

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 22 MAY 2025

2.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Paul Fellows Chairman
Councillor Ian Selby Vice Chairman

Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Phil Gadd
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Zoe Lane
Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Nikki Manterfield

Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Habib Rahman
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Rob Shorrock
Councillor Vanessa Smith
Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing Options)
Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and Community)

David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer
Gary Andrew, IT Services Manager
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer

1. Apologies for absence

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, tributes were paid to the late-Chief Executive of South Kesteven District Council, Kenneth Russell Cann.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridget Ley, James Denniston, Richard Dixon-Warren, Helen Crawford, Nick Robins, Penny Robins, Chris Noon, David Bellamy, and Ian Stokes.

2. Election of Chairman

Members were invited to make nominations for the Chairman of the Council for the 2025/2026 municipal year.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Ian Selby be elected as the Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A vote was taken, and the Council **AGREED:**

To elect Councillor Ian Selby as the Chairman of the Council for the 2025/2026 municipal year.

The Chairman was invested with the chain of office and Members offered their congratulations. Councillor Selby noted the privilege of his election as Chairman and offered gratitude to the outgoing Chairman, Councillor Paul Fellows. It was confirmed that one of the new Chairman's charities would be Kesteven Rideability, with further charities to be announced.

COUNCILLOR IAN SELBY TOOK THE CHAIR

Councillor Paul Fellows was offered thanks and appreciation by Members for his period as Chairman, particularly regarding his extensive service to the community and charity work. Councillor Fellows thanked Members and Officers for their support.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

Members were invited to make nominations for the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2025/2026 municipal year.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Anna Kelly be elected as Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A vote was taken and the Council **AGREED:**

To elect Councillor Anna Kelly as the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2025/2026 municipal year.

The Vice-Chairman was invested with the chain of office.

4. Public Open Forum

There were no public speakers.

5. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

6. Minutes of previous meetings

Councillor Sue Woolley noted that she hadn't been named in the minutes of either meeting. It was confirmed that apologies had been received for the 18 March meeting but not the 27 February meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2025 were proposed, seconded and agreed as an accurate record.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 18 March 2025 were proposed, seconded and agreed as an accurate record.

7. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted the previous Chairman's engagements.

The Leader of the Council welcomed Councillors Nikki Manterfield and Sarah Trotter into their new roles as Leader and Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group, and thanked Councillor Graham Jeal for his participation for the previous two years.

The Head of Paid Service noted that there were 16 outstanding Third-Party Related Transaction Forms that needed returning urgently to Finance officers. Members were also reminded that they needed to undertake mandatory training within six months of the AGM.

There was a further reminder of the annual refresher, and mandatory training requirement for Governance and Audit Committee, Planning Committee, Licensing Committee and Standards Committee. If members did not undertake this training they would not be permitted to take their seat on the committee.

8. Announcement by the Leader of the Council on the Size and Membership of Cabinet and Cabinet Members' Remits

The Leader of the Council confirmed that there were no membership changes on the Cabinet. The Leader explained that this was due to the united nature of the Cabinet but he did acknowledge constructive disagreement.

Thanks were offered to outgoing Chairmen from 2024/2025, in particular Councillor Pam Bosworth who had been Chairman of the Licensing Committee since 2009. The Leader also wished to personally thank those officers that had supported him in his role to date.

Updates from the previous year were highlighted by each member of the Cabinet:

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture outlined the increased ticket sales across the arts centres and praised improvements made to the parks across the district.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement noted the works on the Guildhall Art Centre and the Waste Depot, which were on time and on budget to be completed by November 2025. Improvements were also to be undertaken at Grantham Bus Station and Wharf Road Car Park.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste noted that 4.5 tonnes of litter had been collected from the A1 and praised officers in being shortlisted for the 'Best Team in Council Services' at the MJ Awards. The Head of Waste Services was congratulated for being a transformative presence. Gratitude was also expressed towards the Sustainability & Climate Change Officer who had been instrumental in securing a £3.5 Million bid to be invested in the Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.

The Cabinet Member for Housing outlined the following:

- The average length of time that properties were void for at South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) had dropped from 163 to 79 days, already achieving the target aim for the end of the 2025-26 financial year ahead of schedule.
- 252 properties were to receive solar panels because of the money within the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- A tenant satisfaction review had found that 90% of respondents were satisfied with their repairs.
- 2093 homeless approaches had been dealt with over the previous year by officers.
- Whilst 32 properties had been purchased through the 'Right to Buy' scheme, this had secured approximately £3 Million of income for SKDC. 31 further properties had also been secured.

The Cabinet Member for Planning outlined that the Shopfront Design Guide had been updated and SKDC was in the advanced stages of updating the Local Plan. Praise was given to officers as SKDC had been shortlisted for the 2025 National Planning Awards.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licencing noted that a new Data Protection Policy had been introduced and also praised the planning behind the new Customer Service Centre.

9. Programme of Meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Committees for 2025/2026

Members were asked to approve a programme of ordinary meetings of Full Council, Cabinet, Overview and Committees and other Committees of the Council for the 2025/2026 municipal year.

Having been proposed and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council approve the programme of Meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Committees for 2025/2026 as attached at Appendix A to the report.

10. Appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council and appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

Members considered the requirements placed on Full Council for the appointment of Members to its Committees and Panels, and the appointment of their Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen. All Political Group Leaders were responsible for nominating Members from within their respective Groups to each of the Committees/Panels, in accordance with the political proportionality of the Authority as appropriate. Full Council were to appoint the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees.

During discussions, Members highlighted the following points:

- Seven of the proposed Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen were from the Conservative Group, who proportionally should occupy 40% of seats across Committees.
- A different calculation to decide political balance had been used, adding up all of the seats across ordinary committees and apportioning a percentage of seats to each political group. The previous calculation used appeared unfair to the smallest political groups on Council.

An amendment was proposed and seconded to recommendation 1 *“to revert to the previous formula for selecting individuals to serve on Committees”*.

In response to this it was noted that all eight group leaders had agreed to the new formula prior to the meeting and that the previous formula would have excluded the Labour and Co-operative Group and the Green Group from holding any seats on the Council outright. Upon holding the vote, the amendment **FELL**.

Debate ensued on the substantive motions:

- All members of Council had received a list of suggested members to take seats on Committees that had been agreed with political Group Leaders, which had been added to during the meeting. It was outlined that there were still some vacancies amongst the Committee and Panels; it was suggested these could be filled under delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders.
- The Leader outlined the list of Chairman and Vice-Chairman proposed within recommendation three and was content that they were suitable nominations as Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.
- A procedural motion was made by a Member for a 10-minute adjournment for consideration of the proposed individuals. This was seconded but on being put to the vote the proposal **FELL**.
- An amendment to the list of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen was proposed and seconded, which would see Councillor Charmaine Morgan continuing as the Chairman of the Planning Committee. The Leader of the Council confirmed that a rollcall vote could take place on an alternative candidate for this role.
- Following the change of the initially proposed Chairman, Councillor Byrd was proposed and seconded as the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, as was Councillor Penny Milnes, and this was subjected to a rollcall vote.
- The suggestion was made by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licencing for extra representation to be awarded to the Conservative Group on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Board, as the largest group. The Cabinet Member cited the success of this in the previous year and praised their contribution.
- The Chief Executive suggested a similar recommendation to that proposed for membership of committees for nominations to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Board. Therefore, the representatives could be discussed and agreed with group leaders.

Having been moved and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council:

- 1. Note the changes in political proportionality of the Council and the consequent allocation of seats on Committees (Appendix A of the report).**
- 2. Approves the appointments to Committees and Panels as agreed with the respective political Group Leaders. A delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant political Group Leaders was agreed to fill any remaining vacancies on committees.**
- 3. Approves the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen as follows:**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman - Councillor Murray Turner
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Barry Dobson

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman - Councillor Elvis Stooke
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Emma Baker

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman - Councillor Bridget Ley
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Gareth Knight

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman - Councillor Lee Steptoe
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Zoe Lane

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman - Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Rhea Rayside

Employment Committee

Chairman - Councillor Anna Kelly
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Gloria Johnson

Governance and Audit Committee

Chairman - Councillor Tim Harrison
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Paul Wood

Licensing Committee

Chairman - Councillor Paul Fellows
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Robert Leadenham

Planning Committee

Chairman - Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Penny Milnes

Standards Committee

Chairman - Councillor Pam Byrd
Vice-Chairman - Councillor Sarah Trotter

4. Delegates to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders the power to fill seats on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Board.

The meeting adjourned at 16.20 and resumed at 16.38.

11. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

The Council was presented with a report by the Chief Executive on the appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies.

Having been proposed and seconded and upon being put to the vote, appointments to outside bodies were **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

- 1. Appointed Councillor Ashley Baxter, as Leader of the Council, to East Midlands Councils and the Local Government Association outside bodies for one year.**
- 2. Delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with Group Leaders the decision to appoint a representative to the PATROL Joint Adjudication Committee outside body until May 2027.**
- 3. Appointed Councillor Pam Byrd as representative to the Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board outside body until March 2026.**
- 4. Appointed Councillor Matt Bailey as representative to the Grantham Almshouses Charity outside body until May 2027.**
- 5. Appointed Councillor Robert Leadenham as representative to the Grantham Canal Partnership outside body until May 2027.**
- 6. Appointed Councillor Rhea Rayside as representative to Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire Outside Body, replacing Councillor Phil Dilks.**
- 7. Noted the remaining appointments previously made within table two of the report, which would continue.**

12. Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/25

As Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee, Councillor Tim Harrison presented the Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/25.

Councillor Harrison outlined the work carried out by the Governance and Audit Committee over the previous year, identifying that, in February 2025, the Committee approved the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 along with the External Audit Year End Report 2023/24.

After being proposed and seconded, it was **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council:

- 1. Note the Annual Report of Governance and Audit Committee for 2024/2025.**
- 2. Approve the indicative workplan and timetable for 2025/2026.**

13. Budget Framework Amendments 2025/2026

The Budget Framework Amendments 2025/2026 was presented by the Leader of the Council.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- Clarity was requested about variations to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) account, particularly regarding a decrease in reroofing funds. The Director: Housing and Projects confirmed that a slight redistribution in funds was due to a recent stock condition survey concluding that not as many roofs required renovation as first thought.
- A similar query was raised about variations of disabled adaptations within the HRA budget. This was confirmed to be due to the budget being overestimated in previous years. However, this could be revisited if required in the future. The Cabinet Member for Housing also identified that higher historical spend had been due to contractor issues causing a backlog.

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council:

- 1. Accept a grant of £1,212,660 (revenue expenditure of £997,660 and capital expenditure of £215,000) plus £162,103 capital grant from the Rural England Prosperity Fund, from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for 2025/26 and amend the Budget Framework accordingly.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development, to approve the grant allocations and to undertake any necessary actions including: allocation of any uncommitted funds to specific interventions; and reallocation of funds and movement of revenue funds to capital expenditure.**

3. **Approve the UKSPF and Rural Prosperity Board Terms of Reference (Appendix B of the report).**
4. **Approve the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme and financing statement for 2025/26 (Appendix C of the report).**

14. Appointment of Independent Persons

The Appointment of Independent Persons report was presented by Councillor Anna Kelly, Chairman of the Employment Committee.

The report outlined the credentials of each candidate, noting their vast, yet differing experiences. It was also confirmed that both candidates had been endorsed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee following the recruitment process.

The report sought approval for the Independent Persons (IPs) to observe four-year terms.

It was proposed, seconded, and AGREED:

DECISION

That Full Council approve the appointment of Julie Byrom and Michael Turner as Independent Persons with immediate effect for a period of four years.

Councillors Rhea Rayside and Vanessa Smith left the Chamber.

15. Decisions Taken Under Urgency

The decisions taken under special urgency in 2024/2025 was introduced by the Leader of the Council.

The Council **NOTED** the decisions taken under special urgency in 2024/2025.

16. Members' Open Questions

Question One - Councillor Lee Steptoe to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Steptoe asked why the Homeland Party had been permitted to book the Bourne Corn Exchange during the pre-election period for a meeting, and what could be done to prevent this in future.

The Leader agreed to report back to Full Council following the conclusion of an investigation into this issue.

Question Two – Councillor Mark Whittington to the Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Whittington enquired about preparations for the upcoming anniversary of the passing of Isaac Newton.

The Deputy Leader of the Council confirmed that SKDC had been approached by The King's School, Grantham, who were taking the lead on celebrations and that discussions were still ongoing.

Question Three – Councillor Max Sawyer to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Sawyer sought reassurance of the safety of the HRA considering the approaching Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the steps taken to ensure that residents did not lose out due to any financial consolidation LGR imposed.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged that this would be a work-in-progress given the current status of LGR. However, the concerns were noted, and reassurance was given that the administration would continue to fight for the interests of SK residents and he would keep Full Council updated.

Question Four – Councillor Nikki Manterfield to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Manterfield requested the recently abolished role of Cabinet Member for People and Communities to be reinstated.

The Leader of the Council outlined that the responsibilities of this position had been redistributed amongst the Cabinet and the administration did not intend to reinstate the post.

Question Five - Councillor Sarah Trotter to the Cabinet Member for Planning

Clarification was sought about SKDC's position on battery energy storage systems within the district. Councillor Trotter asked how many of these sites were already sited in Lincolnshire and how many more had been applied for.

The Cabinet Member for Planning noted that there was not a specific policy, but any planning application would be judged on their individual planning merits. Furthermore, he would seek to confirm the specific number of sites to Councillor Trotter.

Question Six – Councillor Charmaine Morgan to the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Morgan asked the Leader to join her in thanking SKDC officers and external agencies in their collaborative work on flooding in the district.

The Leader of the Council echoed the gratitude and acknowledged the key role those parties played in preventing flooding.

17. Close of meeting

The meeting concluded at 17.40.