings were held with her and the Interim Head of Technical Services and the Project Manager. There had been a positive outcome from the meetings held. The Vice-Chairman asked if the weekly updates that he had received previously, but had stopped in November could be reinstated. It was stated that these would be reinstated.

Further discussion followed in respect of the project with the majority of Members expressing their appreciation that in the absence of a Director of Housing, the Chief Executive had been involved with the project from an early stage. Some concern was expressed in relation to costs due to the slow progress and it was acknowledged that early problems at the beginning of the project had delayed the project slightly, but these had now been addressed and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning was regularly briefed on the project.

A question was asked in respect of the EPC ratings on the properties and it was confirmed that the properties would be a C as a minimum.

Members noted the report.

56. Choice Based Lettings update

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning introduced the report. At the last meeting of the Committee, Members had received a demonstration on the Choice Based Lettings process which had gone live in October 2023. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning congratulated the Team on implementing Choice Based Lettings which was used all over the Country.

The Chairman indicated that she had been on the system but asked if the photographs of properties would be included as this had been mentioned previously. She also queried a property that had received 15 applications but none were "suitable". The Head of Housing Options stated that she would speak to the Chairman outside the meeting. The Void Team had been tasked with taking photographs of properties and they would be uploaded shortly.

Questions were asked in respect of the pending applications; these were often due to further information being required. The use of the portal was a two way process and applicants had to actively engage when they applied for properties. It was asked if there was a theme to the outstanding information being requested to which the Housing Options Manager stated that one hadn't been identified.

A question was asked about those tenants who struggled with IT and it was confirmed that there was assistance available. Auto bids were facilitated for those without the necessary IT equipment. A further question was asked about waiting lists and it was confirmed that currently there were 252 applications pending assessment but work was being undertaken to reduce the number. Had historical applications been removed with the implementation of the new system. It was confirmed that no data was transferred.

Further discussion followed in respect of applications and banding. It was suggested that a guide on hints and tips would be helpful and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning indicated that he would take this forward.

Members noted the update.

57. Work Programme 2023/24

The following items to be included on the Work Programme:

- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund – 6 monthly updates next update July 2024
- Update on Garage Site developments – March 2024
- Update on Voids – March 2024
- Draft KPI's – March 2024

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

There was none.

59. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 16:51.

This page is intentionally left blank



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 March 2024

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning

Housing Compliance Figures

Report Author

Phil Swinton, Health, Safety and Compliance Manager

phil.swinton@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report seeks to update the Committee on actions to ensure regulatory compliance of the Council's social housing landlord function.

Recommendations

That Committee:

1. Notes the latest compliance position of February 2024.
2. Receives a further update report at its next scheduled meeting.

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

1.1 The financial considerations arising from the compliance requirements have been incorporated in the HRA budgets presented and approved by Council on 1 March 2023.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance & ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 This compliance update provides Members with an opportunity to monitor progress against key risk areas, which is to be welcomed from a governance perspective. The legal implications for non-compliance are incorporated within the risk ratings.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director, (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

1.3 Risks will be identified via the work plans with any actions agreed with the Regulator. Dealing with significant compliance matters requires a comprehensive approach to risk management, particularly in respect of assessing priorities and critical actions

Completed by: Tracey Elliot: Governance and Risk Officer

Health and Safety

1.4 The key focus in meeting the regulatory standard is to ensure tenants, leaseholders, their households and visitors live in homes that are, as far as is reasonably practicable, safe with hazards minimised. This is reflected in the key compliance areas that are monitored and reported to Committee.

Completed by: Phil Swinton Health, Safety and Compliance Manager

Diversity and Inclusion

1.5 All equality issues are identified with the necessary compliance and improvement activities taking place on a case by case basis. Each equality impact is carefully considered when actioning a compliance or regulatory change. This is especially so when managing such matters for vulnerable households and particularly those occupying specialist accommodation such as designated sheltered accommodation.

Completed by: Phil Swinton Health, Safety and Compliance Manager

Climate Change

1.6 Any capital improvement plans especially in the context of dealing with essential gas, electrical and other works will aim to maximise energy efficiency measures, and reductions in carbon emissions.

Completed by: Serna Brown, Sustainability and Climate change Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 It has been agreed that Members will continue to receive update reports on the progress of established Housing Compliance figures to ensure that Members have oversite of broad progress around the key areas of activity and scrutinise work where required

3. Key Considerations

3.1 The figures are provided to Members as an update on the latest position in relation to Housing Compliance.

3.1.1 Legionella – 100%

3.1.2 Gas -99.0% in February 2024. There are currently 44 properties which are not compliant. 8 of these were granted a warrant for entry at Court on the 26th February

and an additional Court date has been requested at the earliest opportunity. 13 of these properties were newly noncompliant in February. In addition a number of vulnerability assessments are being undertaken to establish which properties can be capped until tenant cooperation can be obtained. Although small this is an increase on last months reported figures.

- 3.1.3 Electrical Testing – 92.41%. As identified as part of the external audit there has been additional reconciliation on the data held. This has identified that a number of leaseholder and shared ownership properties had been included in the baseline figure which is not required. The new baseline figure is 5856 with 5412 being compliant. As with Gas this is a small improvement in this area, this has been the forth consecutive month with positive movement.
- 3.1.4 Asbestos – 100% All required re inspections are compliant and the new program of works is in place to ensure anniversaries are preserved and works undertaken.
- 3.1.5 Fire Risk assessments – 100%
- 3.1.6 Lift inspections (LOLER) – 100%
- 3.1.7 Smoke and CO – 100% The implementation of the new heating contract with Aaron services will be utilised to provide continued assurance that required devices are sited within properties and working.
- 3.1.8 Cat 1 and 2 (Damp and Mould) 99.85% This figure has remained static this month with 9 tasks outstanding

- 3.2 **Leadership Compliance Meetings:** Chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and the Interim Head of Technical Services, these meetings have been a continued feature of the more detailed compliance review process being undertaken. Members of this group ensure specific responses to the changing compliance review process.
- 3.3 **Regular Reports to Committees and Cabinet:** the necessary reporting to appropriate committees will continue and will be regularly reviewed. Members are invited to comment on this report content and confirm their views and observations relating to the detail contained within this report.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The figures are provided by the Compliance Team and have been verified through external audit and by the lifting of the Regulator Notice. There are currently no other options which require consideration in relation to the provision of figures.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 To secure and maintain an improved position for compliance in respect of housing services, including the identification of appropriate resources, funds and service improvements in a timely manner.

6. Consultation

6.1 The necessary consultation with the tenants and Members of the Council has been undertaken through timely reporting, dispatch of letters to advise tenants of progress, the latest Skyline publication, dedicated customer telephone enquiry line, and an updated web site detailing compliance issues and signposting services. This process will continue and the engagement with tenants particularly will be amended to reflect changing needs and requirements.

7. Appendices

7.1 List any Appendices.

December 2023 to February 2024 Compliance Figures

This page is intentionally left blank

	31/12/2023				31/01/2024				29/02/2024				Comments
	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	Baseline number	Compliant	Non Compliant	% Compliant	
Legionella	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	33	33	0	100.00%	
Gas	4649	4599	50	98.86%	4644	4592	51	98.90%	4644	4592	44	99.00%	Of the 44 overdue: 13 are new, with 8 entry warrants approved at court on the 26th February. An additional court date is being applied for. Capping is planned following completion of vulnerability assessments
Electrical	6055	5584	471	92.22%	6050	5586	464	92.33%	5856	5412	444	92.42%	The baseline has been amended to remove lease holder/shared ownership but includes 180 communal areas. This area has again seen a small increase in compliance percentage.
Asbestos (re-inspections)	259	259	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%	259	259	0	100.00%	
Fire Risk Assessments	147	147	0	100.00%	147	147	0	100.00%	147	147	0	100.00%	
Lift inspections	13	11	2	84.62%	13	13	0	100.00%	13	13	0	100.00%	
Smoke & CO	5868	5868	0	100.00%	5868	5868	0	100.00%	5868	5868	0	100.00%	
Damp & Mould	5868	5858	10	99.83%	5868	5859	9	99.85%	5868	5859	9	99.85%	Cat 1 = 1 disrepair case with solicitors Cat 2 = 8- 5 refused works, 1 booked in for works which is due to commence in March. 2 awaiting tenant to agree a date. Tenant had agreed a date then cancelled the appointment

This page is intentionally left blank



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 March 2024

Councillor Phil Dilks
Cabinet member for Housing and
Planning

Earlesfield Project Update

Report Author

Nick Thacker, Head of Technical Services



nick.thacker@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of the Report

To update the Committee on the progress of the Earlesfield Project, providing an overview of the project position, completed works and projected timescales.

Recommendations

That the Committee notes the contents of the report and the progress being made to deliver on the Earlesfield Project to resolve long standing issues within the Council's housing stock.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any
exempt or confidential
information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate
priorities? Housing

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 budget required to complete the works associated with the Earlesfield Project is included in the approved 2023/24 HRA Revenue and Capital budgets.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance & ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The report provides the Committee with an update on the Earlesfield Project and is for noting. There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from the report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council has a clear mission in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 "to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations" and the timely delivery of improvements to its social housing stock, which includes a significant number of properties on the Earlesfield Estate in Grantham, is a key element to this.
- 2.2 There have been site visits undertaken to completed properties by Cabinet Members and the Ward Members.

- 2.3 To date we have completed 37 property refurbishments. Progress on the project is continuing to be made and it is projected that 42 properties will be completed by the end of March 2024.
- 2.4 Discussions have been held with the contractor and additional resources are being brought on to the project to increase the turnaround on completed properties. The project remains on target for completion by the end of March 2025.
- 2.5 An initial meeting that was held on 4 January where the Council's Chief Executive and the Interim Head of Housing, Technical Services met with United Living's Quantity Surveyor and the Contract Manager to discuss the various issues raised by both parties in relation to the contract administration, documentation and project delivery by the on-site staff. A follow-up meeting took place on the 20 February where the previously raised matters were discussed through to a satisfactory resolution that both parties agreed on.
- 2.6 The current contract with United Living will end on 31 March 2024 and will be superseded by a new contract as the current scope of works no longer meets the Council's requirements for this project.
- 2.7 A report was due to be presented to Cabinet on 12 March 2024 to approve the award of a new contract to United Living with a start date of 1 April 2024. This will ensure continuity of service as they have an existing network of contractors in the area and are familiar with the removal and refurbishment process. A revised scope of works has been agreed as part of the contract renewal which clearly defines the responsibilities of the contractor and the Council.
- 2.8 Monthly meetings have been scheduled with United Living to monitor the on-site works and quality and ensure the project is delivered within the agreed timescale. Additionally, a revised set KPI's has been developed which will ensure the contractor performs satisfactorily for the remaining duration of the project.

3. Key Considerations and Other Options Considered

- 3.1 It is anticipated that around 42 properties will be completed by the end of March 2024.
- 3.2 An updated copy of the programme is attached as Appendix 1.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1 Report is for information and noting.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Latest version of the programme

This page is intentionally left blank

UPRN	House Number	Address	Area	Postcode	Kitchen replacement	Bathroom Replacement	DPI fitted	Full rewire	Partial Rewire	Boiler Replacement	Full heating replacement	Fire Stopping	Loft insulation	Replace Front door	Replace Rear door	Replace windows
------	--------------	---------	------	----------	---------------------	----------------------	------------	-------------	----------------	--------------------	--------------------------	---------------	-----------------	--------------------	-------------------	-----------------

This page is intentionally left blank



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 March 2024

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Building and Acquisitions Update

This report provides an update on the Housing Revenue Account New Build programme including acquisitions.

Report Author

Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change

 Debbie.roberts@southkesteven.gov.uk

Recommendations

It is recommended Members of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee note this report to inform and support their ongoing work programme.

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

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 Capital Programme for 2023/24 Housing Development investment has been established at £5.5m and will be utilised to fund strategic acquisitions, Swinegate Grantham and Elizabeth Road Stamford new build schemes. It is important that the HRA has a continual housing growth strategy that incorporates a range of interventions including acquiring properties directly from developers, new build and acquiring former Right to Buy properties that specifically meet the housing needs. The formation of the capital programme for the HRA needs to ensure that affordable funding is included to enable the progression of the strategy.

Completed by Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance & ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Regular reporting on agreed actions and measures is to be welcomed from a governance point of view, as it provides a transparent mechanism for reporting on performance.

Completed by:

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 No significant risks have been identified.

Climate Change

- 1.4 The contents of this report do not have a direct impact on the Council's carbon emissions or the carbon emissions of the wider district. More detailed information on carbon impact of individual projects is outlined within the relevant project documentation.

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the new build housing pipeline and purchases using the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF1&2).

2.2 The approved Corporate Plan 2024-2027 clearly sets out how South Kesteven District Council intends to meet the mission “to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.”

2.3 The Corporate Plan, Priority 4 identifies ‘Housing’ as a key priority with high quality housing essential for all, and the council is committed to working with partners to provide this by:

- Facilitating a range of appropriate and sustainable housing and community facilities for future generations and the emerging needs of all our communities.
- Delivering exemplary and high-quality services for housing and homelessness.
- Increasing the supply of sustainable and high-quality Council-provided housing.
- Working with developers and private landlords to ensure sustainable, affordable, and high-quality housing is facilitated.

2.4 There are many schemes within the district that are at various stages of the pipeline, an update on each one is as follows:-

Swinegate, Grantham

2.5 Lindum is in the process of building 20 apartments through a direct award on the Scape Framework. This scheme is extremely complex due to being in a conservation area.

2.6 The enabling works to amend access to Watergate car park were completed before Christmas. The entrance to the car park has been widened with new height restriction barriers in place. 5 additional car parking spaces have been returned back to the Council for members of the public to use.

2.7 Following a site visit from the conservation officer, planning officer and structural engineer an application to demolish and rebuild No.20 Swinegate was submitted on 6th October 2023.

2.8 Historic England objected to the demolition of No.20 Swinegate and requested a CARE (Conservation Accreditation Register for Engineers) structural engineer report in order to reconsider their position. The planning application for No.20 was amended following the objection and the façade was due to be retained as agreed by the Planning Committee in February 2024.

2.9 A condition was placed on No. 20 Swinegate that the method statement for demolition was to be submitted for approval by the Planning Committee detailing how the rest of the site could be demolished whilst still retaining the façade. Lindums have met with three structural engineers (including the same CARE engineer) on

site to discuss how the demolition could be safely achieved. All engineers noted that there had been significant deterioration in the building since visiting in December 23 and have advised that there would be safety concerns. Building Control (EMBC) have visited the site and advised that the building is not in immediate risk of collapse and advised the Council to submit a new planning application to demolish the façade and rebuild it in keeping with the original using reclaimed bricks. A new planning application has been submitted (7th March 2024) with the hope that a decision will be made by the Planning Committee at their meeting in either April or May. These delays have impacted on programme by at least four months as development cannot commence until the planning application for No. 20 Swinegate has been approved.

2.10 Members of this committee will be updated at the next meeting.

Elizabeth Rd, Stamford

2.11 Cabinet approved the award for the £665,000 scheme to D Brown Construction Ltd and work commenced in January 2024.

2.12 Works are progressing in accordance with the project plan and the 4 one bedroom units are due to be handed over to the Council in August 2024.

2.13 A site photograph with Members and representatives from D Brown Construction Ltd took place last month.



Larch Close, Grantham

- 2.14 The 21-unit scheme was granted permission at the Planning Committee meeting on 8th November 2023.
- 2.15 The procurement process has commenced with four contractors showing an initial expression of interest. The formal tender period will commence for 8 weeks on the 11th March 2024. Following the evaluation process it is hoped that a contract can be awarded in June 24.
- 2.16 This scheme was included in the HRA budget setting process for 2024/25 therefore sufficient budget is available and the current estimated start date is July 2024.

Wellington Way, Market Deeping

- 2.17 There are outline plans for a 14-unit scheme in this location that had received pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority in 2021.
- 2.18 Early engagement with the Scout Hut representatives has commenced to understand their car parking drop off/collection requirements. Following a small traffic survey on Friday 1st March 2024 amendments to the initial design and layout have been requested by the Council to the architects.
- 2.19 There will be continued engagement with the local residents and representatives from the Scout Hut with a pre-application submitted to the Local Planning Authority by the end of March 24.
- 2.20 It is hoped that procurement and the planning process can be twin tracked and that an award of contract could be made in September 2024 with the successful contractor starting as soon as possible.

Gorse Rise, Grantham

- 2.21 This is a former garage site that was demolished in February 2020.
- 2.22 A pre-application has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for 6 units on the parcel of land.
- 2.23 It is hoped that this site could be explored to provide more sustainable housing with modular or Passivhaus standards being explored. Passivhaus is a performance-based set of design criteria for very low energy buildings, which can help create buildings which use around 90% less energy than standard UK buildings.
- 2.24 It is hoped that the construction can commence in January 2025 following planning and procurement.

Kesteven Road, Stamford

2.25 The site consists of an irregular parcel of land of approximately 1.3 acres in size and includes a combination of a garage block, car parking area and open space. Feasibility has begun to identify the best option and layout for the site with an approximate 15-18 unit scheme being explored due to the biodiversity net gain requirements.

2.26 Early pre- application advice will be sought on this site due to the loss of public open space to see if the whole site can be utilised or if a smaller scheme is required.

Bourne End Road Estate, Colsterworth

2.27 Due to structural issues within the timber frame and thermally poor performance there are opportunities on this estate to demolish some of the existing stock and rebuild with more units due to large plot sizes.

2.28 William Saunders have provided options for 6 or 8 1 bedroom apartments on the land where 2 void properties are currently situated. This would be phase 1 of the proposed redevelopments with phase 2 being the two properties next door once vacated. A third potential site is opposite and would follow later as phase 3 as the plot is larger and could include more units.

2.29 A pre-application for phases 1 and 2 is due to be submitted imminently.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 In order to achieve the numbers of housing that the Council has a requirement to deliver each year there will be a hybrid approach to new builds to work closely with developers on planning schemes which need to include a number of affordable units, the Council will discuss purchasing these (similar to a Registered Provider). There have been discussions with house builders on two sites within the District and these discussions are progressing in a positive direction. The Council is at a stage of agreeing Heads of Terms for the acquisition of 36 affordable units which will be delivered between 2024-2028 with exchange of contracts expected by the end of March 24 for phases 1-3.

3.2 Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 1 –

The Council agreed to accepting the funding at their meeting in July 2023

[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 20th July, 2023, 1.00 pm | South Kesteven District Council](#)

The Council had a requirement to secure 21 units as part of the allocated funding with a deadline of the 30th November 2023 to secure purchases. Under the MoU the Council was required to provide:-

- 19 properties for households that meet the eligibility criteria (2/3 beds)

- 2 Four+ bed properties to be allocated to households currently in bridging accommodation ('the bridging element');

3.3 The Council has met this 21 unit purchase with the following

- 12 properties at Langtoft,
- 4 properties at Bourne
- 1 property in Ropsley
- 4 properties in Grantham (including the 2 four bedroom properties)

3.4 To date we have completed on 20 properties, with the remaining plot with legal services Lincolnshire to complete as soon as practicably possible.

3.5 LAHF 2 – the Council has accepted the second stage of the funding which is to deliver a further eight properties, seven 'main element' 2/3 bed properties and one 'bridging element' 4 bed+ property. The deadline for this funding is the end of March 2024.

New build properties are being sought for this allocation and the committee will be updated on the acquisitions.

3.6 The Council will not be seeking funding from LAHF3 due to meeting all of the local demand for the properties.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1 This is a regular report where Members are invited to scrutinise and comment on performance.

This page is intentionally left blank



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21st March 2024

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks— Cabinet Member for Housing and Property

Mutual Exchange Procedure

Report Author

Jodie Archer, Head of Housing Services

 Jodie.archer@southkesteven.gov.uk

The purpose of this report is to notify to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the updated Mutual Exchange Procedure. The Mutual Exchange Procedure outlines the circumstances in which a Mutual Exchange can be refused and also details the improved processes regarding the decision making process.

The Mutual Exchange Procedure demonstrates the Councils Landlord compliance in accordance with legislation.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Notes the contents of the report and updated Mutual Exchange Policy
2. Recommends to Cabinet the approval of the updated Mutual Exchange Policy

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All 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

1.1 Any financial implications associated with the implementation of this policy will need to be met from existing budgets.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance & ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no governance implications arising from the development of this policy.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 Following a request from the chair of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, this report has been produced to provide an overview of the mutual exchange procedure at South Kesteven District Council.

2.2 South Kesteven District Council complete mutual exchanges in accordance with the legislative framework under the Housing Act 1985 section 92. This is defined as when a tenant who has a secure or assured tenancy agrees to exchange with another secure or assured tenant.

- 2.3 A mutual exchange is a totally voluntary arrangement and historically a process in which residents can find it difficult to find a suitable partner who they wish to swap with.
- 2.4 Tenants' rights relating to a mutual exchange are listed within the Tenants Handbook, given to all tenants and available online via the Council's website.
- 2.5 A review of the inspection checklist is completed with Technical Services to ensure that specific items are not missed.
- 2.6 Arrangements are in place with Repairs Supervisors to have a second inspection if required around specific items that might require more technical knowledge/assessment.
- 2.7 Following agreement of the Mutual Exchange, a further inspection is carried out prior to the tenant moving out, to ensure the property is left in an acceptable condition.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Key considerations are included in the content of the procedure and improved processes.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternative option would be to not have this procedure. However, to meet the requirements of legislation this would leave the Tenancy Service's team exceptionally vulnerable and open to critique that as a Landlord we are non-compliant.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet to approve the procedure and improvements. These will provide clarity on how the operational services are provided.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 There was no consultation required around this procedure as this is set in statute.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Mutual Exchange Procedure – Appendix 1

This page is intentionally left blank



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

MUTUAL EXCHANGE PROCEDURE HOUSING

Related policy	Tenancy Management Policy
Date for review	August 2024
Procedure author	Andre Ford-Hamilton, Tenancy Services Team Leader
Procedure owner	Jodie Archer, Head of Housing Services
Approved by	Jodie Archer, Head of Housing Services

Revision history			
Version	Date	Revision description	Procedure author
1	March 2024	Review	

NEW PROCEDURE / PROCEDURE REVIEW	
New procedure	No
Early review – change in legislation	
Early review – significant changes in practice	
Review due – significant changes	
Review due – cosmetic changes or unchanged	August 2024
Other reason	

Reason for new policy / summary of changes

Revision of housing service

CONSULTATION

List of people/roles who have been consulted	Date

DISSEMINATION

Role	Awareness	Essential
Housing Officer		Y
Housing Assistant		Y

TRAINING

Role	Trainer	Date completed
Housing Officer	Tenancy Services Team Leader / Tenancy Services Manager	Completed January 2024

MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

Method	Responsibility	Frequency
Audit	Tenancy Services Manager	Annually

1 Purpose of the Procedure

This procedure sets out the way in which South Kesteven District Council will ensure the mutual exchange process is carried out efficiently, effectively, consistently and in line with legislation.

2 Legal / Regulatory Framework

Housing Act 1985

Localism Act 2012

3 Responsibilities

Housing Assistants:

- a) To check whether exchange can go ahead in line with legislation
- b) To complete mutual exchange property inspection
- c) To prepare mutual exchange paperwork for the Housing Officers

Housing Officers:

- a) To complete the mutual exchange sign up
- b) To ensure paperwork is passed to Rents for system to be updated

Tenancy Services Team Leader:

- a) Review all documents and approve final sign off of mutual exchange

4 The Procedure

Initial Contact

- 4.1 Contact received from tenant advising they have found a household they wish to exchange properties with.
- 4.2 Mutual exchange application form (Appendix 1) is sent, along with Mutual Exchange Cover Letter (Appendix 2), to both the tenant who made contact and the proposed exchangee.
- 4.3 Notes are added to the tenant's QL tenancy notepad confirming application form sent and the details of the proposed exchangee.

5 Receipt of Application

- 5.1 On receipt of an application for mutual exchange, the Housing Assistant scans/saves the document within the mutual exchange folder in the property file.

NB. Application forms received from a non-tenant are saved within tenancy documents of the tenant whom they are exchanging with.

- 5.2 Within 3 working days of receipt of a tenant's application form, the Housing Assistant checks whether there is any immediate reason to refuse mutual exchange and refers to the Mutual Exchange Guidance notes (Appendix 14).
- 5.3 Non-Secure/Introductory/Assured-Shorthold Tenancies:

- 5.3.1 If the tenant is a Non-Secure, Introductory or Assured-Shorthold tenant, the Housing Assistant sends the tenant a Refusal Letter 1 (Appendix 3), saves a copy to the mutual exchanges folder and adds a note on the tenant's notepad on QL.

- 5.4 Secure Tenancies:

- 5.4.1 The Housing Assistant creates a Mutual Exchange Checklist (Appendix 4) for the case and saves it in the mutual exchanges folder within the property file, which needs to be updated throughout the exchange process.
 - 5.4.2 Once all parties' application forms have been received, the Housing Assistant considers the current tenant's occupancy levels, exchangee's household composition and needs to ensure best use of stock.
 - 5.4.3 If there will be under-occupancy or a property is not suitable due to disabled adaptations not being required, the Housing Assistant will consider refusal.
 - 5.4.4 If one of the parties is not a South Kesteven tenant then the Housing Assistant will send reference requests (Appendix 12), preferably via email, to their current landlord, saves a copy of the request to the mutual exchanges folder in the property folder and updates the checklist.
 - 5.4.5 On receipt, the completed reference is saved to the mutual exchanges folder in property folder.

6 Inspection

6.1 The Housing Assistant inspects each room of the property and all external areas, completing the property inspection form (Appendix 5) and taking photos where necessary. The Housing Assistant must take the following into account:

- **Health and Safety**

Clear access and exit routes to/from each room?
Accumulation of waste in the property?
Ability to cook without the risk of fire?
Evidence of human/animal faeces within the property?
Gas/electrical appliances been tampered with?
Evidence of pest infestation?
Floor coverings causing slip/trip hazard?
Stairs obstructed?

- **Damage**

Walls, Ceilings, Floors, Doors, Windows, Bathroom Suite, Kitchen Units and/or fencing.

- **Hoarding/Clutter**

Each room should rate below 4 on the clutter scale.

- **Cleanliness**

Surfaces require more than a simple wipe?
Dust or dirt visible without close observation?

6.2 The Housing Assistant notes any improvements the tenant has made and establishes if the tenant will be removing these or if they will be left for the new tenant.

6.3 The Housing Assistant advises the tenant that a schedule of works (Appendix 6 and Appendix 7) will be sent to the exchangee for them to decide whether they will accept responsibility for the condition of the property including its decoration and any improvements. ****Please note if the condition of the property is worse than the standard we would let it in, then we must consider approval with conditions (see Approval with Conditions below).****

7 Post Inspection

7.1 The Housing Assistant completes a schedule of works which is sent to the exchangee either by email or post asking for the exchangee to confirm they are happy to accept the condition of the property, the schedule of works

can be then be signed at the sign-up appointment. The schedule of works and inspection form are saved to the mutual exchanges folder.

- 7.2 If the exchangee indicates they do not wish to accept responsibility for the condition of the property then the Housing Assistant sends the tenant the Withdrawal Letter (Appendix 13) and informs the Housing Officer so they can consider enforcement action against the tenancy due to poor property condition.
- 7.3 The Housing Assistant completes a landlord reference for the tenant and sends to other landlord. A copy of the reference is saved in the mutual exchanges folder.

8 Decision Making

- 8.1 The Housing Assistant considers whether there are grounds for refusal under Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985 or Schedule 14 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 8.2 If the Housing Assistant establishes ground(s) for refusal, the Housing Officer will consider refusing the exchange, taking into account the tenant's current circumstances and best use of stock.
- 8.3 If the Housing Assistant decides to refuse the exchange, the refusal process is now followed.
- 8.4 If the mutual exchange is not to be refused, the Housing Officer considers if the exchange may be approved with conditions, as per subsection 5 of section 92 of the Housing Act 1985.

Approval with Conditions

- 8.5 There may be some situations in which we do not have grounds to refuse a mutual exchange but there are outstanding issues on the property which must be resolved. This can include rent arrears and rechargeable repairs. We should not allow a mutual exchange to take place between properties if our property does not meet a standard that we would be happy to let it in.
- 8.6 In these cases, we should approve the exchange but note and inform the applicant(s) that this is subject to certain conditions being met. Where there are rent arrears, we should approve the exchange subject to the rent arrears being cleared. If arrears have not been cleared prior to the date of proposed sign up, we will not proceed with the sign up.
- 8.7 If the condition of the property is worse than the standard we would let it in, we should advise the applicant(s) that the exchange is approved subject to

the property meeting a lettable standard. Repairs must provide a breakdown of rechargeable repairs and we should advise the applicant of the cost to bring the property back up to standard. The tenant has the option to pay the Council for the cost of the works cost and we will arrange for these works to take place or alternatively arranging for these works to be completed themselves. Applicants must be informed that any works they arrange will be subject to inspection by our Repairs Team. If we complete the works or are satisfied that the works have been completed to an acceptable standard, then a date for sign up can be arranged after this.

- 8.8 No sign ups should take place until conditions have been met.
- 8.9 If the mutual exchange involves another landlord, the Housing Assistant liaises with the landlord to confirm the exchange has been agreed by them. If the exchange has been refused by the other landlord, then the Housing Assistant informs the tenant and sends out "Refused by 3rd Party" letter (Appendix 16).
- 8.10 The Housing Assistant establishes, in line with Housing Act 1985 and Localism Act 2011 and Mutual Exchange Guidance Notes (Appendix 14), if the exchange will take place through assignment or surrender and issue of new tenancy and informs the tenant accordingly.
- 8.11 If all landlords have consented to exchange, the Housing Assistant liaises with all parties involved to agree a date to sign the paperwork and the commencement date of the assignment/tenancy before passing to the Tenancy Services Team Leader for final sign off.

9 Refusal

- 9.1 The Housing Assistant contacts all involved parties by telephone to advise the mutual exchange has been refused.
- 9.2 The Housing Assistant amends and sends Refusal Letter 2 (Appendix 8) to all parties, confirming the exchange has been refused and the grounds under which this decision has been made. The refusal letter is then saved to mutual exchanges folder in property files folder.

10 Pre Sign up

- 10.1 The Housing Assistant will prepare all paperwork prior to the sign up appointment taking place:
 - 10.1.1 Exchange by Assignment
 - Mutual Exchange Sign up Checklist (Appendix 9)
 - Deed of Assignment (Appendix 10) for each Council property x 3

- Signed Schedule of Works for each Council property x 3
- Copy of Tenancy Agreement being assigned x 2
- Tenancy Handbook (for each Council property)

10.1.2 Exchange by Surrender and New Tenancy

- Mutual Exchange Sign up Checklist
- Tenancy Surrender (Appendix 11) x 2
- Tenancy Agreement x 2
- Signed Schedule of Works for each Council property x 3

11 Sign up

11.1 The Housing Officer ensures the mutual exchange sign up checklist is followed and all parties sign all documents as required.

11.2 The Housing Officer ensures all new tenants retain a signed deed of assignment and a copy of the assigned tenancy agreement or signed new tenancy agreement and a signed schedule of works.

11.3 Housing Officers ensure all former tenants retain a signed deed of assignment or signed tenancy surrender, and a signed schedule of works.

11.4 Housing Officers retain a signed deed of assignment and copy of the assigned tenancy agreement or signed tenancy surrender and signed new tenancy agreement; a signed schedule of works; the completed and signed mutual exchange sign up checklist.

12 Post Sign up

12.1 The Housing Officer passes the deed of assignment, or tenancy surrender and new tenancy agreement, to Housing Assistants who scan the documents to the property folder in Nassau.

12.2 Housing Assistants send a request of tenancy change to the Rents Team who terminate the current tenancy and create a new tenancy on QL.

NB. All appendix documents are contained within the Nassau (V:) Drive Mutual Exchanges Folder under Forms & Templates



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 March 2024

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Garage Sites and Project Report

This report provides an update to the Committee on South Kesteven District Council's garage site and building stock and sets out next steps to take forward the garage sites identified for development.

Report Author

Suniel Pillai, New Build Project Officer

Suniel.Pillai@southkesteven.gov.uk

Recommendations

It is recommended that members of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress being made in respect of the review of garage sites within the Housing Revenue Account.

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

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

- 1.1 The HRA has a revenue budget to complete the feasibility work associated with bringing forwards a pipeline of new build housing. Each scheme will need to have a business case and financial appraisal produced to be included HRA Capital Programme as part of the annual budget setting process.

Completed by:

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This report is for noting. Should the Council opt to dispose of any sites it will be necessary to adhere to its HRA Acquisitions and Disposal Policy.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 Some of the garage sites have asbestos roofs which will need to be appropriately managed by any contractor as part of the demolition process. This will be a part of the contractors Health and Safety plan and will be monitored by the Council.

Climate Change

- 1.4 The contents of this report do not have a direct impact on the Council's carbon emissions or the carbon emissions of the wider district. More detailed information on carbon impact of individual projects is outlined within the relevant project documentation.

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the garage sites that could be used to provide homes as part of the new build housing pipeline.

2.2 Approximately 455 individual garage units across 60 site locations in the South Kesteven District have been assessed as at February 2024 with regard to their suitability for development.

2.3 The approved Corporate Plan 2024-2027 clearly sets out how South Kesteven District Council intends to meet the mission *“to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.”*

2.4 The Corporate Plan, Priority 4 identifies *‘Housing’* as a key priority with high quality housing essential for all, and the council is committed to working with partners to provide this by:

- Facilitating a range of appropriate and sustainable housing and community facilities for future generations and the emerging needs of all our communities.
- Delivering exemplary and high-quality services for housing and homelessness.
- Increasing the supply of sustainable and high-quality Council-provided housing.
- Working with developers and private landlords to ensure sustainable, affordable, and high-quality housing is facilitated.

2.5 The Council owned garages situated across South Kesteven vary from standalone blocks of garages on large plots, to small, isolated buildings on small sections of land. Two examples can be seen below:



The Close, Colsterworth (20 Garages)



Edinburgh Road, Stamford (3 Garages)

2.6 The variety of garage buildings present a number of challenges to the authority in terms of repair, maintenance and management and opportunities for possible site redevelopment or land sale.

- 2.7 The garages assessed up to February 2024 are in a "fair" condition and will need a substantial amount of work to maintain and improve them in order to make sure they remain safe and functional assets. This is due to the buildings having received little investment in recent years.
- 2.8 A number of interventions have been actioned by the council in recent months to better utilise the garage stock, including conducting high level feasibility and option appraisals with an intent to deliver housing for the district.
- 2.9 In all areas of the district, officers are focusing on examining opportunities within the identified garage sites with a view to packaging these into several 'lots' for future development. Most garage sites can accommodate a maximum of four units per site with some able to accommodate more. The concepts will seek to utilize off site construction methods (such as modular) and the existing brickwork perimeter (where possible) of the garage unit to provide housing on restricted sites.
- 2.10 From the garage sites that have been assessed up to February 2024, the following have been identified to undergo further investigation and feasibility for development:

Gorse Rise, Grantham	Queensway, Grantham
Byron Avenue, Grantham	Munton Fields, Grantham
Commercial Road, Grantham	Cringle Way, Great Ponton
High Street, Colsterworth	Green Lane, Dry Doddington
The Close, Colsterworth	Newark Lane, Carlton Scroop
Claypole Road, Stubton	Essex Road, Stamford
Greyfriars, Grantham	Burnside Avenue, Stamford
Kesteven Road, Stamford	Mountbatten Avenue, Stamford
Kings Road, Stamford	Windsor Close, Stamford

*Those garage sites in **bold** text are currently in feasibility and/or going through the pre-application process with the Local Planning Authority and included in the Build and Acquisitions update report.*

- 2.11 Other Sites - A garage condition survey was started by South Kesteven District Council in 2018 with a list of garages being identified for repairs, maintenance, and development. The survey was halted; however, it is clear that a significant amount of investment will be required for the long-term maintenance and management of the garage assets. This data will need to be combined with garage demand across the district and balanced against the income and other demands to identify the most viable solutions moving forward.
- 2.12 The current assessment has identified the sites outlined in 2.10 where it is considered development is a viable option, with further study being undertaken to

confirm this. This has been determined based on the locality of the sites, current condition of the garage assets, repeated issues with ASB, fly tipping and management of the blocks. These units account for 254 garages/plots across the district.

2.13 Other garage sites, in addition to those in 2.10, are also being scoped for re-use. Potential reuse solutions could include additional car parking spaces or community amenities etc. In some instances, it may be appropriate to propose land disposal due to the size, locality, and restricted access to the sites. The housing, repairs and corporate teams will need to ensure information is shared where appropriate to ensure the appropriate level of due diligence is undertaken. Ward members, tenants and public consultation will be undertaken which will provide the Council on a recommended way forward for the garage sites not going to be developed.

3. Key Considerations

It is recommended that Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive this report for information and comment.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

This is a regular report where Members are invited to scrutinise and comment on performance.

This page is intentionally left blank



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 21 March 2024

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning

Update on Voids Performance

Report Author

Nick Thacker, Interim Head of Housing (Technical Service)

nick.thacker@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report seeks to update members on the progress of the Council's void properties, the changes in the process in the past year and current performance measures.

Recommendations

That the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the latest performance regarding void properties.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Housing

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards);

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

1.1 For 2023/24 the year to date void rate at January was 3.6% compared to a budgeted rate of 1.5% which results in an actual income loss of £839k compared with a budgeted loss of £415k. The void rate for 2024/25 has been increased to 2.5% to take into consideration current performance and a one-off budget of £700k has been approved as part of the 2024/25 HRA budget for void refurbishment. An improvement in the number of void properties and days taken to relet the property will improve the income loss position.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance & ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 The report is for noting and is to inform Members of the latest performance figures on Voids.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 One of the Council's priorities in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 is Housing with the mission to: 'Ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality and sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations'. As a

stock-retained local authority, the Council has statutory and regulatory obligations to maintain and repair all our properties.

- 2.2 The Council manages approximately 6000 properties and around 370 properties become vacant each year (known as void properties). Void days are the days that are accumulated between the property becoming vacant and subsequently relet.
- 2.3 During this period where a property is void there is no rental income being received and we try to ensure that the property is let to the right applicant as soon as possible, in accordance with our recently refreshed Housing Allocations Policy, to minimise rent loss.
- 2.4 Our voids policy ensures that a clear process is in place for both Officers and residents, adhering to best practice. This also includes practices to make sure that the Council is compliant with current legislation, for example the Regulator of Social Housing's Home Standard and current Landlord Health and Safety, Gas and Electrical requirements. The full policy can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 2.5 Similarly, the Void Quality Standard safeguards that all of the Council's properties meet a 'property standard' and the full list can be found in Appendix 1 of the requirements that are to be met. All tenants should refer to their Tenancy Agreement and Tenants Handbook to source their responsibilities for maintaining the property after it has been let from void and properties that do not meet these required conditions are subject to recharges for damage.

Current void performance:

- 2.6 The Council currently categorises voids into two classifications of void works, these are:
 - Minor void (completed by the in-house team) – this includes day to day repairs including replacing broken door furniture, replacing internal doors, rehanging doors, carry out an electrical inspection, providing an electrical safety certificate and completing any necessary repairs, plumbing checks, some decorations and matters of a similar small scale, making gardens safe and clear.
 - Major void (completed by external contractors) – this includes replacement of major elements of the property such as kitchen and/ or bathroom, new doors where needed, heating upgrade if required and all works that would be carried out in a minor void

Recent voids performance

- 2.7 Our target for void turnaround is set at sub 60 days. In 2022/23 we completed 241 void properties at an average turnaround of 106.74 days.
- 2.8 The Earlesfield project is ongoing and has had an impact on our voids times with properties being outsourced to our contractor, United Living. We are closely monitoring the performance of this contractor and currently 15 properties are undergoing works by them.
- 2.9 Over the past 6 months United Living have completed 18 properties, all within the expected timescales.

Current active void properties as at 11 March 2024

Type of Void Property	Number of Void Properties
Major Voids (including 8 – Earlesfield Project, 5 – Redevelopment and 5 – Potential Disposals)	93
Minor Voids	24
Temporary Accommodation	8
Provisional Voids	11
To be inspected	14
Ready to let (including Temporary Accommodation)	16
Decants (6 – Disrepair, 1 – Earlesfield Office, 13 – Earlesfield Project)	20
With Improvements team for Conversion	2
Properties purchased with Local Authority Housing Fund Grant not up to void standard	5
Total	193

Void properties completed during 2023/24 as at 11 March 2024

	Number of Void Properties	Average Void Days
Void Properties	282	171.23
Temporary Accommodation	97	76.49*
Void Properties		

*includes Fire Compartmentation work and properties converted from general stock

Efforts to reduce void times.

- 2.10 The Council's void process remains a high priority as effective management of housing voids is imperative for optimising housing stock utilisation and mitigating rent loss for South Kesteven District Council.

- 2.11 We are in the process of going out for procurement for an additional void contractor to reduce the number of major voids we currently have.
- 2.12 We are in the process of looking at DRS project planner which would take away the manual scheduling of internal voids to an automated system, saving time and in proving void times.
- 2.13 Our contractors are being closely monitored and regular meetings are undertaken to ensure they are delivering voids in a timely manner and to a high standard.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The key points are outlined in section 2 above.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 This report is for noting and is designed to give an update on performance.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 To give the Committee a up to date picture on the performance of Voids.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – South Kesteven Void Quality Standard
- Appendix 2 – Voids policy

This page is intentionally left blank

South Kesteven Void Quality Standard - SKVQS

What you can expect in your new home

We want to make sure we deliver a clean, safe and secure property to incoming tenants, within our targets for turnaround times, standard and cost. All our properties should meet our 'property standard'. Here's what our standard covers:

Security

We will:

- Renew locks to all lockable doors, including any outbuildings.
- Check any other security measures like window locks are working properly and give you the keys.
- Provide any communal entrance fobs or keys that are required.
- Where a Tunstall system is installed we shall ensure it is operational and upgrade the unit if required.

Electrics

We will:

- Carry out an electrical inspection, provide an electrical safety certificate and complete any necessary repairs to make sure electrical fixtures and fittings are safe.
- Ensure the property has a working mains smoke and carbon monoxide detector system as well as heat detector.
- Install 24-hour trickle fans or a Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) unit depending on property requirements and upgrade if required.
- Provide a minimum of x1 double USB socket in bedrooms, living room and kitchen in addition to standard sockets.

Gas

We will:

- Undertake a gas safety check, provide safety certificate and carry out any necessary repairs.
- Arrange for a turn on and test of the gas once the tenant is in situ.

Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

We will:

- Adequate numbers of smoke alarms will be fitted, and Carbon Monoxide Detectors where required.
- Where these are provided, they will be checked and serviced.

Plumbing

We will:

- Flush all systems to minimise the risk of Legionella and ensure there is hot and cold running water, and all taps are working properly.
- Check all accessible pipe work and tanks for leaks and blockages and carry out any repairs as necessary.
- Install a Surestop valve to the mains water supply.

Heating and energy efficiency

We will:

- Make sure the heating system is working properly.
- Provide a valid energy performance certificate.

- Provide advice and/or guidance on operation of heating system.

Damp

We will:

- All properties will be free from damp.
- The Council will ensure an exhaustive inspection whenever damp or mould is present and will undertake whatever works are needed, e.g., upgrading fans and ventilation

Kitchens

We will:

- Make sure the kitchen is adequate and has:
 - A kitchen sink unit with cupboard underneath
 - An electric cooker point
 - An electric point for a fridge freezer
 - At least two usable cupboards
 - Adequate work surface
 - Space and plumbing for a washing machine (unless communal facilities are provided)
 - A minimum of three rows of splashback above the cooker

Bathrooms

We will:

- Make sure all toilets, showers, baths, sinks and taps are working properly.
- Fit an electric shower
- A minimum of three rows of splashback around the sink and full height tiling in shower
- Ensure all sealant around baths, basins and sinks is in good condition.
- Remove any existing shower curtain where present and/or replace with new.
- Replace all toilet seats.

Roofs, guttering & outside maintenance

We will:

- Ensure the property is wind and weather-proof
- Clear the loft of any rubbish and ensure the fire break is intact.
- The loft hatch is to be fitted with a suitable Fire Brigade lock so that it is kept out of use.
- Check rain-water goods are in good condition and clear any blockages or make repairs if necessary.
- Remove any outbuildings or structures which are not safe.
- Ensure any outbuildings are in good condition and watertight.
- Provide an outside light at front of property.

Doors, windows & stairs

We will:

- Make sure all doors are in good working order and that any glass panels in doors and side panels meets current safety standards
- Make sure all windows and locks are in good working order and reseal any gaps around the windows.
- Replace any blown or cracked double glazed units.
- Check that staircases, banisters and balustrades are secure and safe
- Make sure there are curtain battens fitted above all windows.

Walls & ceilings

We will:

- Check the plasterwork on exposed walls and ceilings is in good condition and repair/replaster where condition is poor.
- Strip wallpaper where damaged or where it is suspected that walls underneath may be damaged.
- Remove all polystyrene ceiling tiles and skim coat plaster repair over area of removal if required.
- Mist coat emulsion paint to walls where wallpaper has been removed or to all newly plastered surfaces.
- Ensure that where signs of damp are identified we will treat it.

Floors and floor coverings

We will:

- Remove any fitted carpets and floor coverings, except any non-slip flooring to kitchen and bathroom which is in good condition.
- Install non-slip flooring to kitchen and bathroom if not present.
- Secure and/or repair any loose or broken floorboards.
- Ensure that your flooring is level and safe allowing you to fit the floor covering of your choice.

Decoration & cleaning

We will:

- Offer you a decorating allowance for some rooms if they are in a poor condition.
- Ensure all surfaces, including woodwork are free of flaking paint and ready for decorating.
- Remove any graffiti
- All floors and stairs will be swept and wet mopped where possible.
- Bathroom and WC floors will be disinfected.
- All doors (internal and external), doorframes, windows, window frames, windowsills, skirting boards, radiators, and pipe works will be washed down and wiped cleaned.
- Cobwebs will be removed from all areas.
- All sinks, basins, taps, tiled areas, and showers will be cleaned and sanitised.
- Kitchen units, including all work surfaces, cupboards and drawers will be cleaned and sanitised internally and externally.
- All toilets and pipe work will be cleaned.
- If the property shows signs of vermin or insect infestation, then fumigation or other appropriate treatment will take place. Prior to this becoming the tenant's responsibility from commencement of tenancy.

Aids and Adaptations

We will:

- These will be left in situ unless instructed to remove. All aids and adaptations will be checked, and repairs undertaken as necessary to ensure they are safe to use.

Gardens

We will:

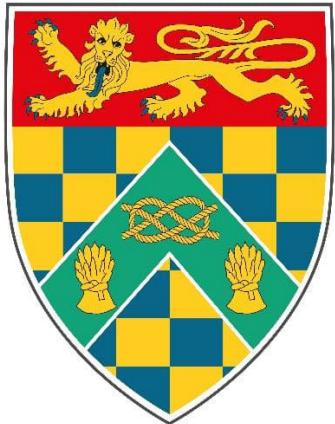
- Clear the garden of any rubbish.
- Ensure grass and hedges are cut where necessary
- Fill or remove any garden ponds
- Ensure fencing that borders a public space is in good condition and that all other boundaries will be marked by at least post and wire.

- Ensure that paths leading to main doors are free from trip hazards.

General maintenance and future upgrades

We will:

- Inform you of any works due to be carried out at your property within the following 12 months.
- Check the property for asbestos and where it is identified it will either be removed or left in a safe condition.
- Not all repairs will be carried out before re-letting. Some repairs may be completed once the incoming tenant has moved in. These will be repairs that wouldn't prevent the tenant from living in the property.
- The new tenant will be advised of any outstanding work during viewing and/or during sign-up. New tenants will be asked to sign an acceptance form that confirms the property is of an acceptable standard, with any repairs due after re-let clearly noted.



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**South Kesteven District Council
Voids Policy
2022 – 2025
January 2022**

(1) Policy Summary

1.1 This Policy details South Kesteven District Council's approach to managing void properties with the goal of:

- Delivering a clean safe and secure property to incoming tenants, within our targets for turnaround times, standard and cost.

(2) Introduction

2.1 A property is Void in the period between tenancies.

2.2 Voids are vacant properties and therefore no rent is being paid. This results in a loss of income for The Council. Therefore, we aim to minimise this loss by ensuring that a property is let to the right applicant as quickly as possible.

2.3 The Council aims to let every property to a household which is the best match for that property in order to meet the households current, and where possible, future needs. Although one of the Council's aims is to minimise rent loss, we will also seek to maximise the best match for the property through the allocations process.

3. Policy Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all properties held by the Council within its Housing Revenue Account and is triggered by a tenancy ending and it being appropriate for the Council to re-let the property.

3.2 This Policy will ensure compliance with current legislation, promote good practice, ensuring consistency of approach and has regard but is not limited to:

- Regulator of Social Housing's: Home Standard
- Current Gas and Electrical safety requirements
- All current Landlord Health and Safety requirements
- Ensures value for money in void property works
- Achieves the minimum property quality standard through application of the re-let standard
- Achieves high levels of customer satisfaction with the overall allocation process and property condition
- Is consistent with the aims of our corporate plan

3.3 This Policy applies to all aspects of void management.

4. Policy Objective

4.1 This policy is designed to meet the following key themes in the Council's corporate plan:

- Housing that meets the needs of all residents
- Healthy and Strong Communities
- A Clean and Sustainable Environment
- A high performing Council

5. Policy Delivery

5.1 The operational delivery and monitoring of this policy is the responsibility of the Head of Housing Services and Head of Housing Technical Services.

5.2 The Council's staff involved in the void process have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied.

5.3 Properties will be re-let in accordance with the Council's:

- Allocations and lettings policy
- Void's policy and relet standard
- Chargeable policy
- Asset management strategy
- Compliance policies and procedures
- Financial standing orders

6. Tenancy Sustainment

6.1 The Council will seek to minimise unnecessary voids through:

- Effective tenancy management
- Financial inclusion advice
- The installation of aids & adaptations so that tenants and their families can remain in their home where economically viable in accordance with the Aids & Adaptations policy
- Signposting tenants to the relevant resources for the provision of housing support

6.2 The Council will record reasons as to why properties have become empty and will undertake regular root cause analysis to identify if the void could have been avoided. If the void could have been avoided, the Council will take action to minimise the potential for this happening again in future.

7. Repairs and Improvements

7.1 Repairs and improvement work are often the main factor for a delay in the re-letting of void properties. Therefore, the Council will have a void quality standard (SKVQS) detailing the standard required to let a property (see

appendix 1). This SKVQS addresses the key principles of safety, security, cleanliness and repair. This is not an improvement standard and therefore improvement work will be undertaken after the new tenant has moved in, and only prior where a repair is not viable.

7.2 Where prospective tenants have specific requirements in order to occupy a dwelling, and these are not included within the relevant void standard, then approval should be sought from the Head of Technical Services or the Head of Housing Services.

7.3 The Council will utilise their Housing IT systems to efficiently manage the void process from start to finish.

7.4 Aids and adaptations which are essential to make the property habitable for a new tenant or their family will be carried out prior to the property being let. A cost benefit analysis shall be undertaken with any decision being taken by the Head of Technical Services, Head of Housing Services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Housing.

7.5 Improvement work will normally be undertaken after the new tenant has moved in. If a repair is not viable then improvement work can be undertaken at the void stage

8 Tenancy Termination - Tenant Responsibilities

8.1 All tenants will be required to comply with the terms of their tenancy agreement, including providing 28 days' notice of their intention to terminate their tenancy. A shorter period may be agreed, but this is subject to agreement by the Head of Housing Services.

8.2 Tenants must leave the property in an acceptable condition, subject to fair wear and tear. Where this is not the case, the Council will recharge outgoing tenants for any repairs required to the property which are due to tenant damage, disrepair or neglect, for changing locks or replacing keys if not returned, and for the cost of removing rubbish, furniture or personal belongings. Further guidance is detailed within the Council's chargeable policy.

9 Voids – The Council's Service Commitment

9.1 We will ensure that prospective tenants are kept fully informed about the commencement date of their tenancy.

9.2 We will ensure that all void properties are brought up to our current SKVQS (appendix 1) prior to being let to the new tenant.

9.3 All new tenants will be surveyed to ensure that they were happy with the allocations process and standard of their new home. The results of these surveys shall identify and inform continuous improvement opportunities.

9.4 We will actively monitor our allocations and voids processes to minimise the period our properties are empty, so that they are available for letting to prospective tenants as quickly as possible.

10. Performance Management

10.1 All activities within the Void Policy will be subject to continual performance monitoring.

10.2 Key performance targets (KPIs) will be reviewed annually. KPIs will be reported to the Council's senior housing team, committee, cabinet and periodically to our tenants.

10.3 Periodic audits will be undertaken by the heads of service to ensure compliance with the contents of this policy.

11. Complaints and Appeals

11.1 All complaints regarding the service received will be dealt with in-accordance with the Council's complaint procedure.

11.2 All appeals regarding the allocation of a property will be heard in-accordance with the Allocations policy.

12. Other languages and Formats

12.1 This policy will be made available in other languages and other formats on request.

13. Policy Review

13.1 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required, for example changes in statutory or regulatory requirements.

This page is intentionally left blank



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 March 2024

Report of Councillor Philip Knowles,
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing

Corporate Plan 2024-2027: Key Performance Indicators

Report Author

Charles James, Corporate Policy Officer

Charles.James@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the proposed key performance indicators (KPIs) for the Corporate Plan 2024-2027, to be monitored by this Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and to recommend the approval and adoption of the KPI suite from 1 April 2024.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Confirm the key performance indicators it wishes to review associated with the actions in the Corporate Plan 2024-2027.
2. Notes that key performance indicators will be monitored throughout the year as determined by the Committee in agreeing its work programme.
3. Notes that the KPI suite will be reviewed and if necessary revised as part of the annual review process.

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

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 financial implications associated with this report.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications associated with this report which are not already highlighted in the body of the report. KPIs will be regularly reported to the relevant Committees and Cabinet.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan (the Plan) sets out the strategic vision and key priorities of the Council. The Plan underpins the delivery of all of the Council's strategic activity and provides the performance framework for managing the delivery of the actions and priorities in the Plan. It is good practice for a public sector organisation seeking to deliver a wide set of aims and objectives to produce a Corporate Plan and regularly review the activity and achievements against it.
- 2.2 The Corporate Plan 2024-2027 was adopted by Council on 25 January 2024 (see Appendix 1). It was proposed that actions, key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets would be developed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs), which would retain oversight of the performance management arrangements at a strategic level. Cabinet will receive performance reports on a quarterly basis. Scrutiny committees will also be able to take a deeper dive into any areas of concern.

3. Key Considerations

Performance Management Framework

- 3.1 Effective performance management is essential to the success of the Plan. It establishes how delivery will be monitored, improvements driven, and open and transparent accountability upheld.
- 3.2 There are two suites of performance indicators to support the Plan.
 - a) The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will monitor the **delivery of the Corporate Plan Actions and the overall performance of the Council**. This report proposes the KPI suite for the 10 actions that fall within the scope of this Committee. Accountability for delivery of these actions rests with the Senior Management Team. A table of the proposed KPIs is available in Appendix 2.
 - b) The Strategic Socio-Economic Indicators (SSEIs) will monitor the progress towards the fulfilment of the Council's vision, 2034 outcomes, and the **overall performance of the district**. Each SSEI is benchmarkable against other local authorities, aligned to the Office for Local Government (OFLOG) suite, and will be reported in the annual State of the District report (SOTD). The SSEIs will be kept under constant revision, enabling immediate incorporation of new OFLOG metrics etc. The Council has limited influence over the SSEIs. Reporting will evidence whether the district is on the right trajectory and provide insight into the Council's operating environment, enable the

identification of challenges and shape the service response. The current SSEI suite is available in Appendix 3.

- 3.3 Accompanying the KPI report will be a performance indicator (PI) dashboard. This will present information regarding the performance of the relevant Service, which are out of the KPI measures scope. The intention is to present the 'story' of the Service to Committee, providing as meaningful and robust performance data as possible. These measures are not KPIs and will be kept under constant review by Officers to ensure the most useful data is being captured for the Committee.
- 3.4 Once approved, reporting on the KPIs will be a regular part of the OSC workplans. Mid-year (quarter 2) and end-of-year (quarter 4) reports will be presented to the OSCs. Quarterly reports will be presented to Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- 3.5 An annual performance report that considers all aspects of the Corporate Plan will be presented to Cabinet. This report will have been to relevant scrutiny committees, to consider any changes required to the KPI suite and the actions of the Corporate Plan. Changes may be required in response to the external operating environment or policy context. As an agile organisation it is crucial for the Council to retain this flexibility.
- 3.6 Work is underway to strengthen the Performance Management page of the Council's website. To improve openness and transparency it is intended this page will host the KPI reports, link to the relevant Committee meetings and publish data pertaining to the performance of the Council, but not directly captured by the measures of the KPI suite. The PI dashboards will all be hosted on the page.

Development and Design

- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Meeting these functions has underpinned the approach to developing the KPI suite. To do this, two basic foundational principles have 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).
- 3.9 Each KPI has quantitative (i.e. numerical or measurable data telling us how many, how much or how often) and qualitative (i.e. non-numerical data to understand underlying reasons, opinions and motivations) measures. The quantitative measures enable progress over time to be monitored and are

benchmarkable where appropriate. The qualitative enable the quantitative measures to be contextualised and the experience of service delivery to be understood. This latter function will be provided by the commentary on each KPI produced by the responsible Officer.

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

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 As Council has agreed the OSCs will lead on this invaluable work of agreeing KPIs they wish to keep under review, there are no viable alternatives. An absence of success criteria would mean the delivery of the Corporate Plan is unmonitored and prevent continuous improvement. Having a purely internal KPI suite would prevent effective and transparent scrutiny and accountability.

4.2 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) published draft statutory guidance on compliance with the Best Value Duty for local authorities in July 2023. The Best Value Duty relates to the statutory requirement for local authorities and other public bodies defined as best value authorities in Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 ("the 1999 Act") to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".

4.3 The guidance provides greater clarity to Local Government on how to fulfil the Best Value Duty by describing what constitutes best value, the standards expected by the department and the models of intervention at the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' disposal in the event of failure to uphold these standards. DLUHC is currently analysing consultation responses to the draft guidance. The final document is expected in 2024.

4.4 The draft guidance is clear that '*Making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance and outcomes is a core requirement for achieving best value.*' This will require robust and effective performance management and scrutiny. The presence and practice of these arrangements are characteristics of a well-functioning authority. The absence or poor functioning of said arrangements are indicators of potential failure.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 The adoption of the KPIs and targets set out in Appendix 2 of this report (and encompassing any changes agreed by the scrutiny committee) will provide a basis for effective performance management of the Corporate Plan 2024-2027 and enables the overview and scrutiny committee to input on the development of the targets.

5.2 The annual review process will ensure Cabinet is provided with a clear overview of progress against targets for the previous financial year, along with the opportunity of ensuring the Council's activities are focussed on the highest priority areas (i.e. a refocussing based upon any changes to the external environment or policy context).

6. Consultation

6.1 The draft KPIs and targets set out in Appendix 2 have been developed in consultation with relevant officers. This report provides Overview and Scrutiny Committee members with the opportunity to input on the development (and ongoing management) of relevant KPIs and targets.

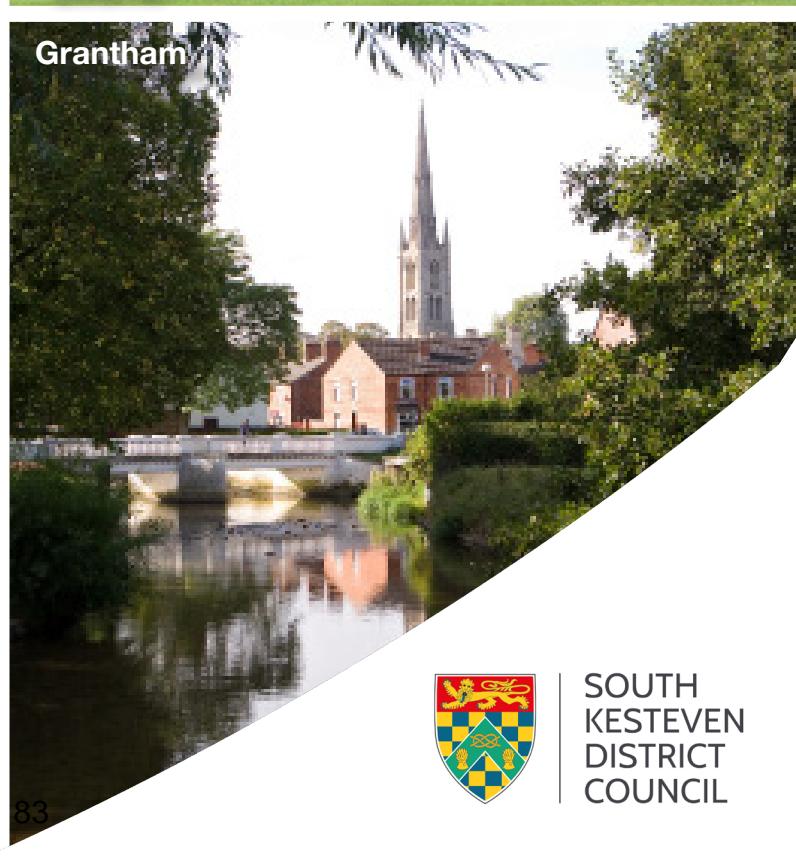
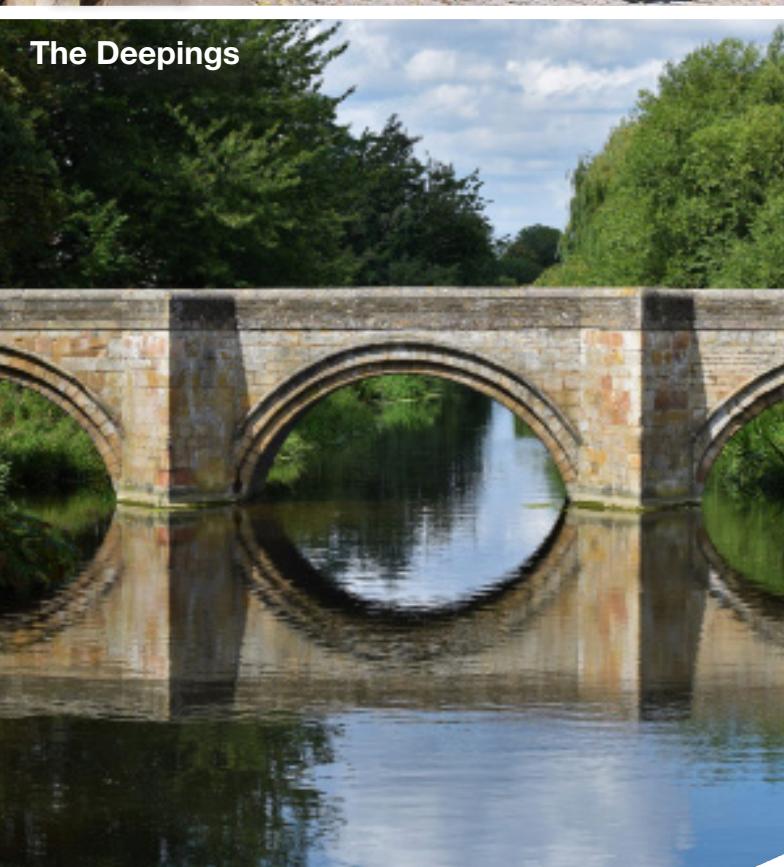
7. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan 2024-27
- Appendix 2 – Proposed KPI Suite 2024-27: Housing OSC
- Appendix 3 – Strategic Socio-Economic Indicator (SSEI) Suite: Housing OSC (February 2024)



Corporate Plan

2024-27



Foreword by the Leader and Chief Executive

South Kesteven is a District full of promise and potential. It is marked by the resilience, strength, resourcefulness and kindness of our communities. It is the mission of the Council to kickstart that potential, driving forward for a sustainable future.

Our Corporate Plan clearly sets out how we intend to realise that mission. It is a statement of who we are as an organisation.

This is a plan grounded in a comprehensive evidence base, informing the Council's strategic direction and priorities.

It is designed to be ambitious, realistic, dynamic and adaptable, with a long-term focus of where we want our District to be in the medium term. We have received excellent engagement from Elected Members, businesses, partners, community groups and residents.

We are confident this Corporate Plan will guide the work of the Council towards our vision to be 'A thriving District to live in, work and visit', underpinned by five priorities:

- We will continue to engage with all communities to support a thriving society that all our residents are proud to be a part of.
- We will meet the challenge of climate change with a renewed energy, championing our District to be a clean, green and healthy environment for future generations.
- We will support business and work with partners across all sectors to create the right conditions to support a dynamic, resilient and growing local economy, which fulfils the potential of the District and benefits all our communities.
- We will ensure all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.
- We will deliver the trusted, high quality and value-for-money services our residents expect and deserve.

Underpinning the priorities are three fundamental principles:

- *Listening and being responsive to the needs of all our communities.*
- *Building public trust and confidence by promoting a culture of openness, transparency and accountability.*
- *Providing value-for-money for residents and businesses through responsible and prudent use of resources.*

The Corporate Plan is our blueprint for the next four years, built upon the foundations of prudent financial management, the values of #TEAMSK, robust performance management and collaboration with partners who share our ambition for South Kesteven.

As the Council delivers the priorities over the next four years, residents and businesses can expect to see a continued focus on our communities, the Council leading the way to achieve Net Zero, sustainable economic growth, housing that meets the needs of the District and an effective Council always delivering for local residents.



Cllr Ashley Baxter
Leader of the Council



Karen Bradford
Chief Executive of the Council



Belton House



Grimsthorpe Castle

A New Vision for South Kesteven

The Corporate Plan is based on a golden thread. This is the thread that connects all work, at all levels of the organisation, directly to our overarching vision, priorities and ambitions.

The vision sets out what the Council wants the District to be like:

'A thriving District to live in, work and visit'.

This phrase encapsulates our aspirations for the District, a place of dynamic, prosperous, and connected communities. Above all, a place residents are proud to call home.

Our mission is to provide excellent public services and robust governance to support South Kesteven. A mission statement defining the approach the Council will adopt has been developed:

'South Kesteven aims to be a modern and forward-looking Council that delivers effective, efficient and equitable public services to enhance the well-being of our residents, enable prosperity, protect the environment and empower communities for a sustainable future'.

The statement sets out who we aspire to be as an organisation: committed, creative, caring. Grounded in the principles of transparency, accessibility, and accountability.

The vision and mission statement underpin our priorities and approach to service delivery. Where we have statutory services to deliver: providing housing, collecting waste, running elections, planning, licensing and environmental health, these will be delivered with the high quality, consistency and timeliness expected by our residents and businesses.

Where we deliver discretionary services: a sustainable leisure and cultural offer, supporting local enterprise and reinvigorating our towns and leading on climate action, these will be delivered with energy and creativity to achieve an exemplary level of service provision.

We recognise our vision cannot be achieved in isolation. We will champion community participation and collaborative partnerships with businesses and other public sector organisations.

We will continue to build on South Kesteven's success as a thriving place to live, work and visit. We will cement our reputation as a Council trusted by our residents to deliver value for money.

South Kesteven: A place to call home

South Kesteven is the southern gateway to Lincolnshire. A District where heritage meets innovation, proud of our past, whilst focused on the future.

The 2021 census revealed South Kesteven is home to 143,400 residents. The majority of the population reside in the four historic market towns of Bourne, Grantham, Stamford, and The Deepings. The remainder live in the network of villages and rural dwellings. Rates of life expectancy and satisfaction are above national averages and are the highest in Lincolnshire. There is a proud military and aviation heritage reflected in the District being home to a substantially higher population of veterans than the national average, 7.4% of South Kesteven's adult population have served in either the regular or reserve Armed Forces.

The District is generally affluent with low levels of deprivation, gross disposable household income per head is the highest in Lincolnshire, whilst median earnings for residents are amongst the highest in Lincolnshire. The elegant Georgian town of Stamford has frequently been voted one of the best places to live in England. Nevertheless, there remain small pockets of severe deprivation, primarily in Grantham. The economy of the District is diverse with 6,265 registered enterprises in the District, the largest business base in Lincolnshire.

The District boasts enviable north-south connectivity and is strategically located alongside the A1 and the East Coast mainline, with arrival in London Kings Cross in less than 70 minutes by train. Combined with superb schools, attractive surroundings, a relatively lower cost of living compared to elsewhere in Britain and a low crime rate – South Kesteven is one of the safest areas in Lincolnshire. This makes the District an attractive destination for those seeking to settle and raise a family.

The high quality of life is the District's key strategic asset. Indeed, the population increased by 7.2% over the 2010s and is projected to reach 152,458 by 2036. This growth is driven by newcomers from other parts of the country, which is a strong signal of confidence in the future of South Kesteven.

As we look to the future, along with the numerous advantages set out above, we must have clear understanding of the challenges facing South Kesteven. The four key long term strategic challenges are summarised as:

- A Changing Society - The population of the District is ageing, with growth driven by internal migration.
- Opportunity for all – The District is home to some of the least deprived areas in the country, yet also has persistent pockets of severe deprivation.
- Tackling the Climate Emergency - Lead and champion the local response to climate change with the ambition of a Net Zero District by 2041.
- Sustainable and Inclusive Growth - The District's economic performance in terms of productivity, earnings and wage growth has been slow over the past decade.

The Corporate Plan has been developed in this context. These challenges will require imagination, transformation and collaboration to address. Our priorities contain fifteen outcomes for 2034. Each articulate what successful delivery of our vision for South Kesteven would look like. We cannot deliver our vision alone. The outcomes provide long-term focal points to bring together residents, businesses, skills providers, partners and community groups to develop and deliver action – united by the common goal of a thriving South Kesteven.



Bridge over the River Welland, Deeping St James

A District in Numbers



The life expectancy is
80.6
the highest in Lincolnshire

The 2021 census estimated
the population of the
District to stand at

143,400

The population is projected
to reach 155,821 by 2043

The District is ranked
amongst the top
20%
of Districts in
England for life
satisfaction

The median age
of the District is

46

There are
6265
businesses in the District,
43 per 1000 residents



The District is the
2nd
healthiest in
Lincolnshire

The crime rate is the
second lowest in
Lincolnshire at
61.16
recorded offences
per 1000 residents

South Kesteven
is ranked
amongst the
40%
least deprived
Districts in
England



12%
of households
experience fuel
poverty

12.3%
of under 16 year olds experience
relative child poverty



81.8%
of the 16-64 population possess
at least NVQ2+ qualifications.

41.1% possess NVQ4+
qualifications

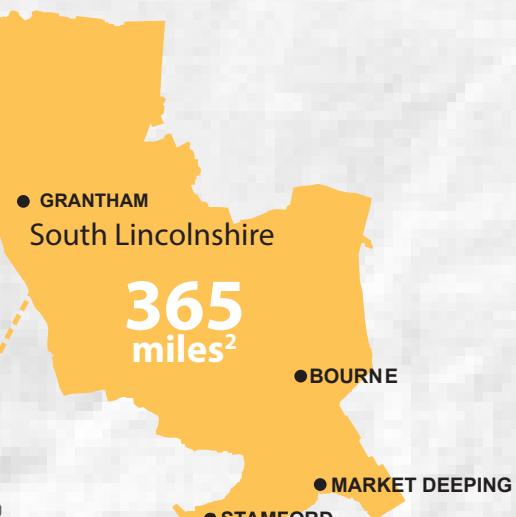
Gross disposable
household income
per head is
£21,467
- the highest in
Lincolnshire

Median annual gross
earnings are
£31,914

The local economy is worth
£2.722
billion



13%
of jobs are in
knowledge intensive
services



69%
of households own
their own home

The median
house price is
9.78
times the median
annual full time
salary

Lincolnshire

GRANTHAM



1hr

CO₂

The District's total
territorial CO₂e emissions
in 2020 were
948kt CO₂e
This equates to 6.6 tonnes
per capita

Priority 1: Connecting Communities

Mission: To enhance the strength, wellbeing, security and capacity of all our communities for a thriving and cohesive society that all our residents are proud to belong to.

Ambitions

We will:

- Enable opportunities for increased public engagement to empower and connect our communities.
- Deliver and facilitate a sustainable leisure and cultural offer.
- Work in partnership with the voluntary, private and public sectors to enable the delivery of community projects and responsive support services to meet the needs of all our communities.
- Encourage sport and physical activity to support healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities.
- Celebrate and promote the strong heritage and rich culture of South Kesteven.



Why?

Strong communities are the foundation of strong societies and economies. We are fortunate that our District is largely prosperous. Most residents live in good and safe neighbourhoods, with energised community involvement, networks and facilities.

It is our task to nurture communities through support, empowerment and investment. This means working with our communities to understand their priorities and needs, to develop and deliver solutions to the issues which matter most. This means proactively improving the health and wellbeing of residents through a sustainable leisure and cultural offer.

This means building and maintaining relationships with key partners: community groups, the Police, the NHS and other tiers of government. This means supporting young people and the most vulnerable, and targeting funding towards communities who feel disconnected or left behind.

A thriving South Kesteven is one where all residents have the opportunities to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, in safe neighbourhoods and realise their full potential.

To ensure strategic focus and momentum towards the completion of our ambitions is maintained, we have described what we want our District to look like in 2034:

2034 Outcomes

- South Kesteven is a fair and vibrant society, which residents actively shape and are proud to belong to. ✓
- Inequalities within the District are reduced with pockets of severe deprivation eliminated. No part of the District will rank in the bottom decile for relative deprivation. ✓



What we have delivered:

- Received an Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award for outstanding support to the Armed Forces community – one of only 18 organisations across the East Midlands to hold the status.
- Established the £1 million South Kesteven Prosperity Fund (SKPF), which has funded 70 projects undertaken by towns, parishes and community groups across the District.
- Upgraded 40 CCTV cameras to further improve our accredited and highly commended CCTV service.
- Granted £219,000 to local projects through the Community Fund.
- Secured an award of £344,659 from Phase 1 of the Swimming Pool Support Fund to support the operation of LeisureSK Ltd with the increased costs in relation to utilities and pool chemicals. Further bids submitted to Phase 2 of the Swimming Pool Support Fund for energy saving initiatives and a bid submitted to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.
- Secured Arts Council Transition Funding for the consortium of venues which includes Stamford Arts Centre, Guildhall Arts Centre, Louth Riverhead Theatre and the South Holland Centre.
- Adopted the Lincolnshire Districts Health and Wellbeing Strategy and developed a bespoke local Action Plan to drive health and wellbeing improvements at a local level.

What we will do:

- Deliver the Local Health and Wellbeing Action Plan
- Deliver the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
- Deliver the Cultural Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
- Invest in a sustainable leisure and cultural offer.
- Ensure that our leisure facilities and arts venues are sustainable and meet future needs.
- Enable and support a flourishing and vibrant artistic and cultural scene.
- Deliver the Community Engagement and

- Development Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
- Continue to deliver an accredited, effective and legislatively compliant CCTV service in partnership with Lincolnshire Police.
- Deliver the Safer Streets programme and seek opportunities to develop a legacy applied District wide once the funding period ends.
- Continue to support our Armed Forces Community, and as a Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS) Gold Award holder, advocate for the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Priority 2: Sustainable South Kesteven

Mission: To meet the challenge of climate change and ensure a clean, green and healthy natural and built environment for present and future generations.

Ambitions

We will:

- Lead by example in reducing our operational carbon footprint by 30% between 2019 and 2030.
- Lead and champion the local response to climate change with the ambition of a net zero District by 2041.
- Significantly increase tree planting across the District and manage, care and protect existing tree cover.
- Ensure the District is always a safe, clean and pleasant place to live, work and visit.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitats, working to actively restore and rehabilitate damaged eco-systems.
- Provide an excellent and value for money waste and recycling collection service.

Why?

Addressing climate change and nature loss is the challenge of this generation. We have the ambition to take this challenge on, both by reducing our own carbon footprint and through sustainable management of our resources, corporate estate and housing stock.

We will champion and influence the District to do the same. We have produced the Climate Action Strategy 2023 with an accompanying Action Plan, to clearly set out how we will do this.

Responsible stewardship, an outstanding natural environment and a beautiful built environment are important for health, wellbeing, and pride of place. The District benefits from a unique countryside, extensive parks and open spaces and historic townscapes. It is our role to work to conserve, promote and enhance this inheritance for the benefit of current and future generations.

This means ensuring through planning, developments are sustainable and fit the character of the District. This means actively improving and restoring the biodiversity of South Kesteven, respecting the rural nature and promoting green and open spaces as places where nature and wildlife can flourish.

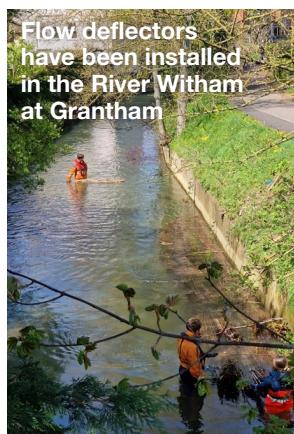
We will proactively challenge and enforce against environmental crimes, such as littering and fly tipping, and will promote responsible behaviours aimed at reducing waste and encouraging recycling. We will run an exemplary and value-for-money waste and recycling service. To ensure strategic focus and momentum towards realisation of our ambitions, we have described what we want our District to look like in 2034 as:

2034 Outcomes

- Greenhouse gas emissions have been greatly reduced. The District is on target to achieve net zero by 2041. The Council has met or exceeded the interim operational emissions target. ✓
- Adaptation and resilience to a changing climate is embedded across the organisation. ✓
- The Climate Action Plan has been delivered. ✓
- The Council's waste & recycling collection and environmental services are nationally regarded as exemplary models of delivery. ✓



Riverside Walk in Wyndham Park



Flow deflectors have been installed in the River Witham at Grantham



Green Flag status awarded to Grantham's Wyndham Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and Dysart Park

What we have delivered:

- Published our first Climate Change Action Strategy 2023, establishing how the Council will continue to reduce its carbon footprint and adapt to a changing climate, whilst leading, influencing and championing the District to do the same.
- 152 properties received upgrades to low-carbon heating systems, making homes warmer and reducing energy costs for tenants through the Green Homes Grant.
- A further 300 social housing properties will be upgraded via the £7.26m Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- Secured Green Flag status for the three parks in Grantham: Wyndham Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and Dysart Park.
- Rejuvenated riverside areas along the River Witham in Grantham, including the creation of a wetland area in Queen Elizabeth Park, through the successful delivery of the £1.29m Blue-Green Corridor scheme, improving access to wildlife for 13,700 residents.
- Successfully insourced the grounds maintenance team from EnvironmentSK Ltd.

What we will do:

- Deliver the Climate Change Action Strategy programme.
- Continue to reduce operational emissions to achieve the target of a 30% reduction on 2019 by 2030 and develop modelling to set a target of achieving Net Zero operations as soon as viable.
- Review and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities across the corporate estate, such as solar panels and EV chargers.
- Improve the energy efficiency of the leisure estate and review further renewable energy opportunities.
- Review and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities across the sheltered and social housing properties.
- Adopt a Tree and Woodland Strategy and deliver an accompanying Action Plan.
- Ensure biodiversity net gain is delivered through planning and corporate projects.
- Continue to tackle waste related crimes, including fly tipping with support from the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership.
- Manage the smooth implementation of twin stream recycling to improve the recycling rate and reduce contamination.
- Develop and implement an effective process for the collection of food waste.
- Deliver a range of schemes to improve the recycling rate.
- Manage the construction and transition to a new purpose-built depot, which is fit for purpose, and explore options for the old depot.
- Develop and deliver the Fleet Management Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.

Priority 3: Enabling Economic Opportunity

Mission: To enable and support a dynamic, resilient and growing local economy, which benefits all our communities.

Ambitions

We will:

- Work to support businesses to protect existing jobs and create new opportunities for all.
- Promote the District as an attractive place to visit, work, invest, study and do business.
- Attract investment to improve infrastructure, support regeneration and drive economic growth.
- Ensure an adequate supply of suitable land is allocated for commercial use and facilitated through the Local Plan.
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with the business community to understand and support their needs and aspirations.
- Develop links with educational institutions to upskill residents to meet the needs of the current and future economy.

Why?

Economic success is closely linked to cultural success and a sense of pride in the community.

A vibrant economy will attract new businesses, which in turn provides more jobs and opportunities for residents.

The District boasts excellent north south transport connectivity, a large business base, a skilled population, superb schools and colleges, and an attractive quality of life offer.

Capitalising on this potential entails continuing to build on the links with business forged during the pandemic, working with educational institutions to upskill residents, the operation of an effective planning system and attracting investment and funding to revitalise our towns.

By providing local opportunities, supporting businesses and employers and investing in town centres, we will enable conditions which attract and retain people who want to invest, live, work and visit the area.

We will lead by example as an employer of choice, offering excellent staff development and apprenticeship opportunities.

To ensure strategic focus and momentum towards realisation of our ambitions, we have described what we want our District to look like in 2034 as:

2034 Outcomes

- South Kesteven has a thriving, innovative and diverse economy and is recognised as a great place to live, visit, invest and do business. ✓
- The District's economy is growing strongly, increasingly based upon knowledge-intensive services, generating high quality jobs, with productivity levels well above the regional median and wages above the national average. ✓

Major restoration at Westgate Hall in Grantham



What we have delivered:

- Created the Local Economic Forum (LEF) made up of key stakeholders which help guide decision-making and act as a key consultative body on future strategies, initiatives and funding programmes regarding local economic development.
- Distributing £3.9 million of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) monies.
- Through the £1.263 million High Street Heritage Action Zone programme, restored the iconic

Grade II listed Westgate Hall, Grantham and nine shopfront regeneration projects, generating over £350,000 in private sector investment.

- Accelerated the £5.56 million Grantham Future High Streets Fund to the delivery phase with public realm and residential accommodation projects scheduled for completion in 2024.
- Allocated over £53 million in COVID support grants to 3000 businesses. The Council was shortlisted for the East Midlands 'Best COVID Response Award' in 2022.

What we will do:

- Deliver the Economic Development Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
- Deliver initiatives to expand and deepen engagement with business.
- Continue to distribute the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and explore opportunities to develop a legacy beyond the funding period.
- Embed and strengthen the Local Economic Forum as a key institution for local stakeholders to shape the District's approach to skills, business support and investment.
- Work with the Lincolnshire Growth Hub to support businesses to start-up, succeed and grow.
- Strategically leverage the Council's procurement spend to maximise social value.
- Consider targeted interventions – planning powers and schemes, to achieve high-quality regeneration across the District and explore options to unlock stalled sites.
- Bring forward a step change in the way Council-run street markets are presented, operated and promoted.
- Develop a long-term approach to regeneration and be prepared for investment and funding opportunities.
- Continue to promote and develop South Kesteven as an attractive visitor destination, focusing on our cultural and heritage strengths.

Priority 4: Housing

Mission: To ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.

Ambitions

We will:

- Through the Local Plan facilitate a range of appropriate and sustainable housing and community facilities for future generations and the emerging needs of all our communities.
- Deliver exemplary and high-quality services for housing and homelessness.
- Engage effectively with our tenants to shape the services we deliver.
- Increase the supply of sustainable and high-quality Council-provided housing.
- Work with developers and private landlords to ensure sustainable, affordable and high-quality housing is facilitated.

Under international law, to be adequately housed means having secure tenure. It means living somewhere which is in keeping with your culture and having access to appropriate service, schools and employment. Rates of home ownership are high in South Kesteven. Prices are relatively affordable compared to elsewhere in England. The Council owns and is the social landlord to nearly 6000 properties.

As a planning authority, the system will be operated efficiently as a driver to sustainable growth.

Planning policy will maintain a strong focus on good design to ensure developments are sustainable and in line with the unique characters of the District. We will look to ensure housing across a range of prices and tenures, with appropriate community facilities, are available to meet demand and help residents to remain in the District.

We will continue to drive improvements in our housing services, to deliver exceptional provision which meets the needs of our tenants and the residents of South Kesteven.

To ensure strategic focus and momentum towards realisation of our ambitions, we have described what we want our District to look like in 2034 as:

2034 Outcomes

- Housing delivery matches the needs of communities, homes are affordable, private rentals are high quality and homelessness is reduced. ✓
- The Council's housing and planning services are nationally regarded as exemplary models of delivery. ✓
- Housing services are fully compliant with all regulations and best practice. Repairs and complaints are actioned promptly and to a high standard. The Council's tenants feel their concerns and priorities are recognised and are satisfied with the service provided. ✓
- Successful delivery of the ongoing new build pipeline continues to contribute towards meeting the housing need in the District. ✓



What we have delivered:

- Ground broken on the construction of 20 properties at Swinegate, Grantham. This is part of a pipeline of the Council building 65 affordable properties over the next two to three years.
- Successfully delivered the Housing Improvement Plan after self-referring to the Regulator of Social Housing. The Regulatory Notice has been lifted.
- Delivering a £3.2 million programme of renovation works to 143 properties in the Earlesfield Estate, Grantham.

- Acquired 21 properties through the first tranche of Local Authority Housing Fund money allocated to the Council. These will house Ukrainian and Afghan refugees and will ultimately be added to Council's social housing stock.
- Introduced new housing management and choice-based letting systems.
- Commenced an early review of the Local Plan with a confirmed five year housing land supply.
- Completed 336 adaptions through the Disabled Facility Grants scheme worth a total of £2.9 million.

What we will do:

- Review the quality of existing properties across all tenures and seek to reduce the impacts of poor housing on residents and communities.
- Ensure services to support residents to remain living in their community with as much independence as possible, ideally within their own home, with the right support.
- Review and rationalise the Council's assets portfolio to ensure an optimal return for the Council.
- Deliver the £3.3 million decarbonisation programme.
- Ensure the Council's housing stock is high quality and suitable for the needs of tenants now and into the future. Seek to dispose of properties which are economically unviable.
- Continue to improve the turnaround period and standard of properties.
- Deliver a high-quality, planned and responsive repairs service.
- Deliver a pipeline of new build housing following a hybrid approach of construction and acquisition when appropriate to maximise funding streams.
- Seek opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of the Council's own housing stock and continue to support private retrofit projects to reduce energy costs, lower carbon emissions and create a more sustainable future.
- Develop a joint approach to bringing empty homes back into use.
- Ensure the Local Plan continues to facilitate sustainable growth across the District and the Local Plan Review is successfully completed in 2026.
- Ensure the planning process is effective, efficient, high quality and timely.

Priority 5: Effective Council

Mission: To deliver trusted, high quality and value-for-money services that fulfil the needs and expectations of all our residents.

Ambitions

We will:

- Provide excellent, value-for-money and financially sustainable services.
- Manage our resources and assets effectively with open, transparent, and accountable decision making.
- Actively and effectively engage with and listen to our residents, placing their needs and concerns at the heart of everything we do.
- Embrace and maximise opportunities for innovation, improvement and securing external funding.
- Through #TEAMSK retain a highly skilled, empowered, motivated and professional workforce.
- Uphold a healthy and robust local democracy, where Elected Members champion their wards, communities and the District as a whole.

Why?

The key to delivering local growth, thriving communities and a healthy local democracy is effective political and administrative leadership. This requires a clear vision and set of priorities, and the will and ability to champion the area.

Effective leadership is open and accountable, this is the foundation of a positive relationship between the Council and residents and businesses.

Trust should never be taken for granted. Our residents and businesses rightly have high expectations of us. We must and will demonstrate that we are worthy of trust through action. In a period where there have been high profile national failures across local government it is more important than ever that the Council delivers on its duty to provide best value for its residents. This means a Council that is responsible in its handling of public money and makes prudent use of its resources to achieve financial sustainability. This means delivering the excellent services that are expected, in partnership and collaboration with other organisations where possible. This means having robust governance and management structures in place.

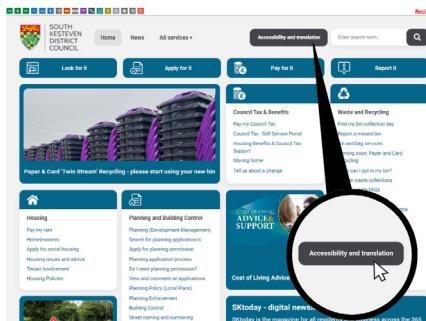
This means having an energetic organisational culture committed to high performance and continuous improvement. Above all, this means a confident and outward looking Council that is always open to honest scrutiny and challenge and listens to our residents. It is in this spirit that we have produced this Plan and will approach all our priorities and ambitions. To ensure that strategic focus and momentum towards the realisation of our ambitions is maintained, we have described what we want our Council to look like in 2034:

2034 Outcomes

- The Council's service delivery provides exceptional quality and value for money and is nationally regarded as exemplary in its approach when compared to peer authorities. 
- The Council's governance offers exceptional quality and assurance and is nationally regarded as an exemplary model in its approach when compared to peer authorities. 
- The Council's financial management offers exceptional quality and value for money and nationally regarded as an exemplary model in its approach when compared to peer authorities. 



Waste freighter raising awareness of breast cancer



Providing inclusive and accessible services for residents



Enhancing the environment

What we have delivered:

- A successful Corporate Peer Challenge resulted in a review of governance structures and rationalised the amount of Council-owned companies to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Adopted a People Strategy, vastly improving staff engagement, retention, training and satisfaction.
- Completed a full review of the Health & Safety policy and plans to strengthen risk control and accident awareness across the Council.
- Pursued a policy of 'grow your own' employing

23 apprentices and awarded Apprenticeship Employer of the Year 2023 by Grantham College.

- Saved £300,000 per annum by moving into modern, open plan office accommodation in Grantham.
- Implemented and embedded a new Constitution and Committee structure, including a new Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Standards Committee.
- Completed 2021-22 and 2022-23 Statement of Accounts audit. An unqualified opinion was received for 2021-22. The same is expected for 2022-23.

What we will do:

- Continue to work in partnership with relevant partners to deliver and support targeted initiatives across the District to help communities to be more self-sufficient.
- Ensure the administration of licenses and approvals relating to both national legislation and discretionary, are effective, efficient, timely and consistent.
- Continue to implement and embed a one team approach to deliver effective services.
- Produce and deliver a Councillor Development Strategy and accompanying programme to achieve accredited Councillor Development Charter status.
- Deliver the refreshed Customer Experience Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
- Ensure the tax collection process is always effective, efficient, timely and fair.

- Deliver a balanced, sustainable financial plan over the medium term.
- Implement and embed the new finance system.
- Deliver the IT Roadmap, ensuring all systems meet the needs of internal and external customers, and explore opportunities for new technologies and innovation.
- Seek opportunities to maximise value for money in all services.
- Deliver the Internal Audit Plan and drive continuous organisational improvement.
- Ensure procurement is always compliant, fair and delivers value for money.
- Continue to embed the People Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
- Develop and deliver Planned Maintenance Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.

The Foundations: Financial Sustainability

South Kesteven District Council continues to work hard to ensure that high quality and cost-effective services are delivered and that savings and efficiencies are achieved which will assist with achieving financial sustainability.

There is a clear focus on identifying how a balanced budget can be achieved over the medium term in order to ensure that services continue to receive the investment required to deliver a quality offer to our residents.

The Council continues to drive forward its plan to achieve financial sustainability against a backdrop of significant uncertainty regarding future funding from government.

This year is the sixth in succession that Councils have received a one-year only funding settlement which makes financial planning extremely challenging and national changes to the way in which Councils will be funded in future further adds to the uncertainty.

The latest budget forecasts show that the Council needs to save £1.15 million over the next three years, based on government funding assumptions, in order to be in a position where a balanced budget will be achieved.

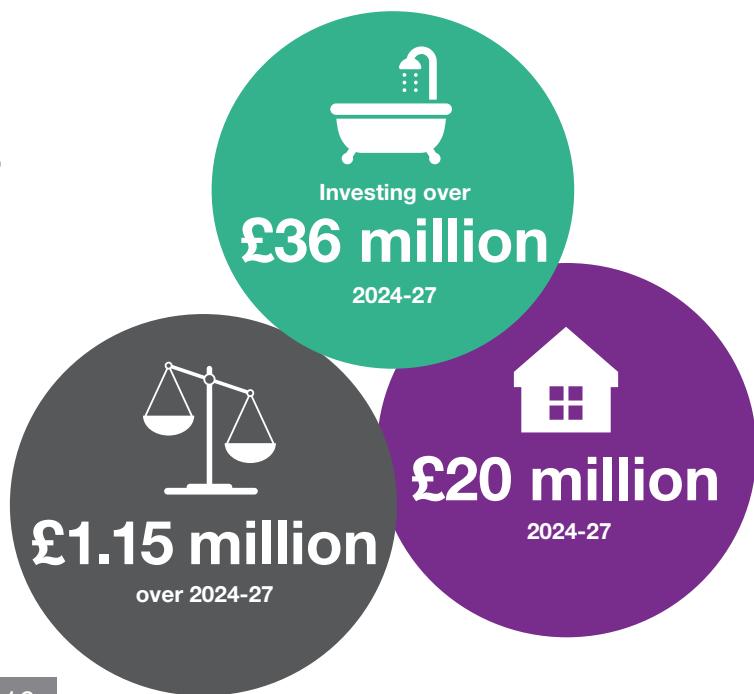
The Council is fully committed to achieving this target and will continue to adopt approaches which include streamlining the organisation, so that it is ready for the challenges ahead, modernising processes and procedures, and rationalising assets and operating costs where possible.

The delivery of the Council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan remains its key focus.

Underpinning this is a pledge to provide quality services, a strong commitment to investing in sustainable growth, meeting the challenge of climate change, improving leisure facilities and delivery of an ambitious housing programme that meets the needs of the social housing sector.

Financed from a combination of reserves and grants, the Council has committed over £20 million to fund the delivery of new build social and affordable housing and stock acquisition programmes over the next three years. Over the same time period it will also continue to maintain its existing housing stock, by investing over £36 million in a range of programmes including compliance works, re-roofing, external wall insulation, structural refurbishment and the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms.

The environment in which the Council set out its medium-term financial plan remains challenging and there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding future government funding, however the Council remains committed to providing high quality services to all its residents and delivering the actions set out in the Corporate Plan.



The Foundations: Managing Performance

Effective performance management is essential to progress in delivering the ambitions and actions of the Corporate Plan. This requires monitoring whether initiatives are having the intended positive impacts on the District. There are two suites of performance indicators to support the Corporate Plan – Key performance indicators and strategic socio-economic Indicators.

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will monitor the delivery of the Corporate Plan Actions and the overall performance of the Council. Each KPI is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Timely) and agreed via the scrutiny committees to which quarterly reports will be presented.

The selected metrics will be wholly within the Council's control and will offer accountability and stimulate continuous improvement. The suite will be reviewed annually.

The Strategic Socio-Economic Indicators (SSEIs) will monitor the progress towards the fulfilment of the Council's Vision, 2034 Outcomes, and the overall performance of the District. Each SSEI is benchmarkable against other local authorities, aligned to the Office for Local Government (OFLOG) suite, and will be reported in the annual State of the District (SOTD). The SSEIs provide the evidence base of the Corporate Plan, underpinning the District SWOT analysis which has informed the Council's Priorities and Ambitions.

The Council has only very limited influence over the SSEIs. Reporting will evidence whether the District is on the right trajectory and provide insight into the Council's operating environment, enable the identification of challenges and shape the service response. The table below sets out some examples of SSEIs for each priority:

Priority Area	Example SSEI
Connecting Communities	Crime rate per 1000 residents
	Prevalence of child poverty
	Physically active adults
Sustainable South Kesteven	Household waste recycling rate
	Air quality
	Total territorial CO ₂ emissions
Enabling Economic Opportunity	Employment rate
	Productivity
	Median weekly earnings
Housing	Affordability ratio (median earnings/house prices)
	Net additional homes delivered
	Households in temporary accommodation
Effective Council	Council Tax collection rate
	Total core spending power per dwelling
	Level of band D Council Tax rates

The Foundations: Values and Equalities

The values of the Council determine how we behave and deliver services to residents and businesses and how we interact with each other. They are the 'true north' that underpins the culture of **#TEAMSK**.



Our values are:

- **Trust** - Trust is the foundation of all positive relationships – between colleagues, management, officers and Elected Members, and our residents trusting us. It is about fostering a culture of honesty and openness.
- **Empowerment** - Colleagues are encouraged and supported to take initiative and contribute to the betterment of our services and our communities.
- **Accountability** - We are transparent in and take ownership of our actions and decisions.
- **Making a Difference** - Recognising that the Council is driven by a purpose to create a positive impact and improve the lives of all our residents and communities.
- **Supportive to All** - Putting the residents at the heart of everything we do.
- **Kindness** - Being emphatic and understanding of others and always going the extra mile.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Our commitment to equalities is about long-term, continuous improvement.

It is the responsibility of all Officers and elected Members to implement the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our equality objectives will be supported by a

delivery plan as part of the People Strategy, which will include actions from all service areas.

This will ensure consideration of the needs of our staff and our residents is at the heart of what we do – from the earliest stage of development, through to decision-making and implementation.

Objective	How this will be achieved
Continue to maintain an inclusive, diverse workforce that feels valued.	<p>In all parts of your work life we will work in a fair and equitable manner.</p>
	<p>Encourage celebration and support our differences.</p>
Continue to build and promote a culture of equality and inclusion into all the services, functions and projects we deliver.	<p>Develop a network of equality allies across the Council who are empowered to support and advise their colleagues on matters of equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>Ensure all projects, policies strategies and reports which have a direct impact on people are accompanied by a robust equality impact assessment.</p>
	<p>Consult with residents on all aspects of the Council's work that have a direct impact on them as our customers</p>
Continue to develop and support resilient, connected and inclusive communities that have a voice in the decisions that affect them.	<p>Ensure the Council's services are responsive to different needs and treat service users equitably, with dignity and respect.</p>
	<p>Involve, listen and respond to our communities effectively.</p>
	<p>Engage with communities to promote opportunities for funding and project support.</p>



Bourne

Alternative formats are available on request:
audio, large print and braille

**South Kesteven
District Council**

You can contact the Council about benefits, rent or other issues

01476 406080

Out of hours 01476 590044

customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk

www.southkesteven.gov.uk

Find us on social media:

f Search South Kesteven District Council

X @southkesteven



Corporate Plan 2024-27 – Draft Provisional KPI Suite – Housing OSC									
Priority	Code	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Provisional Action	Action Summary	Service Area	Provisional Owner/s	Proposed KPI Measure/s	Provisional Targets	Notes
Housing	HOUS1	Housing	Review the quality of existing properties across all tenures and seek to reduce the impacts of poor housing on residents and communities.	Housing quality	Public Protection	Head of Service (Public Protection)	Number of category 1 or 2 HHSRS hazards eradicated within the Private Rented Sector.	For information only	N/A
Housing	HOUS3	Housing	Review and rationalise the Council's assets portfolio to ensure an optimal return for the Council.	Condition of portfolio	Housing Services	Head of Housing Services	Availability of EPC and Stock Condition Data	100%	N/A
							Number of lets per month	For information only	
							Number of mutual exchanges per month	For information only	
Housing	HOUS4	Housing	Deliver the £3.3 million decarbonisation programme.	Delivery of decarbonisation programme	Housing Services	Head of Housing Services	% of programme delivered	% completion based on length of programme	N/A
							Properties upgraded	For information only	
Housing	HOUS5	Housing	Ensure the Council's housing stock is high quality and suitable for the needs of tenants now and into the future. Seek to dispose of properties which are economically unviable.	Quality of stock and service provided to tenants	Housing Services	Head of Housing Services	Properties with EICR up to 5 yrs old	The target on EICR is 10 Years	N/A
							% Dwellings with valid gas safety certificate	100%	
							Stage 1 complaints per quarter with a resolution & Stage 2 resolution Ombudsman determinations against the LA	For information only	
							Percentage of complaints responded to within target time	100%	N/A
							Satisfaction with the overall service provided by the landlord	80%	
							Average void time (days)	Year 1- 100 days Year 2 - 60 days (TBC)	
Housing	HOUS6	Housing	Continue to improve the turnaround period and standard of properties.	Voids and turnaround times	Housing Services	Head of Housing Services	Rent loss due to voids	TBC	N/A
							Average void time (days)	Year 1- 100 days Year 2 - 60 days (TBC)	
Housing	HOUS7	Housing	Deliver a high quality, planned and responsive repairs service.	Performance of housing repairs service	Housing Repairs	Head of Housing Services	Percentage of emergency repairs completed within target timescale	100%	N/A
							Percentage of non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale	90%	
							Satisfaction with the repairs service over the last 12 months (perception)	90%	

Priority	Code	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Provisional Action	Action Summary	Service Area	Provisional Owner/s	Proposed KPI Measure/s	Provisional Targets	Notes
Housing	HOUS8	Housing	Deliver a pipeline of new build housing following a hybrid approach of construction and acquisition when appropriate to maximise funding streams.	New Build Pipeline	Projects, Performance & Climate Change	Head of Service (Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change)	Deliver 80 properties over life of Corporate Plan (2024-27)	20 per annum	N/A
							Delivery of Swinegate, Grantham development	20 properties to project timescales	Dedicated KPIs for specific developments will be added as those projects begin construction
							Delivery of Elizabeth Road, Stamford development	4 properties to project timescales	
							Delivery of Larch Close, Grantham development	21 properties to project timescales	
Housing	HOUS9	Housing	Develop a joint approach to bringing Empty Homes back into use.	Empty Homes	Public Protection	Head of Service (Public Protection)	A working group is planned to establish a new approach to Empty Homes. The creation of KPI measures will be an objective of said group.	TBC once working group established	N/A
Housing	HOUS12	Housing	Deliver an effective Housing Options Service	Performance of Housing Options	Housing Options	Housing Options Manager	Number of cases overdue a full homelessness decision	0	N/A
							Number of homelessness approaches (domestic abuse presented separately)	For information only	
							Number in temporary accommodation and temporary accommodation spend (benchmarked to peers)		
							Number of successful homelessness outcomes (for all the duties owed)		
Housing	HOUS13	Housing	Protect our most vulnerable residents with robust safeguarding processes.	Safeguarding Processes	Housing Services	Housing Options Manager	Number of 3rd party support referrals	For information only	N/A
							Number of safeguarding referrals (by demographic)	For information only	
							% of referrals actioned within defined timescale	TBC	
							Number of FOIs (% dealt with within defined timescales)	90%	
							Number SARs (% dealt with within defined timescales)	85%	

Strategic Socio-Economic Indicator (SSEI) Suite: Housing OSC (February 2024)

These metrics will monitor the performance of the district. Each can be benchmarked against all other English district authorities. The latest available data will be presented.

1. Housing Tenure- Home Ownership (Census 2021)
2. Underoccupancy - 1 more extra room (Census 2021)
3. Underoccupancy - 2 more extra rooms (Census 2021)
4. Overcrowding - 1 more room needed (Census 2021)
5. Overcrowding - 2 more rooms needed (Census 2021)
6. Affordability Ratio - Median Earnings/House Prices (Resident)
7. Affordability Ratio - Lower Quartile (Resident)
8. Affordability Ratio - Median Earnings/House Prices (Workplace)
9. Affordability Ratio - Lower Quartile (Workplace)
10. Median House Sale Price (existing stock)
11. Lower Quartile House Sale Price (existing stock)
12. Proportion of dwellings rated EPC C+
13. Net Additional Homes Delivered
14. Total Dwellings owned by Local Authority
15. Percentage of Local Authority Owned Stock vacant
16. Percentage of Local Authority Housing Stock Vacant Long Term
17. Average Relet Time for LA Owned Dwellings
18. Households owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act
19. Households in Temporary Accommodation
20. Proportion of households in receipt of housing benefits
21. Households on Local Authorities Housing Waiting List
22. Average Private Registered Provider (PRP) Weekly Rents
23. Average Local Authority Weekly Rents
24. Proportion of Housing Stock not meeting the Decent Homes Standard - Overall
25. Proportion of Housing Stock not meeting the Decent Homes Standard - Owner Occupied
26. Proportion of Housing Stock not meeting the Decent Homes Standard - Rental
27. Percentage of domestic properties not connected to the gas grid

This page is intentionally left blank



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 21 March 2024

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet member for Housing and Planning

Choice Based Lettings Update

Report Author

Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing Options)

sarah.mcqueen@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to give an update on the progress of the implementation of Choice Based Lettings allocations system.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

Notes the update on the progress of the implementation of Choice Based Lettings allocations system.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Housing that meets the needs of all residents
Healthy and strong communities

Which wards are impacted? (All Wards)

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

1.1 The implementation of the new service has been undertaken with existing resources.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

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

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 As the Committee is aware, Choice Based Lettings was launched in October 2023 following a full registration process. All applicants on our existing housing register were contacted and invited to reapply for our new system with assistance offered where required.

2.2 As reported at the previous Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, we have since received a large number of Housing Register applications and the team are continuing to work to assess these applications as quickly as possible. Guidance

states that we would like to work to a 10 day lead time for housing register assessments.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Please see below the latest statistics as of 4th March 2024 to demonstrate the work done so far on the implementation.

	Total (January 2024)	Total (March 2024)
Applications received	2095	2858
Applicants who have applied and do not qualify/closed applications	961	1007
Applications incomplete (waiting further info)	428	156
Pre assessment completed (not taken further by applicant)	179	236
Applications pending assessment	252	200
Active applications	548	806
Of these: Band 1:	109	161
Band 2	159	241
Band 3:	234	320
Band 4:	46	84
Housed:	28	83
Of these: Band 1	10	46
Band 2	12	26
Band 3:	4	9
Band 4:	2	2

3.2 As discussed at the previous Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a key priority since going live with this system is to ensure that we are assessing applications in a timely manner.

3.3 The oldest application pending assessment is 17th January 2024. So we are currently working on a 6 week lead time for housing register assessments.

3.4 This currently a longer wait than we would like and work will continue to improve this waiting time.

3.5 Since my last report for January's committee, a further 763 applications have been received which shows the volume of work we are having to manage at present.

- 3.6 In addition to the housing register assessments, is the vast number of phone calls received by the team. This is understandable when a new system is implemented, however there is a lot of guidance available on or website which includes a frequently asked questions section which we would encourage all customers to check prior to calling the team.
- 3.7 We have managed to bring the number of assessments waiting down to 200, however again, there is still room for improvement.
- 3.8 Our team continues to grow, with 2 housing options assistants starting recently and over the coming weeks, another assistant will join the team. We will also welcome an allocations officer to replace a member of the team who moved to another role within the Council.
- 3.9 Overall, feedback from customers remains positive and understanding of the system continues to grow. We have had a few customers query the positioning in shortlists of properties as they assume they position will improve for each property. This is not necessarily the case and it is important to remember that each property holds its own shortlist and therefore positioning can vary from one property to another.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The report is for noting, however, the Committee may consider any further action necessary as part of considering this item.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 This report is for noting.

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Updated Work Programme 2023/24

No	Item	Meeting Date	Lead Officer	Requirements	Notes (including reporting timeframes)
March 2024					
1.	Regulatory Compliance Monitoring update	21/03/24	Phil Swinton	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
2.	Earlesfield Programme update	21/03/24	Nick Thacker	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
3.	Build and Acquisitions update	21/03/24	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
4.	Mutual Exchange Policy	21/03/24	Jodie Archer	Policy document	21 March 2024
5.	Garage Sites and their suitability for development	21/03/24 TBC	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai	Report following work being carried out in respect of developing unused garage sites	21 March 2024
6.	Voids update	21/03/24	Nick Thacker	Current position in respect of void properties	21 March 2024
7.	Draft KPI's	21/03/24	Debbie Roberts	To consider draft KPI's for 2024/25	21 March 2024
8.	Choice Based Lettings update	21/03/24	Sarah McQueen	To update the Committee on numbers	21 March 2024
9.	Shelter Housing Workshop update	21/03/24 TBC	Jodie Archer	Update following the Sheltered Housing workshop held on 18 March 2024	

Future Items – next meeting Thursday 6 June 2024 TBC at Council AGM					
	Regulatory Compliance Monitoring update	TBC	Phil Swinton	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
	Earlesfield Programme update	TBC	Nick Thacker	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
	Build and Acquisitions update	TBC	Debbie Roberts/Suniel Pillai	Regular update	Regular Update at each meeting
	Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy	TBC	Ayeisha Kirkham/Tom Amblin-Lightowler	Policy document	
112	Rent and Service Charge Policy	TBC	Celia Bowen	Policy document outlining how the Council will calculate and charge rent and service charges for the housing stock	
	Empty Homes Strategy	TBC	Ayeisha Kirkham	Consideration of a draft Empty Homes Strategy	
	IHMS update	TBC	Jodie Archer		
	C4L Update	TBC	Sarah McQueen		
	Stock Condition	TBC	Nick Thacker		
	SHDF Update	TBC	Peter Park		
	Fabric First	TBC	Nick Thacker		
	Repairs Workshops	TBC	Nick Thacker	New dates to be confirmed summer 2024	

Items already considered by the Committee at a previous meeting during 2023/24				
1.	Regulatory Compliance update	21/09/23 16/11/23 22/01/24		September 2023
2.	HRA Capital Programme – Progress Monitoring	21/09/23		September 2023
3.	Earlesfield Programme update	21/09/23 16/11/23 22/01/24		September 2023
4.	Update following Void Workshop (Future workshops)	21/09/23		September 2023
5.	Fee Policy Licensing of Mobile Homes	21/09/23		September 2023
6.	HRA Disposal & Acquisitions Policy	21/09/23		September 2023 Cabinet adopted policy 10.10.23
7.	Total Housing Compliance Policies	16/11/23 22/01/24		Deferred to January 2024
8.	Update following Homelessness workshop	16/11/23		16 November 2023
9.	Build and Acquisition update including Review of Housing Purchases in Langtoft (Nov 23)	16/11/23 22/01/24		16 November 2023
10.	Choice-based lettings plus demonstration	16/11/23		16 November 2023

11.	<i>Decarbonisation Programme and Funding update</i>	22/01/24		22 January 2024
12.	<i>Midyear KPI's reporting</i>	22/01/24		22 January 2024
13.	<i>Housing ASB Policy</i>	22/01/24		22 January 2024
14.	<i>Estate and Tenancy Management Policies</i>	22/01/24		22 January 2024
15.	<i>Private Sector Housing - Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy</i>	22/01/24		22 January 2024