

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Wednesday, 16 October 2024 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Members: Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)
Councillor Steven Cunningham (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Pam Byrd, Councillor James Denniston, Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren, Councillor Robert Leadenham, Councillor Habibur Rahman, Councillor Vanessa Smith and Councillor Peter Stephens

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 interest in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 4. Minutes from the meeting held 10 July 2024** (Pages 3 - 18)

Published and dispatched by democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk on Tuesday, 8 October 2024.

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

5. **Updates from the previous meeting** (Page 19)
To receive updates on actions agreed at the previous meeting.
6. **Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**
7. **Prevent Update 2024** (Pages 21 - 34)
The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding South Kesteven District Council's delivery of the Prevent duty and to seek the Committee's recommendation to Cabinet to approve the draft venue hire policy which is attached as an appendix.
8. **Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement 2024** (Pages 35 - 51)
In response to the specific duty to publish information, Members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the draft 2023/34 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement and provide a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for People and Communities to publish the information.
9. **Health and Wellbeing Action Plan Update** (Pages 53 - 73)
To provide an update on the progress and delivery of the actions identified within the South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan
10. **Cost of Living Update** (Pages 75 - 92)
The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the activities undertaken by the Cost of Living Team, along with details of the financial support received (facilitated by the Cost of Living Team) for South Kesteven residents during 2023/24 and 2024/25.
11. **Customer Service update** (Pages 93 - 104)
The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding customer interactions and call handling within the Customer Service team and high contact service areas for 2024/25.
12. **Youth Council** (Pages 105 - 110)
This report aims to update the members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress and activities of the Youth Council of SKDC.
13. **Work Programme 2024 - 2025** (Pages 111 - 114)
To receive the Work Programme for 2024 – 2025
14. **Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Minutes

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 10 July 2024, 10.00 am

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



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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Committee Members present

Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)
Councillor Steven Cunningham (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor James Denniston
Councillor Robert Leadenhurst
Councillor Habibur Rahman
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Sarah Trotter

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Richard Cleaver (Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement)
Councillor Philip Knowles (Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing)
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Cabinet Member for People and Communities)

Other Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison

Officers

Graham Watts (Assistant Director of Governance and Public Protection, Monitoring Officer)
Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning)
Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community))
Ayeisha Kirkham (Head of Service – Public Protection)
Carol Drury (Community Engagement Manager)
Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance)
Charles James (Policy Officer)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)
Stephen Ellis (County Lines Development Officer - Lincolnshire Police)

69. Public Speaking

There were none.

70. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Vanessa Smith, Richard Dixon-Warren and Peter Stephens.

Councillor Charmaine Morgan substituted for Councillor Vanessa Smith.

Councillor Sarah Trotter substituted for Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren.

Councillor Graham Jeal substituted for Councillor Peter Stephens.

71. Disclosure of Interest

There were none.

72. Minutes from the Joint Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 March 2024

The minutes of the Joint Meeting held on 18 March 2024 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

73. Minutes from the meeting held on 28 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2024 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

74. Updates from the previous meeting

There were no actions agreed at the previous meeting.

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

There were none.

76. Police and Crime Panel Update

Councillor Sarah Trotter provided the Committee with a Police and Crime Panel update, as the Council's representative:

'Since I last spoke to you, our meetings have moved from Horncastle to County offices in Lincoln and on Thursday the 27 June I attended a very interesting presentation to the panel by officers from the East Midlands Special Operations Unit about the County Lines and I am delighted that one of the officers, PC Steve

Ellis, Development officer, has agreed to attend today and give us a shortened presentation.

Can I request if the committee or non-members have any questions to save them to the end of both presentations, and we will endeavor to answer or will provide written responses later. Equally so if you have any non-operational questions that you would like me to raise at the next Police & Crime Panel meeting, which is scheduled for 20 September, please can you email me.

For those of you new to the Rural and Communities OSC Committee, as in my previous overview, I thought it would helpful to just briefly explain the roles and responsibilities of both the

- *Commissioner,*
- *And the PCP & Chief Constable, currently the recently appointed Paul Gibson.*

Our current Police Commissioner for Lincolnshire, Marc Jones is scrutinized and supported by the PCP made up of 10 Councilor's from the County's eight local authorities and two independent (co-opted members).

- 1) *We can review the Commissioner's decisions and have the opportunity to question him.*
- 2) *We have the power of veto over any precept proposals, the choice of Chief Constable, and we are required to review the Police and Crime Plan before it is published.*

Marc Jones has the vital role in holding the Chief Constable to account for operational delivery on behalf of the people of Lincolnshire.

The Chief Constable must answer to the Commissioner in terms of delivering efficient and effective local policing to the people of Lincolnshire, and the way resources and spending are managed, as well as ensuring that the force is contributing to ensuring that policing capabilities are available to address national crime threats and cross-border criminality.

On Wednesday the 21st February, the panel met for an extraordinary meeting and were gathered to conduct a confirmation hearing for the PCC preferred candidate, Mr Paul Gibson, for the post of Chief Constable for Lincolnshire police. A variety of questions were posed to both the Commissioner and Mr Gibson.

On Friday the 28 June I attended the Panel Meeting, in Lincoln where a variety of questions were put to the Commissioner by panel members, concerns were raised at closure of certain policing hubs, the Commissioner reported that any decisions relating to this matter would be on hold due to the election and no changes would be made to at least the Autumn and a report would be published unless of sensitive material.

Another particular concern was in relation to the policing "funding formular" a guide to the calculations used to work out how much money is allocated to police forces.

The Commissioner has attempted to gain extra funding for Lincolnshire for eight years. The Police uplift nationally helped funding, however the formular itself is outdated, so hopefully post-election this can be reviewed, for the benefit of Lincolnshire, but there will always be winners and losers, nationally. Full written replies to questions posed will be in the published minutes for September.

Other matters discussed were the panel's rules of procedure, the Police & Crime Plan delivery update, the key principles within the plan

*Community Safety and Prevention in Partnership
Listening, responding and being accountable
Protecting and supporting victims and the vulnerable
Policing that works*

The delivery against the Police & Crime Plan, victim services better than ever before, with a new website, 11 additional staff and high praise from independent assessors, record number of police officers recruited, finances on an even keel and delivered the highest ever budget for policing in 2023. Investment in cutting edge technology to ensure Lincolnshire Police are equipped to fight 21st century crime.

Almost £11 million of additional funding brought in from Government to be spent on keeping our communities safe.

Thank you members for your patience and I am happy to take any questions but please can I ask they be kept to the minimum to enable our guest speaker PC Steve Ellis to have sufficient time to deliver his presentation and take questions at the end, as you would imagine his time is precious and we are very lucky that he has taken time out to attend our meeting today.'

One Member queried whether there had been any indication from central Government on whether the funding for Police forces would be increased in size.

It was clarified that the funding formula for Lincolnshire Police was considerably lower than Police forces in large cities. It was noted that central Government had a priority on Neighborhood Policing.

A query was raised on whether any indication had been given to the Police and Crime Panel that the new Chief Constable would review their predecessors policy on the recruitment and deployment of PCSO's.

The Police and Crime Commissioner was reviewing the policy on the recruitment and deployment of PCSO's.

The County Lines Development Officer for Lincolnshire Police provided a verbal presentation to the Committee:

The Officer's role was to deliver training and awareness sessions to partners and professionals, as well as families.

County Lines was a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

The Children’s Commissioner for England believes that at least 27,000 children were county lines gang members. An additional 120,000 children – one in every 25 teens in England – may experience broader risk factors associated with exploitation.

There were many aspects as to why individuals became involved and exploited to county lines:

- *To feel apart of something/family group/organisation.*
- *Fear of receiving threats of violence.*
- *Protection or being shielded from other forms of violence.*
- *Love.*
- *Debt bondage.*
- *Career opportunity and lure of making money.*

‘Cuckooing’ was a term used to describe the practice where County lines or drug dealers/Crime Gangs take over the property of another person and use it as a place from which to run their drugs business/ crime activity. They will deal and/ or store drugs cash and weapons from the address.

The criminals may target those who are vulnerable, potentially because of substance abuse, mental health issues, financial issues, Learning Disability or loneliness, and befriend them or promise them drugs in exchange for being able to use their property. The gangs often sent vulnerable young people and adults from their own area to stay at a house and distribute the drugs, again often intimidating and threatening them to stay.

Reachable moments were outlined:

- *Children and vulnerable adults may often fluctuate between being “willing workers on a county line and, after a beating or when they have a drug debt, become aware of the risk and exploitation and want to leave”.*
- *This seemed to mirror the type of exploitation involved in other types of violent and coercive control such as domestic abuse.*
- *There were some ‘reachable moments’ in this cycle where interventions from statutory and/or Voluntary sector organisation could enable the individual to avoid getting further entrenched and, ideally, to exit the activity.*

Lincolnshire Police followed the 4 P approach:

- *Pursue – Arrest, warrants, seizing drugs, weapons, cash etc.*
- *Prevent – Preventing individuals becoming involved or continuing to be involved.*
- *Protect – Protecting victims.*

- *Prepare – Reduce the impact of harm.*

Concern was raised on issues within prison service and the blockages. It was queried whether the impact was affecting how Lincolnshire Police operate.

The County Lines Development Officer for Lincolnshire Police dealt with County Lines alone and therefore could not provide any update on prison services. He was aware that prison services were under scrutiny.

One Member noted a recent drug related event that had taken place in Bourne, whereby an individual was murdered. Furthermore, concern was raised around the growing number of drugs being traded in Bourne in line with the reduction in PCSO's.

It was queried whether increased community policing would assist County Lines Officers in drug containment and the selling of drugs.

The County Lines Development Officer was very passionate about community policing and the importance it had. There were challenges within community policing on numbers.

The Head of Service - Public Protection confirmed that the team had a close working relationship with Lincolnshire Police. The team would liaise with Inspector Mark Hillson, where direct concerns on community policing could be addressed.

A query was raised whether the CCTV for South Kesteven was supportive in terms of intelligence and arrests on County Lines cases.

The County Lines Development Officer highlighted that CCTV was important for the prevention of crime as well as arrests, however, he was not familiar with the CCTV provision for South Kesteven.

Members raised concern on knife crime, it was queried whether Lincolnshire Police had seen an increase in knife crimes.

It was noted that knife crime had increased nationally and locally.

77. Corporate Plan 2020-23 Key Performance Indicators End-of-Plan and 2023/24 End-Year (Q4) Report

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Licensing presented the report that outlined the performance of the Council against the Corporate Plan 2020-23 and part Q4 for 2023/24.

The Corporate Plan 2020-23 listed eight actions across the priorities Healthy & Strong Communities, and High Performing Council, which fell within the remit of this Committee. These actions set the Council's agenda for the life of that Plan.

The first round of performance reporting in 2020/21 introduced a series of criteria for what successful delivery would look like. This criterion has been used as a measure to judge the Council's overall performance against the stated actions.

The Council achieved seven out of eight stated actions that were set in 2021.

In Q4 for 2023-24, six actions were presented, four were rated green and two of the actions were rated amber.

The new KPI suite with proposed targets for 2024-27 was presented to, considered, and approved by the Committee on 28 March 2024. The first report for those KPIs would be presented in Q3 of 2024/25.

A query was raised on safeguarding matters and whether issues with Council housing were dealt with internal within the Housing department.

The Community Engagement Manager confirmed that all safeguarding matters were dealt with in the same system and procedure. Safeguarding concerns around anti-social behaviour with tenants were dealt with the Neighbourhoods Team.

That the Committee:

- 1. Review and scrutinise the performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators in relation to the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2020-23 priorities and outcomes.**
- 2. Use this report to inform and support the ongoing work programme of the Committee.**

78. UKSPF Update

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Licensing presented the report.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and has provided £2.6 billion of funding for local investment between April 2022 and March 2025. It aimed to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK by investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills. The UKSPF replaces the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) was a top-up to the UKSPF and succeeds EU funding from LEADER and the Growth Programme which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England. The REPF supports capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure. The programme seeks to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. It is complementary to funding used to support rural areas under the UKSPF, with the funding period running from April 2023 to March 2025. Lead local authorities, such as South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) have flexibility over how they deliver the UKSPF and REPF.

In respect to the REPF South Kesteven had been awarded a total of £540,460 in funding for projects which would have to be delivered by the end of the programme, March 31st 2025.

- Year 2: £135,115 was awarded in the financial year 2023 / 2024
- Year 3: £405,345 was awarded in the financial year 2024/ 2025

The Year 2 allocation within the REPF (1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024) was as follows:

- Supporting Rural Business
 - Intervention 1.1 - £60,115 (capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro & small enterprises in rural area.)
 - Intervention 1.3 - £25,000 (capital grant funding for developing and promoting the visitor economy)
- Supporting Rural Communities
 - Intervention 2.4 - £50,000 (capital grant funding for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offers)

The Year 3 allocation within the REPF (1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025) was as follows:

- Supporting Rural Business
 - Intervention 1.1 - £180,345 (capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro & small enterprises in rural area.)
 - Intervention 1.3 - £75,000 (capital grant funding for developing and promoting the visitor economy)
- Supporting Rural Communities
 - Intervention 2.1 - £100,000 (capital grant funding for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.)
 - Intervention 2.4 - £50,000 (capital grant funding for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer)

To date the UKSPF Board has recommended three applications for approval, totalling £110,301.66. A further have been deferred to return to the July 2024 board for reconsideration, totalling £140,000.

The REPF programme has nine months left to run. If the fund was not spent then it will likely have to be returned to the Government. The recommendations were therefore focused on making every effort to distribute the funding to high quality projects which achieve valuable and value for money outputs in the Council's rural communities.

One Member queried when the deadline for Parish Council bids were.

The UKSPF meeting in July 2024 had applications that were already in production. The following meeting would be held in September 2024, where new projects would

be discussed. Parish Council's were encouraged to contact the Council for guidance on the process of bid applications.

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes the progress made with the UK Shared Prosperity – Rural England Prosperity Fund and the supports opportunities identified to expedite the distribution of the funding.**

79. SK Community Fund – Proposed Amendments March 2024

The Cabinet Member for People and Communities presented the report.

The SK Community Fund was first introduced in 2015 with the Small Grants Scheme added in 2016. It was important that the application process, including the assessment and funding criteria were regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The criteria had been reviewed and some proposed changes to the funding criteria had been identified.

The proposed amendments put to committee were:

Re-introduction of the Community Buildings Category to the criteria of the fund

- The category was temporarily removed in 2023. The change was agreed in light of the many alternative sources of funding available to organisations operating village and community halls to carry out such work. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund also created an overlap of funding for such projects, however, this was shortly coming to an end so the category was recommended for re-introduction to the Fund's criteria. Whilst alternative sources of funding existed, grants from the SK Community Fund could be used as supporting funding for larger projects.

Introduction of an additional offer within the Community Amenities category to cover monuments and war memorials

- The Community Engagement Team is often approached by groups looking to renovate such structures and, whilst the maximum grant offered through the SK Community Fund is unlikely to be sufficient to carry out significant work, a grant could support a larger bid or possibly pay for an architect's report where required.

A tightening up on eligibility for projects related to highways to specifically remove such items as speed signage/cameras and village signs from the criteria at the request of the Awarding Panel

- This change was a direct request from the Awarding Panel who felt that projects should be funded by those responsible for highways or via a parish

precept since the SK Community Fund was established to support projects that had wider community benefit.

A tightening up on eligibility of applications from Parish and Town Councils and Parish Meetings to state that projects that are parish-specific should be supported through the Precept process

- The condition that Parish and Town Council's should utilise their precept rather than seeking community funding has always been in the criteria of the fund. This change was simply a change of wording to underline the fact that, if the project is only of benefit to a specific location (like, for example, the village signage mentioned earlier), the precept should be the first option to fund the endeavour.

It was highlighted that smaller Parish Council's utilised their precepts on the maintenance of the village and may not have monies left over for village signage.

One Member noted that Denton Parish Council had a precept of £6,200. Denton Parish Council had to save over the last four years for white speed gates, which would cost £4,000 per gate and four were required.

The importance of speed prevention within Denton village was outlined and that applications for speed signs should be supported within the Community Fund criteria.

A Member informed the Committee of a community speed watch, where 20 volunteers had taken part for a few hours a week during busy periods of events taking place at Belvoir Castle. During a busy event at Belvoir Castle, over 9000 vehicles travelled through Denton. During a week of community speed watch, 56 speeding motorists were caught, two of which were doing within excess of 70mph in a 30mph zone.

The Community Engagement Manager clarified that the Community Fund would still be available to Town/Parish Council's for projects and events that offered wider community benefit, however the precept should be the first step for specific Parish projects.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement informed the Committee that the Lincolnshire County Council Highways website stated that equipment purchased for community speed watches had to be purchased through Town/Parish Councils.

Town/Parish Councils were encouraged to plan their precepts, at least a year in advance, in order to receive match funding.

Grantham Town Council had only recently been established and therefore were on a backfoot in regard to road safety, speeding etc. It was noted that they had a very small precept for a large population and large road network.

Several Members did not agree with the proposed amendments on the change of wording on applications received from Town/Parish Councils be included within the SK Community Fund.

One Member stated that it would cost a Town/Parish Council £2,000 to join Lincolnshire Road Partnership. It was clarified that there was no joining fee. Parishes could start a speed watch group via the Partnership who would provide the equipment required and up to 6 passive roadside notices. Additional notices could be purchased at a cost of £20 each. Wheelie bin stickers could also be purchased at a cost of 50p each. Electronic signs were £2,000 each.

One Member suggested that workshops be set up with Officers and Parish Council's to assist them in planning ahead on precepts.

Councillor Robert Leadenhurst invited Committee Members to a community speed watch training session which was being held by Lincolnshire Road Partnership at Harlaxton Village Hall at 7:45pm on Monday 15 July 2024.

It was highlighted that the purpose of the community fund was to prioritise issues of loneliness, social and rural isolation, mental health and wellbeing.

Speeding fell outside the remit of the community fund; however, the Committee were keen to discuss issues around speeding in a workshop environment.

The Community Engagement Team had access to a database, whereby 4,000 different funds could be explored for various types of funding so support could be given to identify alternative sources for such projects.

One Member suggested that the Committee review issues of speeding and invite a representative of the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership to give a presentation if a workshop was set up to explore this matter further.

ACTION: For further discussion around road safety and speeding in communities to be added to the Work Programme.

The Community Engagement Manager highlighted that funding workshops and fairs were delivered by the Community Engagement Team in community settings four times a year. Parish and Town Councils could attend if they required information on funding opportunities available to them for any type of community project.

The Committee thanked Officers for all their hard work.

ACTION:For the Committee to discuss the impact of the Forbidden Forest Festival on South Kesteven's rural communities.

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

- 1. Comments on the changes proposed to the criteria of the SK Community Fund.**
- 2. Recommends the Cabinet Member for People and Communities approves the changes proposed to the criteria of the SK Community Fund.**

80. Community Engagement Update

This report was presented at the request of the Committee Chairman.

It was the first in a series of reports that were linked to work undertaken by the Community Engagement Team.

Going forward, the reports would be themed and based on activities outlined in the Action Plan of the Council's Community Engagement and Development Strategy.

The report provided a retrospective update on community engagement for 2023/24, based on activities that promoted wellbeing, positive mental health and help to reduce social isolation.

This work was underpinned by the commitment shown within our Corporate Plan under the key priority of "Connecting Communities".

The report was provided for information and officers were present should members of the committee have any questions.

One Member highlighted the importance of events taking place. It was requested that a programme of events be provided for Members to inform their communities of events taking place.

The Community Engagement Manager clarified that all activities were outlined within the Council's Action Plan, which had been considered by Committee.

ACTION: For the Community Engagement Action Plan to be sent to all Members

The Community Engagement Manager provided a verbal update on work undertaken in support of the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant:

'As Members will be aware, our engagement and advocacy work to support our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant is a very important and integral part of the work we do as a Community Engagement Team. You might also be aware that, apart from anything else - this year marks the 80th Anniversary of two significant offensives in WW2. Those being, of course, D Day and Arnhem.'

You will, as ever, get an annual review of activities related to our Armed Forces work later in the year but, with your agreement, I'd just like to mention a few significant things that have happened or are planned to happen this year.

D-Day Commemorations

Three well-attended, hosted, information walks (30 May, 5 June and 13 July). These have taken place at RAF North Witham, now known as Twyford Wood near Colsterworth, location for a top-secret pre-D Day American Pathfinders mission, laying the markers behind the German lines to guide the incoming invasion. An associated talk was also held in the Guildhall Arts Centre on June 6. All were delivered by Brian Riley, military heritage specialist.

A significant D-Day commemoration was also organised on 8 June at RAF Saltby, hugely significant for American forces on D-Day. There was a commemorative service, military re-enactors, talks, heritage vehicles and the Airborne Forces Riders.

It was attended by the Chairman of SKDC, Chief Executive and our Cabinet Member. It was also attended by serving and retired American military, including the current commander of 314 Air Lift Wing (modern day equivalent of the US 9th Troop Carrier Command who flew paratroopers from Saltby for D-Day), Col John Tucker and his Command Chief, Sgt Cameron Davis were with us. Two days earlier Col Tucker had flown the lead aircraft in the Cherbourg flypast. After that, they made the journey to the UK specially for the event at Saltby, with Col Tucker calling it the honour of his career.

Coming Up

15 – 17 August

Digging Market Garden. This is an archaeological dig at Fulbeck Manor. SKDC is working in partnership with Oxford University and the University of Lincoln in conjunction with Wings to the Past. The dig is intended to illustrate the presence locally of Allied paratroopers pre-Arnhem – specifically British First Airborne on this site whose commander, Maj General Roy Urquart was billeted at this site during 1944.

6 – 8 September

There will be an event in Caythorpe, 216 Signals Parachute Squadron - Arnhem Reunion.

Saturday 7 September would be a village gala.

The Sunday has a High Street Parade and commemorative service in St Vincent's Church (St Vincent's Church is shrine to airborne forces and 216 Signals' spiritual home, forged in 1944)

SKDC was contributing to heritage displays + re-enactors + D Day Darlings

11 - 12 October

*156 Parachute Regiment Reunion at RAF Saltby.
Talks, Dinner 11 October and service 12 October.*

*156 Para regiment was decimated at Arnhem to the extent that it was disbanded and merged with 1 Para on return (1 Para HQ at Grimsthorpe Castle)
SKDC contributing talks / video of D-Day Commemoration 8 June, plus re-enactors*

25 October

Arnhem80 – St Wulfram’s Church.

Evening of Commemoration for 80th anniversary.

Band of the Welsh Guards, speakers and stories of Arnhem’s unique local backstories of British, American and Polish airborne forces’ collaboration and training in the build up to battle – and their departure from local airfields.’

One Member requested the events in a date order format.

ACTION: For the Community Engagement Manager to provide a programme of events in a date order format.

That the Committee:

1. Notes the content of the report and provides comment on the activity contained.

81. CCTV (Verbal Update)

The Head of Service – Public Protection provided a verbal update on CCTV.

In March 2024, Cabinet approved the contract award for the Upgrade of CCTV network and to enable connected towns, including the provision of wireless hubs. The project includes upgrading the existing analogue network across the town centers of Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and Market Deeping. This upgrade will also include free to access public Wi-Fi networks across the IP fibre network which will help position the council as a digital enabler, supporting digital inclusion.

As part of this project the CCTV Control room will be moved to the Grantham Police Station, which will have a number of benefits including increased partnership working with the police. The control room equipment will be upgraded to include a new milestone management platform, new workstations and a video wall.

BT was awarded the contract, and the project has commenced following the Cabinet approval. Weekly meetings have been arranged with BT to manage the progression of the project.

All equipment has been ordered and scheduled to be received at BT’s engineering base in August 2024, there it will be tested and pre-configured as much as possible to reduce installation time on site.

The delivery project plan is complete, identifying resources, individual items of work, grouped into schedules of delivery and dependencies so that the BT project manager can tightly control the planned works and mitigate any slippage, and risk assessments and method statements have been completed.

The Control Room design is approved and in manufacturing. Liaisons and updates are active with Council and Police IT, SKDC & Lincolnshire County Council for street works, wayleaves and street column permissions. New fibre circuits are on order with Openreach and the public Wi-Fi coverage is agreed and will be delivered alongside the CCTV works. We are currently negotiating the lease agreements at the Police Station.

The project is on plan, with CCTV proposed to be re-located to the Grantham Police Headquarters in Autumn of 2024. We look forward to updating you as the project continues to progress and inviting you to a grand opening once complete later in the year.

Concern was raised around the need for more CCTV coverage. It was queried how additional CCTV cameras should be requested.

In terms of making requests on the provision of additional CCTV, Officers had to consider whether all other potential avenues had been explored prior to installing CCTV. Going forward, requests for additional CCTV would be reviewed.

It was queried whether the new technology at the Police Station would have the capacity to support more CCTV cameras in the future.

It was confirmed that the technology had been upgraded and would have the capacity to support more CCTV cameras in the future.

The Chairman queried whether the project was on time to be delivered in Autumn 2024.

The target for delivery was September/October 2024. If the project fell off-target, a further update would be brought to the Committee.

82. Work Programme 2024-25

The Committee noted the Work-Programme 2024 - 25.

Members requested the following items to be brought to Committee meeting in the future.

- Parish Council Workshop.
- Impact of the Forbidden Forest Festival on South Kesteven's rural communities.
- KPI report.
- Crime Disorder meeting.

Councillor Charmine suggested a verbal update be brought to the Committee in December 2024 for the following:

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

There were none.

84. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:52.

Action Sheet

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Actions from meeting of 10 July 2024

Min no	Agenda item	Action	Assigned to	Comments/Status	Deadline
79	SK Community Fund – Proposed Amendments March 2024	For further discussion around road safety and speeding in communities to be added to the Work Programme.	Added to Work Programme by Democratic Services	. Complete	
79	SK Community Fund – Proposed Amendments March 2024	For the Committee to discuss the impact of the Forbidden Forest Festival on South Kesteven's rural communities and to be added to the Work Programme.	Added to Work Programme by Democratic Services	Complete	
80	Community Engagement Update	For the Community Engagement Manager to provide a programme of events in a date order format.	Carol Drury (Community Engagement Manager)	Complete	

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 16 October 2024

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside,
Cabinet Member for People &
Communities

Prevent Update 2024

Report Author

Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information on South Kesteven District Council's delivery of the Prevent duty and to seek the Committee's recommendation to Cabinet to approve the draft Venue Hand External Speaker Policy.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the content of this report and provide any comments.**
- 2. Recommend to Cabinet the approval of the Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy.**

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Connecting communities
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 There are no specific financial comments arising from this report.

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 which are not already referenced in the body of the report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 Putting in place a venue hire and external speaker policy will help to minimise risk in relation to use of properties owned and operated by the Council. By providing relevant training relating to awareness of Prevent the Council further mitigates risk by ensuring officers and elected Members are aware of responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.4 The provision of Prevent training and community engagement is strongly aligned with statutory obligations and responsibilities the Council holds under the Health and Safety at Work 1974 and relevant legislation associated with the Act.

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Health, Safety and Compliance Manager

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 Since its introduction in 2003, concerns have been raised within some communities that Prevent is sometimes implemented in ways which undermine fundamental rights and freedoms, stifle free speech, lead to discrimination, and stigmatise or alienate sections of the population.

- 1.6 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 1.7 The Prevent Duty, which was introduced in 2015, also places the duty of 'due regard' on public bodies to ensure actions relating to Prevent are delivered in an appropriate, proportionate and fair way.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager.

Safeguarding

- 1.8 Prevent sits within the safeguarding arena and its processes ensure that those susceptible to grooming are protected from harm. Prevent forms part of SKDC's Safeguarding Policy and so is supported by the Council's Safeguarding officers and through training for officers and Members.

Completed by: Sarah McQueen, Head of Service Housing

2. Background to the Report

The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 for its residents to have the opportunities to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, in safe neighbourhoods. This report highlights this commitment through work undertaken to deliver against the Prevent Duty.

- 2.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 created a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. This duty applies to all public bodies (local authorities, police, the National Health Service (NHS), schools, further and higher education providers, probation, prisons and youth offending services). The duty also applies to private providers supplying public functions for example, in the education sector. Previously, the lead responsibility for Prevent lay with the police, however since 2016, local authorities have had the lead as Prevent interventions are focused in the 'pre criminal space'. In Lincolnshire, the lead authority is the County Council, however, District Authorities are also required under law to meet the Prevent Duty.
- 2.2 The National Threat Level for the UK, assessed by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, has remained at *Substantial* since February 2022 (meaning an attack remains likely). Therefore, awareness of Prevent, the ability to recognise potential concerns and knowing when and to whom those concerns should be raised, are vital in the prevention of radicalisation and terrorism.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Under the Prevent Duty, local authorities are expected to ensure appropriate frontline staff, including those of its contractors, have a good understanding of Prevent, are trained to recognise where a person might be susceptible to becoming radicalised into terrorism, and are aware of available programmes to provide support. It is important, therefore, to ensure that community-facing officers keep up-to-date with the requirements to “notice, check and share” in relation to Prevent. The Council provides training for both officers and elected Members to raise awareness of Prevent, understand requirements for making referrals and outlines the support available through Channel. Training is provided either in-person or, for those unable to attend these sessions, a Home Office e learning training package is available. For officers a training module must be renewed every three years. 330 officers are currently trained in Prevent. For elected Members of South Kesteven District Council, this training has also become a mandatory requirement and training must be completed annually. 45 of the Council’s 56 elected Members have completed the required training at the time of writing this report.

3.2 Prevent falls within the safeguarding arena. The grooming of susceptible individuals into radicalisation and extreme ideologies is regarded as a safeguarding concern and must be addressed as such. The referral pathways are different, yet the principles are the same. Chapter 6 of the Council’s Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is therefore dedicated to the Authority’s responsibilities under Prevent. A link to this policy can be found at point 6 of this report – Background Papers.

3.3 Prevent operates in the non-criminal space. This means working with individuals who have not yet committed a crime yet are susceptible to radicalisation in whatever form that takes.

3.4 Prevent has three objectives. They are:

- to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it
- to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they receive appropriate advice and support
- to work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which require addressing.

3.5 The Prevent Duty requires Local authorities to have multi-agency arrangements in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of Prevent work and provide strategic governance. The Duty is further supported by the Local Authority Prevent Toolkit. A link to both these documents can be found at section 6 – Background Papers.

3.6 Overall governance of Prevent in Lincolnshire is undertaken by the Prevent Steering Group (PSG), chaired and administrated by Lincolnshire County Council. Membership includes representatives from:

- The seven District Councils
- Children’s Service and Adult Service Directorates

- Counter Terrorism Policing East Midlands (Prevent)
- Lincolnshire Police
- Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue
- Probation and Prison Service
- Ministry of Defence
- Local health partners
- Department of Education
- Lincoln College, Bishop Grosseteste and Lincoln University
- Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service, Every One and JUST Lincolnshire.

3.7 These agencies are identified as 'specified authorities' under the Prevent Duty and therefore have an individual and collective responsibility to give due regard to Prevent.

3.8 The Steering Group meets quarterly with high attendance levels from all agencies. This group reports into the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership.

3.9 The Duty also requires the Council to have measures in place to ensure our facilities are not exploited by radicalisers. This includes ensuring that any event spaces, publicly-owned venues and resources or IT equipment are not being used to facilitate the spread of extremist narratives which can reasonably be linked to terrorism, such as narratives used to encourage people into participating in or supporting terrorism.

3.10 Section 134 of the Prevent Duty states that "Local authorities should have a policy, based on local risk assessments, that clearly articulates the activities and behaviours of a group or person which may make them subject to restrictions on access to publicly-owned venues and resources. The policy should articulate relevant considerations for awarding contracts for the delivery of local authority services. It is important that the policy is embedded throughout the local authority".

3.11 To this end, a Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy has been developed in collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council. A draft of the Policy can be found at Appendix A.

3.12 The Policy is supported by an advice document which sets out responsible event booking guidance. This document can be found at Appendix B.

3.13 The adoption of this Policy will provide additional assurance that the Council's venue hire procedures are robust and will work to minimise the risk of allowing permissive environments within our own properties.

3.14 Members of Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to review these draft documents, provide comment and agree the recommendation as set out at start of this report.

3.15 Officers will continue to monitor Prevent legislation and statutory guidance. Any changes relating to the duty placed on the District Council will be implemented and will form part subsequent updates to this Committee.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 To not have a Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy in place. This was discounted as it is a statutory requirement for the Council to meet the Prevent Duty.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1. To ensure Members have an overview of responsibilities of a Local Authority and to further ensure that the Council meets the duties placed upon it by the Prevent Duty 2023.

6. Background Papers

6.1 [Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales](#)
6.2 [Prevent duty toolkit for Local Authorities](#)
6.3 [South Kesteven District Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedure](#)

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – Draft Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy
7.2 Appendix B – Draft Responsible Event Booking Advice Document

**VENUE HIRE
AND
EXTERNAL SPEAKER POLICY**



**SOUTH KESTEVEN
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Legal Context	3
3. Objectives.....	3
4. Freedom of speech and expression	4
5. Hiring an External Venue	4
6. South Kesteven District Council Venue Hire	4
7. External Speakers	5
8. Policy Review	5
9. Further information	6

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1. Introduction

South Kesteven District Council (the Council) is committed to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and where diversity is valued.

This policy details the Council's approach to ensuring that we protect our staff, elected members and our community whilst following legislation that we are responsible for upholding.

2. Legal Context

Local authorities operate in a complex legal environment so it is vital that all individuals involved in the hire of Council venues and external speaker process, including the speakers themselves, understand the legal framework and context that governs this area.

Examples of some of the relevant areas of law are given below.

- Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Prevent Duty states that authorities in the exercise of their functions must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism"
- Private rights – people are entitled to protection from harassment, defamation and unlawful breach of their human rights, as well as from unfair treatment under equality law, health and safety law and data protection
- Criminal law – hate crimes, harassment and breach of the peace and terrorism all come under criminal law
- Public law – freedom of speech and some duties under the Equality Act are captured under public law.

3. Objectives

The Council is expected to ensure that publicly owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. The Council must not allow its venues to be used by those whose views would draw people into terrorism.

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide an environment where freedom of expression and speech are protected whilst balanced with the need to ensure that our community is free from harm and that incitement to hatred is never acceptable
- To provide a supportive, inclusive and safe environment for staff, elected members and the community
- To provide clearly defined and effective procedures to ensure that the law is upheld
- To provide clear instructions for organising an event with external contribution or using one of the Council's venues.

4. Freedom of speech and expression

This section details the Council's expectations around freedom of speech and expression.

- Freedom of speech and expression are basic human rights that are protected by law
- The Council has a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of staff, elected members and the community.
- The freedom to express views needs to be balanced with the need to secure freedom from harm for staff, elected members and communities
- The Council wants to ensure that all of our events, activities and initiatives are safe, without risk to the Council or wider community, and are within the law.

5. Hiring an External Venue for Council Events

The Council has a duty to ensure that when hiring an external venue for events that Council organisers, volunteers and any participants involved in the organisation of the event are protected from radical and extremist views.

The external venue must not provide a platform for extremists and must not be used to disseminate extremist views. The external venue must not allow its premises to be used by those whose views would draw people into terrorism.

The Council reserves the right to cancel the booking at a Council venue if it finds that the venue is in breach of the law.

6. South Kesteven District Council Venue Hire

External clients hiring a Council venue will be made aware of this policy and that the Council will not permit its accommodation to be let:

- for political rallies or demonstrations which incite hatred or violence or any breach of criminal law and/or spread hatred and intolerance
- for purposes which are illegal i.e. be they forbidden by law or unauthorised by official or accepted rules
- for functions attended by people whose presence may cause civil unrest or division within the community
- to an organisation or individual which has been banned by law.

The Responsible Event Booking Guidance document should be completed for all bookings by an external hirer.

The Council reserves the right to cancel any booking where it considers:

- such events may be contrary to the interest of the general public or contrary to any law or act of Parliament
- bookings may also be subject to consideration from the police to ensure the safety of the community is assessed against the request for a venue booking
- users of the premises may do something that may cause or pose a risk of loss, damage or significant expense to the Council or harm the reputation of the Council.

South Kesteven District Council is committed to creating a community which is safe and inclusive, where facilities and activities are available to diverse groups of people having access to similar life opportunities, knowing their rights and responsibilities and where local institutions act fairly.

To this purpose, no individuals or groups will be denied the opportunity for access to local authority managed properties unless there is a justifiable reason to do so within the spirit of this policy.

7. External Speakers

The Council expects external speakers to act in accordance with the law and not to breach the lawful rights of others.

Set out below are some of the Council's expectations. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of unacceptable conduct by external speakers.

The Council reserves the right to not permit an external speaker to speak at or attend an event, to refuse to permit an event and/or to halt an event at any time if it reasonably considers there may be a breach of this policy or of any legal obligation.

During the course of the event at which he or she participates the speaker must not:

- act in breach of criminal law
- incite hatred or violence or any breach of criminal law
- encourage or promote any acts of terrorism or promote individuals, groups or organisations that support terrorism
- spread hatred and intolerance
- discriminate against or harass any person or group on the grounds of their sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, disability, religious or similar belief, sexual orientation or age
- defame any person or organisation
- raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the Council.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the lead officer for Prevent unless there is internal or legislative changes that necessitates an earlier review.

Review Date: October 2025.

9. Further information

- Prevent at South Kesteven District Council
Information on [Preventing Extremism](#) can be found on the South Kesteven District Council website and at Chapter 6 of the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures 2024/2027
- Prevent at Lincolnshire Police
prevent@lincs.pnn.police.uk
Information on [Preventing Extremism](#) can be found on the Lincolnshire Police website

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Responsible event booking guidance

Advice and good practice for community venues

Follow the steps below to mitigate the risk of undesirable bookings. This document is not a definitive list and should be used in conjunction with other checking mechanisms.

ASK What's planned and who's planning it?

1. Who is the individual or organisation booking the event?
 - ask for their name and any associated names they operate under
 - ask for their address and a phone number
 - get details of the individual or organisation's website and associated websites
2. Do they implement a policy that promotes equality and diversity and challenges all forms of discrimination? Or will they agree to their event subscribing to your equality and diversity policy?
3. Ask for details of the event including: theme; title; agenda; content; speakers; expected audience numbers and demographics; details of how the event will be promoted (ask for copies of flyers/posters etc.); is the event open to the public or invite only? If the customer is not a local resident, establish why they are holding an event in this area?

CHECK Undertake due diligence to confirm what you've been told and find out more.

1. Run a check on the individual/organisation/speakers by:
 - viewing their websites, articles or speeches
 - considering what other people are saying about them (articles/blogs etc.)
 - check the government's list of known terrorist groups: [Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terrorist-groups-and-organisations)
 - If a charity, check their number at [charitycommission.gov.uk](https://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)
2. Ask for a reference from a venue provider previously used by the individual/organisation.
3. If you are still concerned with the answers provided by the customer, speak to your manager or SKDC's Prevent Lead carol.drury@southkesteven.gov.uk

DECIDE

Do you let the event go ahead? If the booking is identified as controversial the relevant **Head of Service** will make the final decision on whether to accept or cancel the booking.

If accepted, do you still need to take any action to reduce the risks?



Who wants to use the venue? This information should be collected at the point of enquiry from organisations or individuals requesting to book the venue

Name of event				
Date of event:		Time of event:		Is this a repeat booking?
Name and contact details for person requesting the booking (inc. org. / group / charity they represent):				
Event type e.g. engagement, conference, fundraiser, consultation, meeting:			Approximate number of people attending	
Name and contact details of main speaker (inc organisation / group / charity they represent):				
Name and contact details of all other speakers (inc organisation / group / charity they represent):				
Brief outline of what the event will be about				
How is attendance at the event being arranged? (Tick relevant box)		Invite only <input type="checkbox"/>	Open invite however attendees will need to book onto the event <input type="checkbox"/>	Open invite- Open to members of the public <input type="checkbox"/>
How is the event being advertised? (word of mouth, social media, flyers, website etc):			Will the media be present? YES/NO	Is the event going to be segregated? YES/NO
Please provide the contact details for a venue you have held an event at previously (Advise that you may contact)		Name: Tel number/ Email:		



Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 16 October 2024

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside
Cabinet Member for People and
Communities

Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement 2024

Report Author

Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

✉ carol.drury@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

In response to the specific duty to publish information, Members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the draft 2023/34 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement and provide a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for People and Communities to publish the information.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider the draft 2023/24 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement and provide comment on the content.
2. Recommend to the Cabinet Member for People and Communities that the Statement is published following consideration of any feedback received.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Connecting communities
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 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

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

Legal and Governance

1.2. The public sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) came into force in 2011. The Equality Duty applies to public bodies and others carrying out public functions. It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities, helping them to deliver policies and services which are accessible to all and which meet different people's needs.

1.3. The Equality Duty is supported by specific duties, set out in regulations. The specific duties require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty and to set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

1.4. The requirement to publish equality information must be met at least annually. This helps to ensure the information published is up-to-date and relevant. The benefits of collecting, using and publishing robust equality information includes:

- helping to identify greatest equality challenges so these inequalities can be addressed

- having relevant data to enable decision-makers to fully understand how their policies and decision impact on people with difference protect characteristics, including outcomes of individuals
- finding ways to mitigate any adverse impact identified
- maximising opportunities for advancing equality and fostering good relations
- enabling the setting of equality objectives based on robust evidence of the key challenges for staff and service users
- having baseline data available for measuring progress in delivering equality objectives, so improving outcomes for individuals with projected characteristics.

1.5. The benefits to employees and services users includes:

- greater transparency about the Council's equality performance regarding employment and service delivery
- Helping them to understand the rationale behind difficult decisions being taken by the Council
- Enabling them to hold the Council to account for its performance on equality.

1.6. Equality impact is identified through the production of this document. In producing the Annual Position Statement, the Council is able to identify potential areas of workforce under representation and highlight good practice. The Annual Position Statement aims to improve awareness of equality responsibilities and further embed those responsibilities within the Council's working practices.

Completed by Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

2. Background to the Report

2.1 This report is brought to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to present the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement for 2023/24.

2.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on public sector organisations when exercising public functions to have due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance opportunities for people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't share it.

2.3 These are known as the three aims of the Equality Duty.

2.4 Two further specific duties are placed on public sector organisations, which are to:

- Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually, and
- Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

- 2.5 As a public body with more than 150 employees, the publication must include information to show the Council has consciously considered the three aims of the Equality Duty, including details relating to employees who share protected characteristics and people who are affected by the public body's policies and practices who share protected characteristics (e.g. service users, tenants).
- 2.6 Demographic information within the Annual Position Statement is taken from Census data and Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Population Estimates.
- 2.7 The purpose of the Annual Position Statement is to share this information and provide an overview of how the Council has complied with the three aims of the Equality Duty during 2023/2024. The document is for publication to the general public and once approved, will be made available on the Council's website. Alternative formats are available if requested.
- 2.8 The law does not prescribe a required format for this document. The Council can present information in any way chosen and determine content beyond those listed above.
- 2.9 The 2023 Annual Position Statement includes the Council's Equality Objectives for the period 2024-2027 and highlights actions and functions that support compliance with the Equality Duty.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 If the Council does not publish equality information as required by the specific duty regulations, there is a risk of being subjected to legal challenge, as well as potential reputational damage.
- 3.2 In acknowledging meeting the duty is not an end in itself, instead a means to improve performance on the general equality duty, it is proposed Members provide a recommendation to publish the 2023/24 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement on the Council's website.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The option to do nothing was discounted as the publication of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement is a statutory responsibility.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Publication of equality information ensures compliance with the legal requirements

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A – Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement 2024.

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SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality and Diversity Annual Position Statement - Draft

2023/2024

Introduction

This statement provides an overview of 2023/2024 in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion in South Kesteven. This Council promotes equality of opportunity across all its functions.

South Kesteven District Council is committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in everything it does, whether it is the services provided, the money spent or the people employed. The Council is a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer. It defines an equal and inclusive district as one where all residents, service users, Council staff, Elected Members and the voluntary, faith and community sectors are supported to fulfil their potential. These individuals and agencies are treated with respect and are actively involved in shaping decisions that will affect the workplace and the wider community.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the decisions the Council makes on how to deliver the best possible outcomes for communities across South Kesteven. High standards of service delivery continues and the workforce is committed to tackling discrimination and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in everything the Council does.

This document provides general information relating to how the Council works across South Kesteven, a retrospective perspective in terms of the make-up of the people who live and work within the District and highlights activity which supports equality of access to the services available.

The Equality Act

South Kesteven District Council has a responsibility to meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty which is set by law as part of the Equality Act 2010. The duty gives protection for all persons who might be discriminated against because of their age, race, sex, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. The Council must consider what the impact of policies, procedures and functions have on people in relation to their socio-economic status and on those with formal or informal caring responsibilities.

The duty requires the Council to have **due regard** to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The specific duties placed on public bodies are to:

- **Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty** – including information relating to employees who share protected characteristics and information relating to service users. This is achieved through the production of this document.
- **Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.** The Council's objectives are outlined below. These can be reviewed and revised as required within the published timeline which, for South Kesteven District Council, is currently 2024-2028.

South Kesteven District Council Equality Objectives 2024-2028

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>

Profile of the District of South Kesteven

The district of South Kesteven is one of seven within the county of Lincolnshire and borders North Kesteven to the north, South Holland in the east, the unitary authorities of Rutland and Peterborough to the south and the counties of Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire to the west.

The District covers 943 square kilometres (365sq miles) with the administrative centre in Grantham and three further market towns of Bourne, Stamford and Market Deeping. Two-thirds of the population lives in one of the four market towns and the remaining third live in one of over 80 villages and other rural settings in the area. According to Census 2021 figures, the number of domestic dwellings in South Kesteven is 62,850, with Grantham being the largest urban settlement. The District is divided into 77 parishes and has 30 Wards, represented by 56 Councillors.

Community make-up

In South Kesteven there are 153 people per square kilometre, this compares with an overall Lincolnshire average of 130 people per square kilometre. Figures released by the Office for National Statistics in its Mid-Year Estimate for June 2023 state a population of 145,758, which shows an increase in population of 11,970 since the census taken in 2011 and an increase of 21,970 since the 2001 Census. The overall population size is currently projected to increase to 149,777 by 2030 and 155,821 by 2043, through a potential net increase in international and internal migration, in addition to typical population growth.

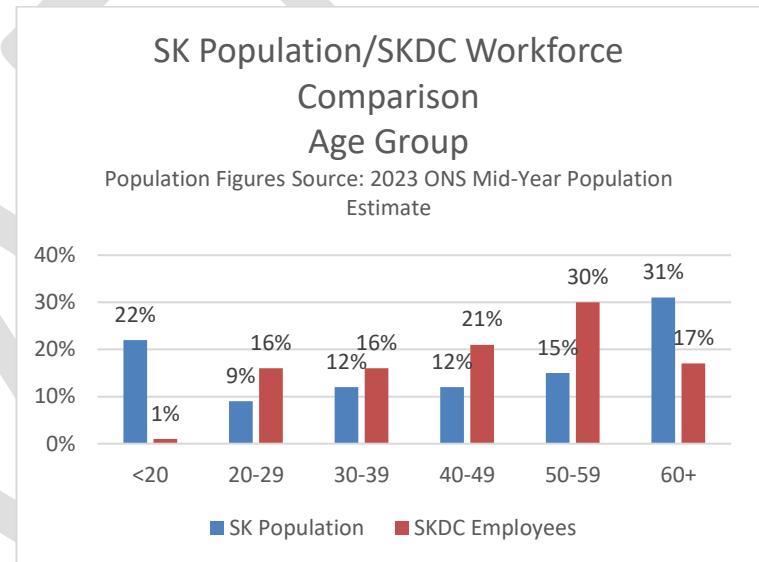
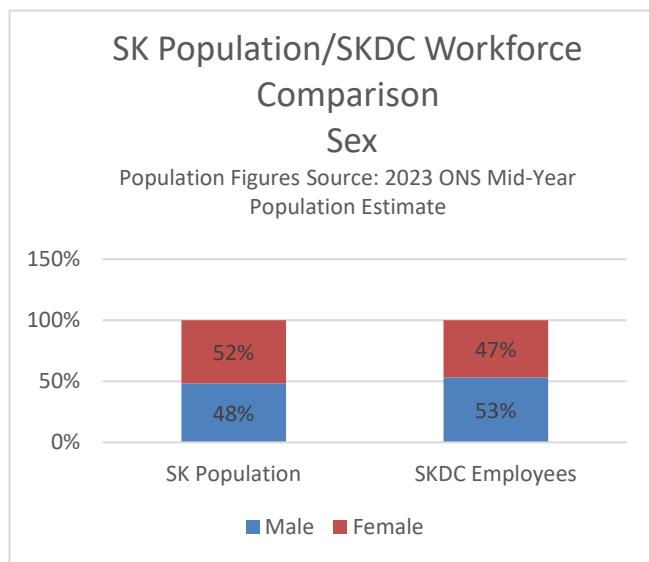
Mapping and local intelligence within the District shows significant increases in minority ethnic communities with the greatest concentration of diversity located in Grantham. This soft intelligence was borne out by the 2021 Census which shows that ethnically diverse communities account for 9.5% of the District's population.

The greatest number of people from any one country from outside the United Kingdom (UK) making their home in South Kesteven are from Poland (1.26% of residents). Additionally there are pockets of small communities, sometimes individual families, who need Council services, help and advice and are unable to speak, read or write in English. Census 2021 data shows the top ten languages (after English) spoken in the District have changed in the ten years since the last Census with Romanian, Tamil, Spanish and Nepalese replacing Cantonese, Slovakian, Tagalog and French. These languages are still present in the District, meaning numbers for the other languages have increased at a higher rate. The Council provides translation and interpreter services on request.

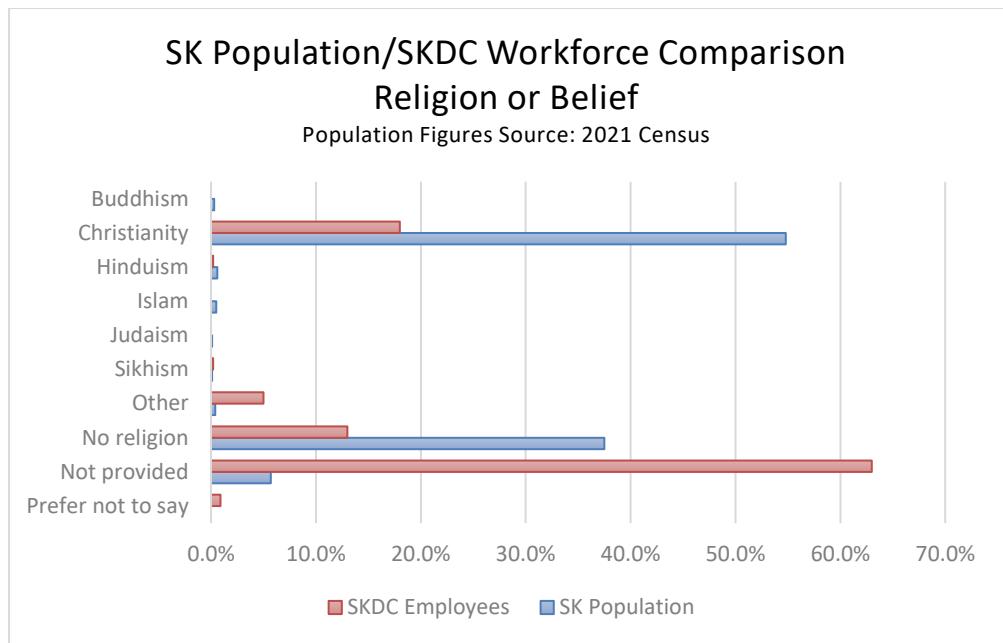
Office for National Statistics (ONS) internal migration figures published in July 2024, as part of its Mid-Year Population Estimate, show that in the year to June 2023, there was net internal migration of 1,229, with a total of 8,573 new residents from other parts of the United Kingdom. The Mid-Year Estimate states there are 43,040 people aged 60 and above who are resident in South Kesteven. This shows this age group remains at 30% of the total population of the District. The proportion of people aged 75 and over is projected to increase significantly by 2040 according to POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information). Using figures reported in the ONS Mid-Year Estimate, the current number of people aged over 75 in the District (based on the 2023 ONS Mid-Year Population Estimate) is 17,266. This figure is projected to increase to 26,800 by 2040 (i.e. a 55.21% increase).

Demographic and Workforce Comparisons

Using data available through the Census and Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Estimates, the Council is able to build a statistical picture of the District's residents. When used as a comparison against the information held in relation to the workforce, this determines how representative South Kesteven District Council is of the population the Authority serves. Carrying out such comparison helps the Council to identify any gaps in the knowledge base relative to the population of South Kesteven and the workforce, as well as providing opportunities for organisational development and change, as necessary, to ensure the Authority remains representative of the District. The following graphics illustrate a direct comparison, based on percentages, between the population of South Kesteven and the workforce of the Council. Information relating to certain protected characteristics is currently not collected by the Council. Where no direct comparison is possible, separate charts have been provided. Mandatory equality information now forms part of the Council's recruitment process, with the option of 'Prefer Not to Say'. This approach should reduce the percentage of information which is not known.



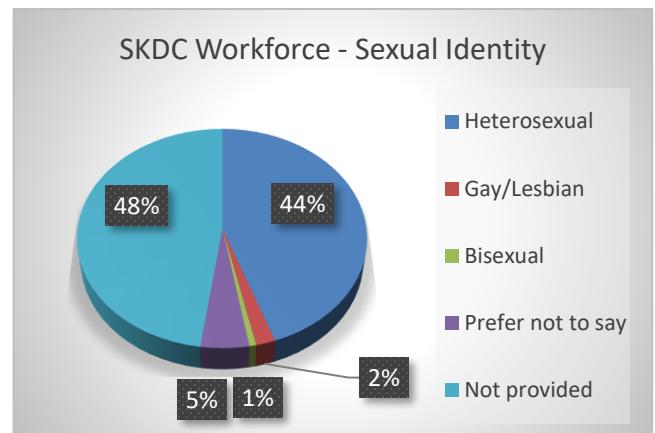
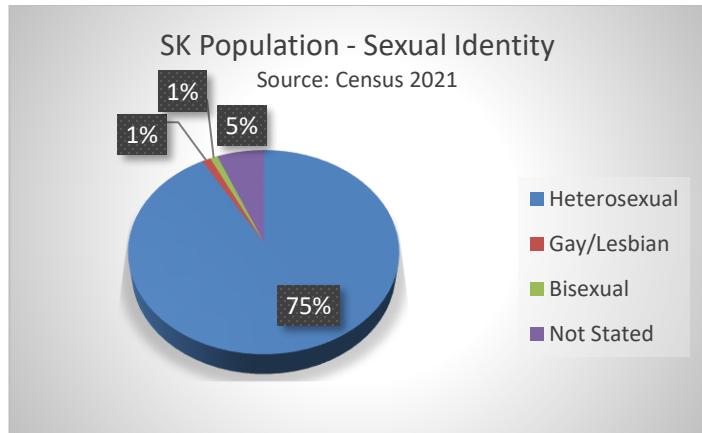
The figures provided relating to age range show what appears to be a large imbalance between the SK population figure and the figure provided to show the percentage of employees. We must bear in mind however that the population figure includes all persons from birth to 19 whilst the workforce figure represents people aged 16 and above. When calculating the < 20 age-group SK population figure to include only those of working age the percentage reduces from 22% of the SK population to 4%. It could be similarly argued that the percentage difference for those aged 60+ would also reduce dramatically if the comparison was specifically related to working people.



The images above provide an illustration, by age-group and sex, of the population of the District directly compared with the workforce of South Kesteven District Council.

The following images provide information relating to other key protected characteristics taken from the 2021 Census alongside the South Kesteven District Council workforce data with supporting narrative where available.





Population and SK Workforce Statistics

Data provided by the 2021 Census shows the population of South Kesteven as 90.5% white British. Ethnically diverse identifiers therefore account for the remaining 9.5%. Statistics for some of the protected characteristics are not known for a large proportion of the workforce. For example, ethnicity data held shows the Council's employees as 68.3% white British which is a slight reduction on 2022/2023 (68.90%), with 4.5% representing ethnically diverse identifiers (an increase on 2022/2023 where a figure of 3.9% was recorded). 0.2% of the workforce responded with "prefer not to say", whilst 26% did not provide an answer.

Supporting our Staff

During 2023/24 there were a total of 575 employees within the Council.

The statistics show 16% of the workforce were aged 29 and under, and 47% are over 50. The Council is continuing to increase the appeal of working for SKDC. Actions include:

- Building relationships with local schools and colleges to advertise roles
- Offering a wide range of apprenticeship options both externally and internally
- Graduate scheme which offers a Level 7 leadership qualification as well as placements across the Council.
- Offering summer internships and a significant number of work experience placements

The Council has a new recruitment website and has produced new recruitment materials to attract to a wider talent pool. The Council also has an in depth workforce development plan which is populated by individual's development requirements and the needs of the Council in line with succession planning.

The Council has a comprehensive engagement and wellbeing plan for colleagues which is built from staff feedback. There are also a number of staff network groups to support colleagues including the Carers Network, Menopause Café and Parents Forum. Educational initiatives, awareness and activities are also regularly promoted with staff on areas such as mental health, physical wellbeing and social wellbeing.

Launched in March 2022, the People Panel is made up of 31 colleagues from departments across the Council. The Panel has been set up to be a forum for feedback and involvement on issues of strategic importance that will affect colleagues. The meetings provide an opportunity for employees to raise issues of interest or concern, share their opinions and views and get more involved in how the Council operates.

Mandatory equality information now forms part of our recruitment process, with the option of 'Prefer Not to Say'. These are not used in the recruitment process and hiring managers conduct 'blind shortlisting' to reduce unconscious bias.

Our gender split is 53% male/47% female and our gender pay gap, last reported in March 2023, is - 0.98% mean and 0% median pay gap, implying there is effectively no gender pay gap at the Council.

The Council's People Strategy 2022-25 looks at ways to increase the diversity of our workforce, to ensure it reflects the demographics of our district. Progress towards the aims of the People Strategy is monitored through quarterly key performance indicator reporting of the Council's Corporate Plan through our Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Strategy is also regularly reviewed by our Employment Committee and Corporate Management Team. The People Strategy 2022-25 can be found [here](#).

Ensuring Equality and Inclusion for our Workforce

Wellbeing: The Council puts on a varied wellbeing programme for staff. Regular staff surveys help shape the programme which has included a range of educational and awareness initiatives on topics such as mental health, breast cancer and strokes.

First Aiders for Mental Health: It is predicted by 2025, there will be in excess of 15,000 living with a common mental health disorder in South Kesteven. It is therefore, increasingly important for staff to be supported. The Council now has 33 First Aiders for Mental Health amongst staff and elected Members who can listen and signpost colleagues to other support services.

Employee Assistance Programme: The Council recognises the demands placed upon staff in their working and personal lives. To help staff deal with these demands, the Council offers an Employee Assistance Programme. This programme, which is also available to elected Members, is a free confidential service providing year-round support and information on a range of personal and work-related issues.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

2022/23 saw the introduction of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group. This group, made up of Officers from across the Council who represent some of the protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, explored opportunities to help the Council become more inclusive, promote equality and diversity and share information on a range of topics to help improve the awareness of Officers. This group will be rebranded and relaunched during 2024/25.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Allies: The Council has a network of Equality Allies across the workforce. There are currently ten Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Allies. These allies provide support to colleagues on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, acting as critical friends during the equality impact assessment process. The Council has a further three champions who support as described above and are also LGBTQIA+ Allies.

People Panel: Launched in March 2022, the People Panel is made up of 31 colleagues from departments across the Council. The Panel has been set up to be a forum for feedback and involvement on issues of strategic importance that will affect colleagues. The meetings provide an opportunity for employees to raise issues of interest or concern, share their opinions and views and get more involved in how the Council operates.

Recruitment: The Council's People Strategy 2022-2025 looks at ways to increase the diversity of the workforce, to ensure the demographics of the district are reflected. One action taken to achieve this is to remove the potential of unconscious bias through implementing Name-Blind Recruitment as part of the recruitment process.

Ensuring Equality and Inclusion for our Customers and our Communities

Equality Impact Assessments: The Council's Equality Impact Assessment process requires consideration is made in the development or review of every policy, function, project or procedure impacting South Kesteven residents. Copies of Assessments are published along with committee reports to ensure due regard is given throughout the decision-making process.

Translations and Interpreters: Any document can be provided in an alternative format on request. This includes translating into other languages, documents in large print or Braille and information in audio format. All staff have access to Language Line for instant translation services and in-person interpreter services are provided when required. Staff and customers have access to Text Relay to assist with calls to, and from, the Council for people with a hearing impairment.

Disabled Facilities Grants: The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide disabled facilities grants to adapt the homes of disabled people. Financial and technical assistance is available to residents who live in their own home, are a private tenant or a housing association tenant to support the needs of disabled children and adults. Eligibility is based on an assessment by an Occupational Therapists (OT). The grant will pay for the essential adaptations the OT identifies as necessary and appropriate in accordance with the Council's standard specification. A total of 132 adaptations were completed with grants in excess of £1.2million.
(Figures provided may cross more than one financial year).

Funding to Food Support Agencies: A ring-fenced funding pot is available to support the work of agencies and community groups within the District which provides access to food and essential supplies to those in need. This support is offered to the four Foodbanks within the District along with community larders, agencies providing hot meals to vulnerable individuals and community cafés operating on a 'pay what you can' basis.

Assisted Bin Collections: A permanent and temporary assisted collection service is provided. This service is offered to households where no resident at the property is able to put the waste out for collections because of frailty, disability or ill-health.

Cost of Living Support: The Council has two dedicated Cost of Living Support Officers. The aims and objectives of the Cost of Living Team are to support our most vulnerable residents who cannot access any other income, to sustain their home, health, family, and security. The value of financial support issued to residents through this team since it was established in 2021 amounts to £2.114m with £1.019m being issued during 2023/24.

Alternative formats and languages

This information can be made available in other languages, large print, Braille, or audio. If you, or someone you know, might benefit from this service, please contact us.

To request a document in a specific language or format please contact:

01476 40 60 80

pr@southkesteven.gov.uk

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Skontaktuj się z nami, korzystając z powyższych danych, jeśli potrzebujesz przetłumaczyć ten dokument na swój język

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Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot a fenti elérhetőségeken, ha szüksége van erre a dokumentumra az Ön nyelvéről lefordítva

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Lūdzu, sazinieties ar mums, izmantojot iepriekš norādīto informāciju, ja jums ir nepieciešams šis dokuments jūsu valodā

русский / Russian:

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தமிழ் / Tamil

இந்த ஆவணத்தை உங்கள் மொழியில் மொழிபெயர்க்க வேண்டும் என்றால், மேலே உள்ள விவரங்களைப் பயன்படுத்தி எங்களைத் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்

Español/ Spanish

Póngase en contacto con nosotros utilizando los detalles anteriores si necesita que este documento se traduzca a su idioma.

Nepali / Nepalese:

यदि तपाइँलाई यो कागजात तपाइँको भाषामा अनुवाद गर्न आवश्यक छ भने कृपया माथिको विवरणहरू प्रयोग गरेर हामीलाई सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस्

*The languages listed above represent the top ten spoken, after English, in South Kesteven. If you know someone who needs information in any language beyond what is listed please contact us as above.

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 16 October 2024

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside
Cabinet Member for People &
Communities

South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan Update – October 2024

Report Author

Bethany Goodman, Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead

✉️ bethany.goodman@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the progress and delivery of the South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

Recommendations

In noting the progress and delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan for South Kesteven, it is recommended that the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Notes the information provided within this report and suggests any enhancements to the extent and clarity of the information produced for the next six-monthly update report.**

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Connecting 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 There are no financial implications for the Council in relation to this report. The work completed to date has been undertaken within identified budgets. If any initiatives are identified which require budget or investment, then an appropriate business case will be developed which identifies the cost and the associated benefit to the community.

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, Monitoring Officer**

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan (2024-2027) identifies Connecting Communities as a key priority. This includes an ambition to work effectively with partners in the voluntary, private and public sectors to tackle inequalities including those relating to health and unemployment, especially in areas of highest need.
- 2.2 In December 2023, Members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan (the Action Plan), and agreed to receive six monthly updates on progress. The Action Plan is aimed at achieving improved health and wellbeing outcomes for the residents of South Kesteven, and supports the Lincolnshire District Councils' Health and Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy) (See Background Papers), which is structured around five lever areas:
 - Housing and Homelessness
 - Activity and Wellbeing
 - Environment and Climate
 - Economic Inclusion
 - Working with Communities

- 2.3. Officers continue to work collaboratively across service areas to deliver the actions identified, with the Lead Officers for each of the five lever areas providing an update on the progress of their specific lever areas. The updated Action Plan is provided at **Appendix One** of this report.
- 2.4. It is worth noting that many of the actions within the Action Plan are considered as 'ongoing' as some of these are continuously being delivered or span across several years. The commentary provides a clearer picture of the great work that is being delivered across the district.
- 2.5. The seven Lincolnshire districts continue to work together, with representatives from each District meeting regularly to provide updates and share ideas. The working group continues to work alongside partners and stakeholders via representation on the Health and Wellbeing Board, to develop and deliver plans to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The adoption of a bespoke local action plan for South Kesteven has allowed the Council to tackle health inequalities across the district in line with the Council's Corporate ambitions and has ensured actions are targeted to drive improvements at a local level.
- 3.2. Continuing to work collaboratively with the other six Lincolnshire district authorities provides the opportunity to identify synergies across Lincolnshire and allows district colleagues to share best practice and learn from each other.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. South Kesteven District Council is committed to developing an ambitious agenda for improving health and wellbeing across the district. Continuing to work on and deliver the actions identified will drive forward these results. Therefore, the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The local action plan has been developed to ensure the identified activity to improve health and wellbeing outcomes across South Kesteven aligns with the Council's corporate vision and will deliver benefits for district residents.
- 5.2. Members are requested to monitor progress on the delivery of the identified actions to ensure the positive outcomes the Council is seeking, are delivered.

6. Background Papers

Executive Summary - Lincolnshire District Councils' Health and Wellbeing Strategy [available here](#).

7. Appendices

7.1. **Appendix One** – South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan

Overall objective: To address inactivity across the county - improving access and opportunity for all residents to be active and participate.

Activity and Wellbeing: Identified Action	South Kestevens Action Plan	By When	By Whom	Completion Status	Progress as of September 2024
Active Place: Develop a plan to be able to positively influence the planning system/external decision making in the area	Openly share the SKDC Sport and Physical Activity Strategy with partners to achieve common goals.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman	Ongoing	Continue to share the strategy with partners and discuss interventions with local organisations that will help meet joined objectives
	Be involved with the development, progress and actions of the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study, Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Facilities Strategy that is being developed in the district. This will help SKDC understand the requirements in the district.	Spring 2024	Michael Chester	Ongoing	The final stages of the Playing Pitch Strategy have been drafted and the study will be completed later in 2024.
	Complete equality impact assessments on all projects involving people to ensure fairness is considered for all.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman	Ongoing	Completed for SKDC events organised by Leisure
Active Place: Make better use of green spaces across Lincolnshire and maximise opportunities for residents and visitors to be active in Lincolnshire	Develop partnership with a provider through funding to deliver fitness sessions to residents in parks/open spaces, or alternatively implement a volunteer led scheme.	Summer 2024	Beth Goodman	Ongoing	A previous funding application was rejected but work continues with Grantham as a starting point with lowest levels of deprivation. An application will be submitted to the Sport England Movement Fund.
	Promote outdoor gym use working with Active Lincolnshire ensuring the maps in the district are displayed on the outdoor gym finder/Lets Move Lincolnshire.	Spring 2024	Alison Lewis	Ongoing	Continuing to promote the outdoor gyms through social media. When investing in play areas, exploring options to install play fitness equipment will be completed.
	Review how we publicise open spaces and outdoor leisure provision as part of the open space study.	Spring 2024	Leisure/Planning	Completed	Visit Lincolnshire website has dedicated space for nature and landscape which includes several walks and trails across the county. The open space study has been completed, and the council continue to collaborate with the Slow Ways website.
	Retain Green Flag status in the parks.	July, 2024	Sharon Haythorn	Completed	This was achieved and celebrated in July 2024
	Work closely with local organisations to develop cycling routes through the district.	Summer 2024	Beth Goodman	Ongoing	British Cycling trained leaders continue to lead new routes in collaboration
	Develop Grantham Transport Strategy focusing on Active Travel through walking and cycling.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman/LCC	Ongoing	Looking at options to complete an Accessibility Study to improve 3 identified routes within Grantham.
	Influence social prescribers to include green spaces as a positive place to promote mental and physical wellbeing	Ongoing	Beth Goodman	Completed	A Pain Café and Young Adults Social Group has launched at Wyndham Park Visitor Centre, hosted by social prescribers.

Active Place: Widen the focus from commercial leisure offer and asset-based physical activity to activity outside, in the home and in the workplace	Regularly connect with Lincolnshire County Council/Active Travel England to positively influence Active Travel, encouraging the planning team to apply for funding provision and developments of public footpaths and cycleways.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman	Ongoing	Lincolnshire County Council have had no Active Travel Officer since the end of 2023 therefore there has been minimal county direction regarding Active Travel. South Kesteven District Council have 200k allocated within the UKSPF pot assigned to Active Travel and a number of schemes are being bid for
	Explore digital inclusion opportunities for users to be able to work out from home and in the workplace.	September, 2024	Beth Goodman	Completed	The Council have worked closely with We are Undefeatable to ensure residents are aware of opportunities to work out from home. A move more workout card has been created to enable people to undertake exercises that are easy to do at home or in the workplace.
	Look at costings and accessibility of leisure centres to break down barriers of accessing health facilities. Look at opportunities for future delivery via the leisure provider.	Ongoing	Michael Chester/Karen Whitfield	Completed	An agency model has been explored and proposed to Leisure and Culture Scrutiny Committee in September 2024.
	Create maps of community assets with the benefits of being active linking the green spaces, community foot and cycle paths alongside displaying the benefits of active travel on climate change.	Summer 2024	Beth Goodman/Serena Brown	Ongoing	Currently acquiring existing maps/researching existing points of interest and routes whilst calculating carbon footprint for short journeys by car. Comms team will design up maps, starting with Grantham and should be completed by end of 2024.
	Continue to work on the actions identified in the condition surveys and undertake feasibility studies with the UKSPF to ensure facilities remain attractive, accessible, and available to residents.	Ongoing	Leisure/Property	Ongoing	condition surveys and has identified all C & D category works. These C & D categories formed the basis for the next stage of prioritisation of the works programme. This stage includes programming works in accordance with the budgets we have available and the urgency of the works. Some works that were identified are planned for the financial year 24/25 where possible, other condition survey projects are being considered for financial year 25/26 including redecoration works at Meres and SK Stadium which will be dependent on budgets available.
	Increase awareness and benefits of physical activity in South Kesteven through networking and marketing, including the use of the Activity Finder on the Let's Move Lincolnshire platform.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman	Ongoing	SKDC website has been updated to incorporate a direct link/widget to the Activity Finder. Additional resources and benefits have also been made available through on this page: https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/arts-leisure-and-culture/sports-and-leisure

Active People: Provide Opportunities and programmes across communities to enable residents to take part in regular activity	Work with stakeholders to provide ample opportunities and programmes within South Kesteven, targeting all ages/abilities.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman	Ongoing	Wellbeing fairs delivered across market towns and currently working on one for the Deepings. Positive Futures offers free programmes for juniors to undertake. Exploring options to create a sport forum in South Kesteven.
	Continue to develop Lincolnshire Co-op Wellbeing Walks to ensure there are two in each market town.	Summer 2024	Beth Goodman/Lincs Coop	Completed	Options for further training to be considered to support volunteers at Wyndham Park Visitor Centre
	Work with Active Lincolnshire and Ageing Better to make South Kesteven an Age Friendly District	November, 2024	Equality, Diversity Internal Group	Ongoing	CMT approves plans to gain Political Support to process with an application to become part of the UK Network
	Implement an annual workforce wellbeing plan to ensure physical and mental wellbeing is at the forefront of the work we do.	Apr-24	Wellbeing Team	Ongoing	A draft of the Internal Wellbeing Plan has been created and will be ready for CMT to approve in November 2024. A range of initiatives have continued to be delivered to employees concentrating on employees physical, mental, financial and emotional health. SKDC have been nominated as a finalist for the second year running at the Lincolnshire Sport and Physical Activity Awards for 'Active Workplace Award'.
Active System: Creating leadership, governance and partnerships, and workforce capabilities across sectors to use resources in a more coordinated way to reduce inactivity.	Work with local leisure providers to deliver rehabilitation programmes for those living with long term health conditions and older adults.	Ongoing to meet changing demands	Beth Goodman	Ongoing	Working with the Lincoln City Foundation and LeisureSK to launch a new Fighting Fit: living with cancer physical activity session in Stamford. Programmes in Bourne and Grantham have come to an end due to funding
Active System: Each district council to develop opportunities to positively influence internal/corporate decision making in their local area and embed in governance processes	Create a mental health working group	June, 2024	Wellbeing Team	Completed	This group was launched in May 2024 during Mental Health Awareness Week and will continue on a quarterly basis, sharing ideas and support. All of the Council's Mental Health First Aiders are part of this.
Active System: Proactive and inclusive approach to sharing learning, best practice and opportunities for collaboration.	Join the wellbeing network groups with local connectors to cover the district.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman	Completed	Ongoing attendance at the Grantham Partnership Board.
	Celebrate and raise awareness through our communications and social media channels	Ongoing	Marketing	Ongoing	Continue to share with partners and discuss interventions with local organisations that will help meet joined objectives
Active System: Proactivity engage across the NHS to encourage innovation and creativity to enable health, wellbeing and physical activity within planning consultations.	Work with PCNs, Neighborhood leads and social prescribers to create successful partnerships to share best practice and opportunities.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman	Completed	Encouraging GP practices to sign up as an Active Practice. A young adults social group and a Pain Café has launched at Wyndham Park Visitor Centre, in partnership with the NHS PCN K2.
	Research and develop a plan for place-based partnerships and opportunities.	May, 2024	Beth Goodman	Completed	Active Lincolnshire is leading on this work through their connected communities sub-group, including Grantham.

All activities planned through all organisations should deliver on the five ways to wellbeing; be active, connect, take notice, keep learning, and give.	Ongoing	Beth Goodman/All	Ongoing	New Internal Wellbeing Plan will be based on this and all external activities delivered will have a focus on at least one strand.
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Overall objective: Reducing economic inequality and alleviating poverty as a fundamental driver for improving mental and physical health and wellbeing

Economic Inclusion: Identified Action		South Kestevens Action Plan		By When	By Whom	Completion Status	Progress as of September 2024
Embed strong strategic narrative/understanding to promote economic inclusion and health inequality linkages that deliver better outcomes		Review current strategies/policies to ensure there are, where appropriate, meaningful and deliberate/positive outcomes that address health inequality.		Mar-24	Economic Development	Ongoing	Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028 has been drafted and will go to Cabinet in October.
		Assess baseline to determine success threshold and achievement		Mar-24	Economic Development	Completed	The State of the District Report was completed in 2023 which concludes the baseline and findings of the economy. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-09/State%20of%20the%20District%202023.pdf
		Review current projects/interventions to test whether appropriate health/economic inequality outcome and outputs have/can be captured or weaved into the initiative.		Mar-24	Economic Development	Ongoing	Equality Impact Assessment's will be undertaken for each intervention within the action plan
		Ensure within the new 'Economic Development' strategy inclusion is a golden thread throughout		Mar-24	Economic Development	Completed	Taken the lead from the corporate plan, direct link into the Economic Dev Strat
People in Employment: Work with Lincolnshire employers to improve working conditions/environment particularly within low paid and insecure employment to improve their health and wellbeing and prevent health issues developing – whilst improving business productivity.		Lead by example, through partnership working - set out how organisations can improve working conditions		Summer 2024	Eco Dev, HR, Key Partners (FSB, Lincs Chamber etc.)	Ongoing	Looking at procurement events/meet the buyer events and ensure providers SKDC work with adhere to living wage etc. Look at local labour/supplier chain.
People in Employment: Improve skills for those currently in work, enabling career progression, greater wage levels, better job security, greater productivity development – good for people and business – part of tackling in-work poverty.		Support the Federation of Small Business in its implementation of the Local Skills Improvement Plan.		Ongoing	Economic Development	Ongoing	Regular contact with FSB. Skills summit events in the district x 2 , looking at holistic view around job opportunities and careers in area, looking at keeping our youth talent. Growth hub. Working with partners
People in Employment: Increase volunteering to support the community and increase well-being for the volunteers themselves.				Autumn 2023	Karen Whitfield	Completed	The volunteering policy is now live and in place, which continues to implement standards for volunteering for the council.
Supporting those most susceptible to economic change and transition: Increase core sector resilience in Lincolnshire by supporting employers to adapt and respond to economic transitions caused by the pandemic, through addressing skills gaps with employees.		Support the Federation of Small Business in its implementation of the Local Skills Improvement Plan.		Ongoing	Economic Development	Ongoing	Attending and supporting FSB and Growth hub.

Supporting those most susceptible to economic change and transition: Employee upskilling and retaining programmes for those in industries exposed to long-term change and decline.	Working with LEP, partners, review Lincolnshire and national landscape ahead of developing an approach to key industries	Ongoing	Economic Development	Ongoing	Identifying key sectors and growth opportunities. DWP/MCCAINS. Adapt to what's going on. Engineering - no young workforce coming through - working with local businesses/education providers/college
Digital skills programme: Residents have the digital skills to access health services, everyday services and employment opportunities.	Support Grantham College in the delivery of the Skills Bootcamp as part of the Government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee, helping everyone gain skills for life	Ongoing	Economic Development	Completed	UKSPF . Grantham college (north) - economic inactivity scheme to provide digital training . Steadfast - south of the district
Digital skills programme: Fully enabled digital FFTP (fixed fibre premises) infrastructure across the county using place appropriate technologies.	Support the telecommunications industry with an 'open for business' approach to rolling out fibre broadband across the district	Ongoing	Economic Development and Planning	Ongoing	UKSPF exploring options.
Eliminate poor health from being a barrier to employment: Create an intervention programme that supports residents with ill-health into employment.	Support DWP in the endeavours to help residents with ill-health towards employment	Ongoing	Economic Development & Community Engagement	Ongoing	Grantham college and Steadfast delivering 1. softer life skills. 2. job search/interview/CV. 3. digital skills.
Creating an environment to support development of the health and care sector to improve health related service provision (wide scale health attraction interventions).	Develop interventions with partners (including FE and college providers) to support recruitment/retention of employees within the health and care sector	Ongoing	Economic Development & Community Engagement	Ongoing	Include in the strategy (recognised health and social care sector identified as key sector). Interact with businesses within it. Invite NHS

Overall objective: Improve understanding of the links between environment and health and maximise opportunities to deliver on both.

Environment and Climate: Identified Action	South Kesteven Action Plan	By When	By Whom	Completion Status	Progress as of September 2024
Improve air quality, particularly in designated management areas.	South Kesteven's air quality annual status report for 2023 is published on the Council's webpages	Dec-24	Ayeisha Kirkham	Ongoing	Publish after air quality action plan
	The Air Quality Action Plan is to be updated in the next 12 months	Nov-24	Ayeisha Kirkham	Ongoing	Consultancy work required post elections. Will be published later in 2024
	Clean Air Lincolnshire project to launch in 2023 and include monitoring of particulate matter at specific school locations in the county as part of an education initiative. Clean Air Lincolnshire encouraging action for cleaner air across the county (cleanairlincs.org.uk)	Ongoing	Ayeisha Kirkham	Ongoing	Clean Air Lincolnshire encouraging action for cleaner air across the county.
Accelerate transition towards active travel	This links with the Activity and Wellbeing area. Districts are collaboratively working with Lincolnshire County Council on plans and have prepared area wide cycling and walking plans. (LCWIP)	Ongoing	Planning/Leisure	Ongoing	Lincolnshire County Council have been without Active Travel Officers until August 2024. Deeping have successfully bid to conduct a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) with Bourne being encouraged.
Promote and increase uptake of electric vehicles	South Kesteven District Council have installed 4 electric vehicle charge points within Council Car Parks within the district. The council continues to explore opportunities for additional EVCP installation at other Council car park locations.	Ongoing	Louise Case	Ongoing	There are currently 6 charge units with 12 charge points across the district. Plan is to conduct a district wide review of approach to EVCPs, local demand and existing coverage, market situation etc.
	Local Plan policy also addresses the expectation that provision for electric vehicle charging is made for new developments.	Ongoing	Planning	Ongoing	Every new residential development expected to install EVCP's in 2020 Local Plan, with no plans to remove this in the ongoing review.
Mobility: provision and uptake of public transport services	Local Transport Strategies include support for walking, cycling and public transport.	Ongoing	Planning	Ongoing	Grantham and Stamford Transport Boards discuss improving support for walking, cycling and public transport
Improve domestic energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions	The Home Energy Upgrade Scheme offers support to residents of the 4 districts of Lincolnshire to improve the energy efficiency of their property, helping to reduce carbon emissions associated with energy use.	Mar-25	Serena Brown	Ongoing	First round of funding completed (LAD3/HUG1) with a total of 49 properties upgraded. Now into the second round of funding. The report for the first round can be found here: https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s41242/Update on Home Energy Upgrade Scheme.pdf
	South Kesteven District Council have also received funding via the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to upgrade over 300 council properties to improve energy efficiency.	Mar-25	Peter Park	Ongoing	(Public Pack)Agenda Document for Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 06/06/2024 14:00 (southkesteven.gov.uk)

Joint work to reduce carbon emissions from all Councils (Lincolnshire County Council and districts)	South Kesteven District Council have developed a draft Climate Action Strategy setting out how we can address climate change and reduce carbon emissions in the district.	Ongoing	Serena Brown	Completed	Climate Action Strategy.pdf (southkesteven.gov.uk)
Reduce Carbon Emissions across all services to meet national carbon reduction targets	South Kesteven District Council have developed a draft Climate Action Strategy setting out how we can address climate change and reduce carbon emissions in the district.	Ongoing	Serena Brown	Ongoing	The Council have also been successful in bidding for money from the Swimming Pool Support Fund, investing in Pool Covers at the Leisure Centres from the Council's Climate Reserve Fund and also has been successful in a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund to contribute to future years savings once the project is complete.
Understand the local impacts of a changing climate to improve community resilience.	The Council's draft Climate Action Strategy includes objectives on adaptation to climate change for the council and for the district.	Ongoing	Serena Brown	Completed	The Climate Action Strategy includes objectives on this
Reduce waste output across the county and tackle key issues	Lincolnshire County Council and all districts are part of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership	Ongoing	Waste Team	Ongoing	Continue to attend
	Plans to roll out separate paper and card collection in South Kesteven to improve amount of material recycled.	Feb-24	Waste/Comms	Completed	All households within South Kesteven now have purple lidded bins.
Improve open space provision that recognises the role of improved biodiversity, carbon storage and wellbeing benefits	The council is developing a Tree & Woodland Strategy which will provide an analysis of tree canopy cover across the District and incorporate trees into existing and new policy. The Strategy will set out a management plan to increase canopy cover and enable existing trees to thrive; enhancing wildlife and biodiversity and the benefits trees provide. The Strategy and accompanying Action Plan will be finalised by March 2024.	Mar-24	Serena Brown	Completed	Tree & Woodland Strategy and Action Plan completed. New tree officer to complete the identified actions
	The Council successfully delivered the £1.2m Blue Green project to restore biodiversity in and around the districts river corridors, and continue to explore future biodiversity improvement funding options.	Ongoing	Louise Case	Ongoing	Frequent meetings with Cllr Baker. £40,000 awarded through the UKSPF to support the Make Space for Nature Biodiversity Project Scheme (targeted at town and parish councils). A menu of biodiversity/rewilding options was developed to complement this. Currently exploring potential of rewilding projects on SKDC open space.
Influence provision of healthy and sustainable food options	Meet with sustainable partners surrounding the promotion of healthy and sustainable food options	Nov-24	Leisure/Partners	Ongoing	Now part of the Healthy Weight Partnership Board. To explore options with Fairshare and local food providers.

Maximise opportunity of Local Plan Reviews	South Kesteven District Council are conducting a review of the current Local Plan and will address issues linked to the environment.	Mar-24	Shaza Brannon	Ongoing	The Local Plan is still under review however a Regulation 18 draft plan has recently been published for consultation which contains draft environmental policies. This work will hopefully be finalised later in 2024.
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Overall objective: Improve the supply, quality and coordination of services to meet housing needs and demands.

Housing and Homelessness: Identified Action	South Kestevens Action Plan	By When	By Whom	Completion Status	Progress as of September 2024
Coordinate the effective delivery of homelessness services through a partnership driven and evidence-based homelessness strategy.	Continue to work collaboratively with the Lincs Housing Partnership Manager to ensure that homelessness services are delivered in line with the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy	Ongoing	Homelessness team	Ongoing	Ongoing regular meetings with Lincs Housing Partner Manager. SKDC are in attendance at these meetings and contribute to updates in relation to the Lincs Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy
	Lead on the quarterly Homelessness Forum partnership meetings to inform and shape a homelessness service based on recognised local demands	Ongoing		Ongoing	Homelessness forum meetings are ongoing, now lead on my the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Manager. Good attendance by partners.
	Ensure new burdens funding is utilised to enable an effective response to increased service pressures.	Summer 2024		Ongoing	Funding extended until March 2025 and using to fund an officer
	Continue to lead on the Rough Sleeper initiative on behalf of South Kesteven, South Holland, North Kesteven and West Lindsey	Ongoing		Ongoing	We still host Change4Lincs. Regular meetings are arranged with each district to improve communication and shape the service to operate until March 2025 when funding ceases.
Establish future investment strategies to meet current and emerging needs for care and support.	Continue with the sheltered housing review to identify possible investment opportunities	Ongoing	Beth Randall/Sheltered Housing Team	Ongoing	Options appraisal undertaken, report has been produced with recommendations in terms of which scheme we could perhaps convert to another type of housing. This is a huge project that is likely to last a few years
	Ensure applications are submitted whenever government funding is available	Ongoing	Victoria Herbert	Ongoing	
Bring more empty homes into use in order to improve the supply of properties available within the county.	Work collaboratively with colleagues in council tax to identify available empty properties	Ongoing	Ayeisha Kirkham	Ongoing	This is ongoing as part of the Empty homes project. The Strategy has been updated and approved in July 2024. There have been 3 officer working group meetings, we have finalised the RAG rating to prioritise the empty properties. The oldest properties are scheduled to be sent educational letters by November.
	Explore options around bringing those properties back into use	Ongoing	Ayeisha Kirkham	Ongoing	
	Build stronger relationships with landlords to offer support and advice to enable properties to be brought back into use	Ongoing	Ayeisha Kirkham	Ongoing	

Deliver new housing to meet housing needs and demands, meeting zero carbon targets and recognising all levels of affordability.	Continue to explore acquisition opportunities to increase council housing stock	Ongoing	Debbie Roberts	Ongoing	The Council have adopted a hybrid approach with building and acquiring properties, including the completion of 4 x 1 bedroom units at Elizabeth Road, Stamford, works ongoing with 20 units at Swinegate, Grantham and construction works will commence on Larch Close in November. The Council have acquired 8 properties with Local Authority Housing Fund 2 money with 4 having been completed and the other 4 by the end of 2024. The Council have secured 36 affordable units in Corby Glen which will see the first phase handed over by March 2025. The Council also acquire former Right to Buy properties back and seek to buy homes off the market for specific needs which will be adapted using s106 monies. The Council set a target to build and acquire 100 units which is on course to exceed.
	Ensure that any properties acquired has satisfactory EPCs in place and rents are sent at an affordable rate	Ongoing		Ongoing	Properties that are purchased require an EPC certificate to be shared with solicitors and all are inspected to ensure they meet the Councils void standards. The affordable rents are set in line with Local Housing Allowance and are 80% of the open market rent.
Improve the quality of existing properties across all tenures and reduce the cost of poor housing to health, care and society.	Ensure a responsive and robust approach to any reports of properties in poor repair in private sector	Ongoing	Sarah McQueen/Tom Amblin-Lightowler	Ongoing	This is undertaken as part of business as usual as a statutory function.
	Ensure a responsive and robust approach to any reports of properties in poor repair in SKDC stock.	Ongoing		Ongoing	We have a newly established damp and mould team to have increased focus on this issue. Earlier this year we had the regulatory notice lifted in relation to compliance with the housing regulator
	Effective monitoring of improvement notices.	Summer 2024		Ongoing	This is undertaken as it is a legal requirement under the housing Act 2004.
Reduce levels of overcrowding as a means of reducing health risks.	Ensure that any affected tenants are able to access effective housing and homelessness advice	Ongoing	Sarah McQueen/Ayeisha Kirkham	Ongoing	Homeless service is inclusive and accessible by anyone, we continue to monitor feedback from customers and aim to improve services based on this.
Improve services to extend people's housing choices in preparation for later life	Continue with the sheltered housing review to identify possible investment opportunities	Ongoing	Beth Randall/Sarah McQueen	Ongoing	Options appraisal undertaken, report has been produced with recommendations in terms of which scheme we could perhaps convert to another type of housing. This is a huge project that is likely to last a few years
Ensure services to support people to remain living in their current home complement each other as a system-wide	Effective management of the DFG application service	Ongoing	Ayeisha Kirkham	Ongoing	This is undertaken as part of business as usual.

current home complement each other as a system-wide approach.

Work collaboratively with partner agencies to support and enable people to continue to live in their current home	Ongoing	ongoing	Ongoing	This is undertaken as part of business as usual.
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Overall objectives: Leverage unique links at place level to engage with communities

Working with Communities: Identified Action	South Kesteven Action Plan	By When	By Whom	Completion Status	Progress as of September 2024
Capture and build on district community engagement knowledge and expertise: Combine and codify the District's knowledge and approach to community engagement and empowerment, building on success and experience gained during the pandemic.	District-wide consultation exercise with voluntary and community sector and residents relating to provision of voluntary services, opportunities for volunteering etc.	Summer 2024	Carol Drury	Completed	Consultation carried out with residents and voluntary and community groups. Findings helped determine the content of the Community Engagement and Development Strategy
	Development of a Community and Engagement and Development Strategy with input from the VCS through the consultation exercise	Summer 2024	Carol Drury	Completed	Our People, Our Place - A Community Engagement and Development Strategy for South Kesteven was adopted by Cabinet 6.2.2024
	Council in the Community initiative to engage with residents face-to-face	Summer 2024	Carol Drury	Ongoing	Format to change as events attracted limited take-up. Community Events the Community Engagement team has actively participated in pre-existing community events. 8.6.24 - Sproxton - D Day event 29.6.24 - Grantham - Safer Streets 14.8.24 - Grantham - Wellbeing event organised by SHINE Lincolnshire 7/8.9.24 - Caythorpe Gala 14.9.24 - Belton House Community Festival
	Series of funding workshops to support project development and delivery by VCS across the district	Summer 2024	Carol Drury	Ongoing	Funding workshops delivered: Deepings 6/7/2023 Stamford 21/9/23 Grantham 18/1/2024 Funding Fair - Bourne - 27/3/24 4 further workshops and a funding fair planned for 2024/25
	Engagement of two cost of living coordinators to support local communities	Ongoing	Cost of Living Team	Completed	Ongoing engagement – Cost of Living Team are funded until 31 March 2025
	Ring-fenced financial support for Foodbanks and other food support agencies across the district	Ongoing	Cost of Living Team	Ongoing	available to support the work of agencies and community groups within the District which provides access to food and essential supplies to those in need. • This support is offered to the four Foodbanks within the District along with community larders, agencies providing hot meals to vulnerable individuals and community cafés operating on a 'pay what you can' basis. • Currently, £12,000 of support has been issued, with the remaining £3,000 to be issued by 31 March 2025

Expand district participation in current sector discussions across the wider system.	Attendance at mental health groups, district health and wellbeing groups, food support groups	Ongoing	Collaborative officer working	Ongoing	Community Engagement Officer attends meetings organised by health colleagues covering Grantham, Bourne and Stamford on a monthly basis
	Wellbeing fairs in collaboration with health and wellbeing partners, food outlets and small business sector	Ongoing	Collaborative officer working	Ongoing	Continue to attend events to showcase how the council supports. Community Engagement attended events recently with wellbeing partners and businesses.
	Attendance at meetings and information sessions relating to Armed Forces Veterans	Ongoing	Debbie Nicholls	Ongoing	Armed Forces Officer leads on and/or attends: Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership Local Authority Armed Forces Leads meeting LGA Armed Forces Covenant Network Airborne Heritage Trail meeting Community Engagement meetings with Prince William of Gloucester Barracks Arnhem 80 Sub Committee
Strengthen sector oversight and assurance: Work with partners (Sector representative groups and County) to develop an agreed approach to sector oversight and assurance, harnessing community potential in a safe, effective way.	Work in collaboration with LCVS and other agencies to provide health checks and assurance relating to VCS	Ongoing	Carol Drury	Ongoing	This service is provided on request from voluntary and community groups within the district. Engagement work with LCVS continues including their collaboration on the Bourne Funding Fair and our participation in their Volunteer Management Conference 12/6/2024
Enhance and sustain voluntary sector engagement and contribution: Building on success during the pandemic, develop and formalize mechanisms to draw on volunteer capacity quickly and efficiently in response to emerging community needs e.g., flooding, pandemic.	Worked with 55 groups (1500 volunteers) during the pandemic. Database now increased to include more than 300 groups across the district.	Ongoing	Carol Drury	Ongoing	The database is an ever-growing ecosystem of contacts amongst voluntary, community, faith, wellbeing and armed forces groups. The database currently contains 616 contacts plus a further 117 specifically related to Armed Forces events/activities.
	Formal links with Parish and Town Councils	Ongoing	Carol Drury	Ongoing	Parish and Town Council conference is under development to take place in the autumn of 2024. This will focus on emergency planning (as a response to flooding earlier in the year) and community safety. Opportunities for information stalls will be offered to other service areas and organisations.
	Public Protection and Community Engagement of officers working with other agencies and stakeholders to ensure an effective and timely response in an emergency situation	Ongoing	Carol Drury	Ongoing	The Community Engagement Team is planning a Parish and Town Council conference in Autumn 2024. Working with the Emergency Planning & Health and Safety Lead, LCC partners, Public Protection and the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership to provide an agenda covering emergency planning and community safety.

	Specific inclusion within Community Engagement Business Continuity Plan relating to the importance of community engagement during emergency situations.	Summer 2024	Carol Drury	Completed	New Business Impact Assessment and Business Continuity Plan developed August 2024
A strategic Commissioning approach in Lincolnshire: To maximise impact and reach of commissioned services across the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing System.	Move towards a strategy commissioning approach across the health and wellbeing system. Investigate the current system of community connectors (SHINE) and social prescribing (L CVS). Work alongside Active Lincolnshire with this approach.	Spring 2024	Carol Drury (for community engagement. Commissioning of health and wellbeing led by other services of the Council).	Ongoing	From a community perspective: The CE Team works in collaboration with Shine Lincolnshire, has developed strong links with the Community Connectors that work across SK. Our Community Grants and Funding Officer has been an active participant in the determination of grants through Shine's Mental Health & Wellbeing Investment Fund. The CE Team also takes opportunities to work collaboratively with L CVS who manage the Social Prescribing Link Workers across the district.
Wellbeing Lincs: Review opportunities to further develop districts preventative approach, using Wellbeing Lincs as a proven and trusted mechanism for collaboration and innovation (harness Wellbeing Lincs as a powerful vehicle for co-production, collaboration, innovation).	Attend partnership meetings	Ongoing	Sarah McQueen	Ongoing	Continue to attend.

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 16 October 2024

Report of Councillor Rayside
Cabinet Member for People &
Communities

Cost of Living Team - Activities Update

Report Author

Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits Customer and Community)

claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the activities undertaken by the Cost of Living Team, along with details of the financial support received (facilitated by the Cost of Living Team) for South Kesteven residents during 2023/24 and 2024/25. The report also provides an update regarding the support being provided to pensioners affected by the changes in the eligibility criteria for the Winter Fuel Allowance.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the contents of the report and provide any feedback and comments.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Enabling economic opportunities
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 report sets out the specific schemes that have been and continue to be implemented to support residents with the cost of living – both statutory and national initiatives.
- 1.2 The majority of the schemes identified in the report are not directly funded by the Council. For the administration of some schemes, new burdens funding is provided by central Government.
- 1.3 The Cost of Living team is funded until 31 March 2025.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.4 There are no specific legal implications connected with this report, however all financial support schemes must follow the agreed process and governance in terms of the allocation of funds.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 Cost of living information is available in a variety of formats to ensure inclusivity. Further diversity and inclusion considerations will be identified and complied with as each project/funding stream is accessed.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

- 1.6 The increasing cost of living is having a significant impact on mental health and emotional wellbeing, and support in this area will therefore form a big part of the cost of living strategy. Internally, this links with work the Wellbeing team are doing

in line with the 'financial wellbeing' focus in our wellbeing strategy. Externally, this support is picked up as part of the actions from the Cost of Living Strategic Working Group.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt (Head of HR)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to enable economic opportunities and be an effective council. This report, and the service provided through the Council's Cost of Living Team, strives to deliver these priorities.
- 2.2. In August 2022, the South Kesteven Cost of Living Strategic Working Group (COL SWG) was formed in response to increasing cost of living concerns and energy price increases. As a result of this, the Cost of Living Team was formed in June 2023. This is the second report to be presented to this committee, with the first report being presented on 1 February 2024.

About the Cost of Living team

- 2.3. The Cost of Living Team is currently in place until 31 March 2025, at which point part of the funding for the team will cease (UKSPF). The remaining funding is from the Revenues and Benefits budget as part of one officer's substantive post within this service area.
- 2.4. The team consists of two officers who provide dedicated support to residents of South Kesteven through a variety of methods which are detailed further in this report.
- 2.5. The aims and objectives of the Cost of Living Team are to support our most vulnerable residents, who cannot access any other income, to sustain their home, health, family, and security. The Cost of Living Team is very aware of how important this support is to residents, and this is why the Council has had such a team since June 2023.
- 2.6. The team also provides vital support to those residents who have no knowledge of the benefits and support available to them (as they have not needed to access support previously), or the various avenues available to them for debt advice and support. This is a complex area and navigation of entering into a new area can be daunting.

Cost of Living Support (Advice and Referral Process)

- 2.7. As part of the introduction of the Household Support Fund 3 (HSF), an internal, online form was put in place for SK Officers and Elected Members to complete to refer a resident into the Cost of Living team for support. This support can take the form of general advice, completion of application forms for various benefits and charities, referral to third sectors and assessment for a HSF voucher.
- 2.8. Since the referral process was launched on 24 August 2023, the Cost of Living team has received and processed a total of 1,605 referrals.
- 2.9. Each referral requires an initial appointment which takes between 30 and 60 minutes with the resident to discuss their personal and household financial circumstances, to determine whether they are receiving all support available to them – maximising their income and looking at ways in which debt support can be provided. Additional appointments may also take place to complete a budget review and applications for benefits and support from charities. The team will offer money advice and consider whether more formal debt support is needed. Additionally, the team will also provide energy advice, potentially referring them to be considered for grants for energy efficiency.
- 2.10. The team does have an holistic view of the resident's circumstances and will discuss their council tax and/or rent account balance, Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit, Foodbank vouchers, top-ups for shortfall in rent / council tax, tenancy support (if SKDC tenant – will be referred in to Tenancy Support Team) and other wider support such as referrals into third party organisations where bespoke support is needed, for example, appeals for other benefits, next steps to consider for debt relief orders etc. The team is also able to identify any potential 'hidden issues or support needs' the resident may have, that they may not have the full understanding of.
- 2.11. In doing this, the Cost of Living Team is providing support to other Council service areas that do not have the capacity or this level of knowledge and would historically have referred the customer to a third party organisation. The team has found that residents are more open with them, than with a specific service area – for example, someone speaking to an officer regarding council tax or rent arrears, may not feel comfortable having a more in-depth conversation. The Cost of Living team provides a 'safe space' conversation, which usually results in positive dialogue and the team being able to obtain more information to help the resident.
- 2.12. The support provided is in-depth as the team has to make an assessment as to what support is needed and which organisation is most suitable to provide that support. The team does not simply offer a blanket response to all residents as their circumstances are assessed on an individual needs basis.

Household Support Fund – October 2021 to September 2024

- 2.13. One of the main responsibilities of the Cost of Living Team is to administer and distribute the Household Support Fund.
- 2.14. Household Support Fund (HSF) was first announced by Government in October 2021 with funding starting from 6 October 2021, with the current fund ending on 30 September 2024. Government announced on 2 September 2024 a sixth Household Support Fund will open from Autumn 2024 to 31 March 2025 – this is detailed in paragraph 2.19.
- 2.15. Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how the funding is to be used (with the scope set out in the national guidance and the accompanying grant determination). The expectation of all funds has been that funding should be used to support households in the most need with food, energy, and utility costs.
- 2.16. Funding is awarded directly to tier 1 authorities, this being Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), acting as the LA Single Point of Contact (LA SPOC). In October 2021, it was agreed LCC and Lincolnshire's District Councils would form a Lincolnshire Working Group to discuss and agree a way forward for the distribution of the funding across the County.
- 2.17. Since October 2021, there have been further HSF schemes announced and implemented, with the current scheme (HSF6) due to open in Autumn. The Lincolnshire Working Group has continued to meet regularly since October 2021 and is currently considering the support which can be provided for HSF6.
- 2.18. Since October 2021, the Cost of Living Team has distributed a total of 13,720 payments / vouchers totalling £2,114,054 to South Kesteven residents. This is a total of £154 per resident. Appendix 1 provides details as to the funding available, eligibility, value of financial support, number of residents supported and how that support was provided.

Household Support Fund – Autumn 2024 to March 2025

- 2.19. On 2 September 2024, Government confirmed the extension of a sixth Household Support Fund to run from Autumn 2024 to 31 March 2025: [Government support extended to help struggling households with bills and essential costs over winter - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/support-extended-to-help-struggling-households-with-bills-and-essential-costs-over-winter)
- 2.20. As a result, the Cost of Living Team will continue to support our poorest residents, providing vital support for energy, food and essential items. Once full guidance and details of the scheme have been released, all Lincolnshire Councils will continue to work together, along with Lincolnshire County Council to determine how the funding will be allocated across the County. In addition, the Councils will work together to

review the criteria for the support and agree the best mechanism for the support to be provided to residents.

Household Support Fund – voucher re-use

- 2.21. There are occasions where a voucher will not be redeemed by the recipient. This could be due to a change in the recipient's circumstances or, on occasions where the voucher was issued as part of a mandatory requirement (such as for all residents in receipt of pension credit or those in receipt of housing benefit only), where the recipient has advised us they do not wish to redeem the voucher.
- 2.22. Where this situation occurs, once the voucher has expired, the Cost of Living Team is able to re-issue the voucher. The voucher must be re-issued to the same cohort as originally intended i.e. if a voucher was for someone in receipt of pension credit or housing benefit only, the re-issued voucher must also be issued to someone with those same circumstances.
- 2.23. It will therefore be expected that vouchers issued as part of HSF6 (Autumn 2024 to March 2025) will expire after the scheme closes. These can be re-issued as stated above, resulting in ongoing financial support being available post scheme closure from 1 April 2025.

Removal of the Winter Fuel Payment - identification of support for those who do not receive pension credit

- 2.24. On 29 July 2024, the Government announced that, from Winter 2024/25, households in England and Wales will no longer be entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) unless they receive Pension Credit (as of 23 September 2024) or certain other means-tested benefits, as detailed here: [Winter Fuel Payment: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/winter-fuel-payment-overview). As a result, Regulations were laid in Parliament on 22 August 2024.
- 2.25. As a negative Statutory Instrument, the regulations would become law unless Parliament passes a motion to annul it within a specified period. An Opposition motion to do that failed on 10 September 2024, and the regulations came into force on 16 September 2024.
- 2.26. On 20 August 2024, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) wrote to all Local Authority Chief Executives and Revenues and Benefits Managers to ask Housing Benefit Teams to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to help them reach those pensioners who could benefit from Pension Credit and therefore continue to receive an annual Winter Fuel Payment.

2.27. On 18 September 2024, the Department for Work and Pensions wrote to all Local Authority Chief Executives to advise of their "Bringing together the administration of Pensioner Housing Benefit and Pension Credit" 'campaign.

2.28. Officers have reviewed information detailing the pensioner demographics within South Kesteven. The key information is as follows:

- The total Pension caseload for South Kesteven is 31,971.
- Of those, 2,541 (7.95%) South Kesteven pensioners are eligible for means tested Winter Fuel Payments and 92.05% (29,430) of pensioners have lost the payment.
- There are an estimated 5,582 pensioners who are in receipt other benefits that do not qualify under the new rules. This is 18.97% of the non-qualifying total of 29,430 or 17.46% of the total caseload.
- 57.8% (1,310) of Housing Benefit claimants are also receiving Pension Credit.

2.29. **Appendix Two** provides details of all activities which will have been taking place from 16 September 2024 to 23 December 2024. This is a key period as any pensioner who makes a successful claim for Pension Credit between this time, would be eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment (providing the Pension Credit claim is backdated to the eligibility date of 23 September 2024 – the allowable limit for a backdate is 3 months).

2.30. In addition to the Winter Fuel Payment, the team will also consider eligibility for a warm home discount. The scheme will re-open again in October 2024 - [Warm Home Discount Scheme: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/schemes/warm-home-discount-scheme). This is a one off £150 discount from electricity bills. The utility provider must be signed up to the scheme, and residents will qualify if they:

- receive the [Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit](https://www.gov.uk/government/schemes/warm-home-discount-scheme); or
- [are on a low income](https://www.gov.uk/government/schemes/warm-home-discount-scheme) and have high energy costs

3. Key Considerations

3.1. These are included throughout the report and members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The report is for information only.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix One – Financial support for residents facilitated by the Cost of Living Team from December 2021 to September 2024.
- 5.2 Appendix Two – Action and communication plan

The total amount of financial support issued to residents as facilitated by the Cost of Living team from December 2021 to September 2024 is **£2,114,054** with **13,720** payments / vouchers issued.

Year	Type of Funding	Eligibility	Value of financial support issued to residents	Number of payments / vouchers issued	How funding was issued
2021/22	Household Support Fund Round 1 (December 2021 to March 2022)	Applicants must be SKDC resident aged over 18 years old	£304,683	2,590	Vouchers issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food (supermarket) Energy & Utility costs
2022/23	Household Support Fund Round 2 (April 2022 to September 2022)	In receipt of pension credit	£102,575	2,390	Vouchers issued – set value of £110
	Household Support Fund Round 3 (September 2022 to March 2023)	Applicants must be SKDC resident aged over 18 years old	£252,625.80	2,382	Vouchers issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash vouchers for energy Supermarket Energy
		Those in receipt of Housing Benefit only (to bring in line with the DWP Cost of Living payment)	£168,934	1,186	BACS payment Vouchers issued

Year	Type of Funding	Eligibility	Value of financial support issued to residents	Number of payments / vouchers issued	How funding was issued
		Those in receipt of Housing Benefit only (to bring in line with the DWP Cost of Living payment)	£30,586	152	Vouchers issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food (supermarket) • Energy & Utility costs
2023/24	Household Support Fund Round 4 (April 2023 to March 2024)	Those in receipt of Housing Benefit only (to bring in line with the DWP Cost of Living payment)	£705,600	2,412	Vouchers issued to be redeemed at any Post Office
		Support for those who have specifically not received the DWP Cost of Living Payments.	£51,000	233	Vouchers issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food (supermarket) • Energy & Utility costs
		Support for those who are in receipt of DWP Benefits, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support who have been referred by SKDC Teams and Elected Members.	£114,594	1,331	Vouchers issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy & Utility costs • Food
		Warm packs	£9,000	N/A	Warm pack collection and distribution from the

Year	Type of Funding	Eligibility	Value of financial support issued to residents	Number of payments / vouchers issued	How funding was issued
					Jubilee Church, Grantham
	Additional wrap around support as a result of general referrals into the Cost of Living Team	Those who were referred in for HSF4 support	£89,719	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax Reduction • Discretionary Council Tax Payments • Discretionary Housing Payments • Foodbank vouchers • White Goods
2024/25	Better Housing, Better Health referrals	A service supporting residents to keep warm, stay safe and live well in their homes <u>Home - Better Housing Better Health (bhbh.org.uk)</u>	£49,450	43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility vouchers (£1,150)
2024/25	Household Support Fund Round 5 (April 2024 to September 2024)	Support for those who are in receipt of DWP Benefits, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support who have been referred by SKDC Teams and Elected Members.	£121,371	794	<p>Vouchers issued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food (supermarket) • Energy & Utility costs

Year	Type of Funding	Eligibility	Value of financial support issued to residents	Number of payments / vouchers issued	How funding was issued
98		Support for residents not in receipt of an income related Benefit that are struggling financially	£55,000	207	Vouchers issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food (supermarket)
		Warm packs (Winter 2024)	£9,000	N/A	Warm pack collection and distribution from the Jubilee Church, Grantham
		Those who were referred into the Cost of Living Team	£49,916	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax Reduction • Discretionary Council Tax Payments • Discretionary Housing Payments • Foodbank vouchers • White Goods

Action and Communication plan		
	Department for Work and Pensions activity	South Kesteven District Council activity
Pensioners in receipt of Housing Benefit Nationally = 120,000 SKDC = 419	<p>Rollout of pensioner Housing Benefit claims to Pension Credit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact to around 120,000 pensioner households • Building on the findings of a recent trial where DWP invited pensioner Housing Benefit households in ten Local Authority areas to claim Pension Credit as well. DWP aim is to apply the lessons from this trial and extend the approach to all Local Authorities in the coming months. <p>Data sharing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the best possible sharing of information so that each resident receives the benefits to which they are entitled. 	<p>Awareness activities by the Benefits and Cost of Living Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with DWP and other partner organisations such as Age UK and Citizen's Advice to explore ways to reach out to eligible pensioners and help them to make a Pension Credit claim. <p>Communication plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in driving a national Pension Credit promotion campaign and awareness-raising; • Internal communication with all customer facing teams – specifically Benefits, Cost of Living, Council Tax, Customer Service and Housing; • External communications due to be issued through the communications team; • Targeted communication to be issued to those 419 pensioner residents in receipt of Housing Benefit. <p>Targeted Support undertaken by the Cost of Living Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contact the 419 pensioner residents in receipt of Housing Benefit to assess eligibility for Pension credit. • In addition, the following activities would take place for each pensioner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Budgeting support – income and expenditure analysis; ◦ Council Tax Support assessment (22 are not currently receiving this); ◦ Council Tax balance check and advice if required (where there is an outstanding balance);

Action and Communication plan	
Department for Work and Pensions activity	South Kesteven District Council activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eligibility review for other financial support such as foodbank and third sector. ○ Housing Support Fund voucher assessment (and award where eligible); ○ Referral for “Better Housing, Better Health” – a service supporting residents to keep warm, stay safe and live well in their homes: Home - Better Housing Better Health (bhbh.org.uk) ○ Referral to Citizens Advice for Energy Advice Appointments ○ Rent balance check and advice if required (where there is an outstanding balance); ○ Warm home discount eligibility - The scheme will re-open again in October 2024 - Warm Home Discount Scheme: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). This is a one off £150 discount from electricity bills. The utility provider must be signed up to the scheme, and residents will qualify if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit; or ➤ are on a low income and have high energy costs
Cohort 1 – 419 pensioner residents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of Living Team are working through the list using the gov.uk pension credit checker (as we have the income for these residents) to determine pension credit eligibility.

Action and Communication plan	
Department for Work and Pensions activity	South Kesteven District Council activity
All residents in receipt of State Pension Only and in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support	<p>Those identified to qualify for pension credit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of Living Team will contact by phone and support with the completion of a pension credit application (with the residents agreement). <p>Those identified who for not qualify for pension credit but have low household income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of Living Team will collate a list and contact the resident to see if they would benefit from help from the Household Support Pensioners Fund. We have £39K funding which would be issued via vouchers to the resident. Conversations will include advice about attendance allowance and social tariffs If we are not able to make contact by phone then we will send out a letter.
Cohort 2 – 263 pensioner residents: All residents in receipt of State Pension Only and Disability Benefit/Carers and in receipt of Housing	The same actions as above (once all residents in cohort 1 have been contacted)

	Action and Communication plan	
	Department for Work and Pensions activity	South Kesteven District Council activity
Benefit and/or Council Tax Support		
Cohort 3 – 429 pensioner residents: All residents in receipt of State Pension Only and Private Pension and in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support		The same actions as above (once all residents in cohort 1 & 2 have been contacted)
Cohort 4 – 272 pensioner residents: All residents in receipt of State Pension Only and Disability Benefit/Carers and Private Pension and in receipt of Housing		The same actions as above (once all residents in cohort 1, 2 & 3 have been contacted)

	Action and Communication plan	
	Department for Work and Pensions activity	South Kesteven District Council activity
Benefit and/or Council Tax Support		
South Kesteven Pensioner Tenants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have 2,010 SK Pensioner tenants • Of those, 535 tenants have been identified to be in receipt of HB/CTS and are included in the list of residents above <p>Communication plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact to all 1,475 pensioner tenants not in receipt of Housing Benefit; • Letters will be sent asking them to contact the Cost of Living Team so they can determine whether they are eligible for further assistance and financial support. <p>Resident meetings across 14 venues within the district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanton Close: 19th September • Meadow Close: 25th September • Witham Place: 2nd October (General and Sheltered Housing) • Manners Street: 9th October • Riverside: 16th October (General and Sheltered Housing) • Edmonds Close: 23rd October • Hilary Close: 30th October • Emlyn Gardens: 6th November • Greyfriars / Grange / Priory Court: 13th November (General and Sheltered Housing)

Action and Communication plan	
Department for Work and Pensions activity	South Kesteven District Council activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectory Close: 20th November • Church View: 27th November • Archers Way: 4th December • Manor Court: 11th December • Essex Road: 18th December



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 16 October 2024

Report of Councillor Rhea Raysia
Cabinet Member for People and
Communities

Customer Service update

Report Author

Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits Customer and Community)

claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding customer interactions within the Customer Service team and high contact service areas for Q1 2024/25 and call handling up to 31 August 2024.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Review and provide feedback on the information contained in the report.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? 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 There are currently no financial or procurement implications to this report.

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

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are currently no legal or governance implications to this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to being an Effective council. This report, and the service provided through the Council's Customer Service Team and high contact service areas strives to deliver this priority.
- 2.2. A telephony and call handling report was presented to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 December 2023. The report focussed on the position regarding call handling.
- 2.3. The Customer Service Team handle customer interactions in various ways for 17 high contact service areas, as well as general public enquiries. This report will provide an update regarding customer interactions for these service areas for Quarter 1.

Customer Interaction type

- 2.4. Tables 1 and 2 show the different methods and number of customer interactions received into the Customer Service Team during 2022/23, 2023/24 and Quarter 1 2024.

Table 1 – Telephone calls and face to face contact:

	Q1 (2024)	2023/24	2022/23
Customer Service calls	25,158	129,415	108,201
Switchboard calls	3,158	30,394	42,039
Other service calls	13,925	44,345	53,622
Total Calls	42,241	204,154	203,862
Grantham walk-in	1,238	4,540	3,959
Bourne walk-in	163	601	1,021
Bourne Library	7,712	26,528	22,694
Total Walk-in	9,137	31,669	27,674
Grantham appt	82	384	464
Bourne appt	46	203	233
Total Appointments	128	587	697
Total Interactions	50,752	236,410	232,233

2.5. Officers are currently undertaking work to be able to report on the number of online forms completed, which are issued to the relevant service area for response. Once available, this will be included in table 2 below. For clarification, website information is not available for 2022/23 as the old website was not capable of producing the required analytics.

Table 2 – Digital Channels – Emails and Website:

	Q1 (2024)	2023/24	2022/23
Emails	5,513	25,302	27,004
Website	382,833	872,256	Not available
Total	388,346	897,558	27,004

2.6. Table 3 shows the comparison of the different interaction types as 30 June 2024.

2.7. It is important for the Council to provide a variety of methods of contact for our customers. It is appreciated one contact method may not be suitable for all. Therefore, the method for customer contact provided by South Kesteven will continue to include all methods as shown in Table 3.

2.8. It is anticipated the relocation of the Customer Service Centre to The Picture House will improve the customer service experience. The Centre will have a dedicated self-serve area and increased presence of officers from high contact service areas.

Table 3 – Interaction comparisons

	Q1 (2024)	% of all interactions
Telephone Calls	55,729	12.31%
Walk in	8,386	1.85%
Appointments	127	0.03%
Emails	5,513	1.22%
Website	382,833	84.59%
Total	452,588	100%

Call Handling – April 2024 to August 2024

- 2.9. Currently, 82% of calls are handled (answered), with 18% of calls being 'abandoned'. This is a slight reduction from August 2023 of 85% handled and 15% abandoned. An abandoned call is where the call is received and is not connected to the Customer Service Team or Service Area. Call abandonment is monitored from 16 seconds into the call being connected to the Councils call queue.
- 2.10. There are numerous information messages for the customer whilst they are in the call queue, advising of other contact methods such as online, and the option to request a call back. Therefore, some assumptions do have to be made as to why customers abandon their calls – as the reason simply is not known. Analysis of abandonment rates continues to be undertaken by the Customer Service Management Team, with actions being considered where improvements can be made or channel shift can be considered.
- 2.11. Call handling statistics are produced and issued by the Performance and Change Improvement Lead on a monthly basis to the Councils Corporate Management Team and service areas. The information includes number of calls offered, handled, abandoned and average speed of answer.
- 2.12. Performance clinics with service are continuing on a monthly basis which enable both the Customer Service Team and service area to have a platform to be able to advise of pressure points and upcoming changes which may impact customer interactions.
- 2.13. The Customer Service Management Team is reactive to call queues. Where there is a high volume of calls for a particular queue, Customer Service Advisors will be moved to cover that queue. Currently, this is challenging as we have seven new staff who are learning the 17 service areas – this is detailed further in paragraph 2.17 to 2.23.

2.14. The graphs shown at **Appendix 1** show:

- Calls offered, handled, and abandoned (volume)
- Calls handled and abandoned (%)
- Calls handled – comparison between 2023/24 to 2024/25
- Calls abandoned – comparison between 2023/24 to 2024/25

Customer Experience Strategy

2.15. The Customer Service Management team is continuing to undertake a review of the existing Customer Experience Strategy. Meetings have taken place with the internal officers working group, which have been productive and resulted in positive engagement for all attendees. The feedback from the working group will be used to form the draft strategy.

2.16. It is important for all service areas to be included in this piece of work as recognition is needed that we need to adapt to how we deliver our services, particular when we move into the new Customer Service Centre. The aim will be to develop and embed a corporate customer service ethos that will positively transform how the council offers residents and customers excellent service.

2.17. The timeline for the production and approval of the strategy is as follows:

- August to October 2024: Draft strategy to be developed;
- 20 November 2024: Draft strategy to be presented to the Councils Corporate Management Team;
- 13 February 2025: Draft strategy to be presented to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- March 2025: public consultation
- 20 March 2025: Presentation of strategy to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- 6 May 2025: Presentation of strategy to Cabinet

Relocation of the Customer Service Centre

2.18 The relocation of the Customer Service Centre to The Picture House, St Catherines Road is progressing.

2.19 A verbal update will be provided by the Head of Service at the committee meeting.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. These are included throughout the report and members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The report is for information only.

5. Appendices

5.1. Appendix One – Call Handling

Background:

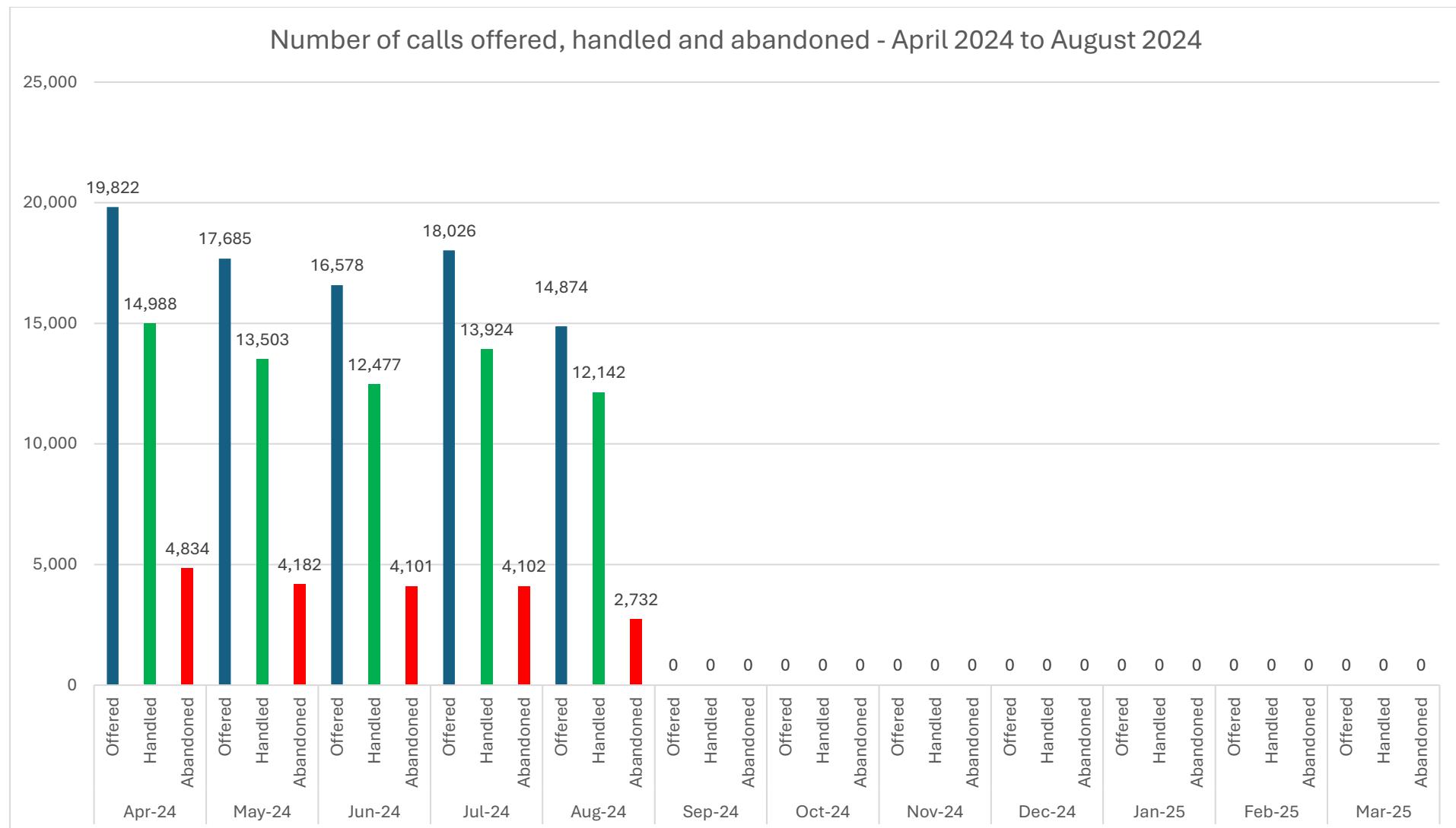
- Statistics are produced and issued by the Customer Service Performance and Change Improvement Lead on a monthly basis to the relevant service areas. The information includes number of calls offered, handled, abandoned and average speed of answer.
- These statistics are calls which are received through the Ignite system. This is a combination of calls which would use the traditional IRV (Press 1, Press 2) and the Virtual Operator, which are routed to the high level service area queues.
- These statistics do not include calls which have reached the service area by direct dial.
- Where performance concerns are raised, performance clinics with service areas are continuing on a monthly basis which enable both the Customer Service Team and service area to have a platform to be able to advise of pressure points and upcoming changes which may impact customer interactions.
- The Customer Service Management Team are reactive to call queues. Where there is a high volume of calls for a particular queue, Customer Service Advisers will be moved to cover that queue. Currently, this is challenging as we have seven new staff who are learning the 17 service areas.
- The Customer Service Team is budgeted for 14.3 FTE and currently have 20 staff (with one vacancy). Of those 20 staff, all have varying levels of skills and knowledge to enable them to handle calls. Therefore, at any time, it is very likely not all staff can take any call from the 17 different service areas.
- The data includes calls handled by Customer Service and individual service areas as detailed below:
- Calls handled by Customer Service:
 - Arts (Box Office Ticket Bookings);

- Benefits (inc overpayments);
- Business Rates;
- Council Tax Billing;
- Enforcement (Revenues);
- Environmental Health & Neighbourhoods;
- Green Waste;
- Homelessness;
- Land Charges;
- Licensing;
- Payments;
- Planning;
- Rents (Income Recovery);
- Street Scene;
- Switchboard;
- Tenancy Services – Housing Management (Estates);
- Waste.

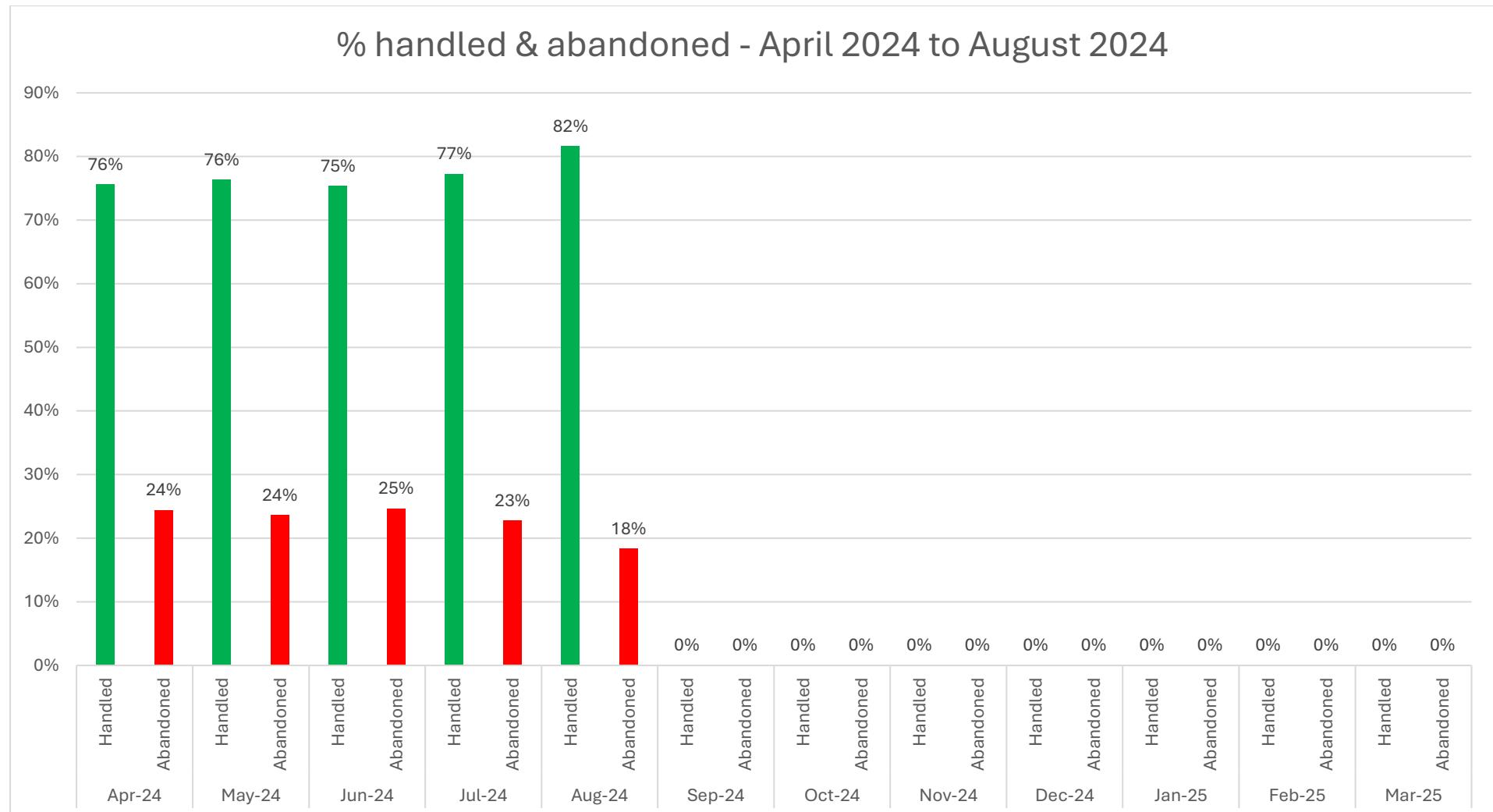
Calls handled by Service area:

- Allocations & Tenancy Services (Lettings);
- Elections;
- Housing Improvements and Repairs;
- Rents.

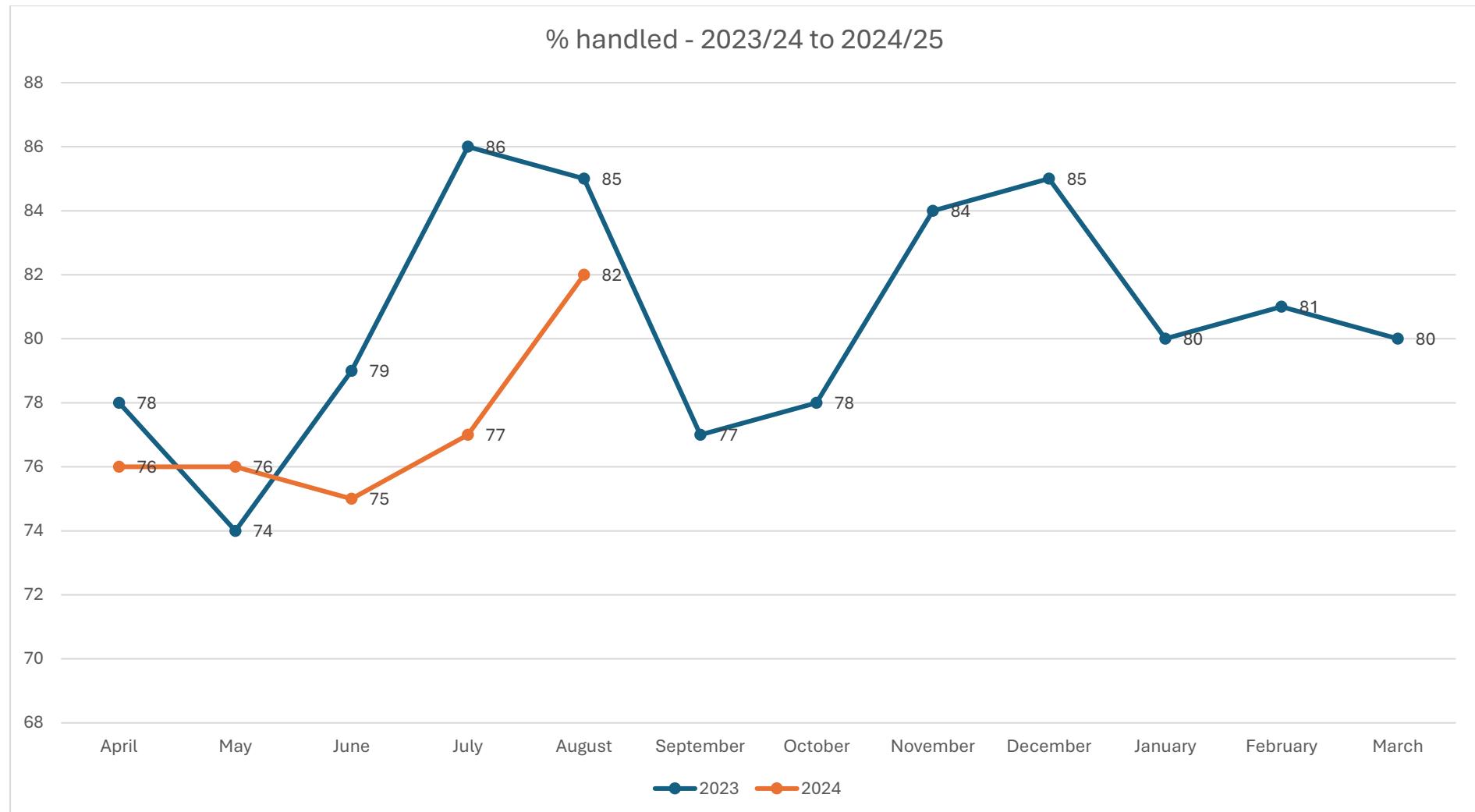
Calls offered, handled, and abandoned (volume) – April 2024 to August 2024



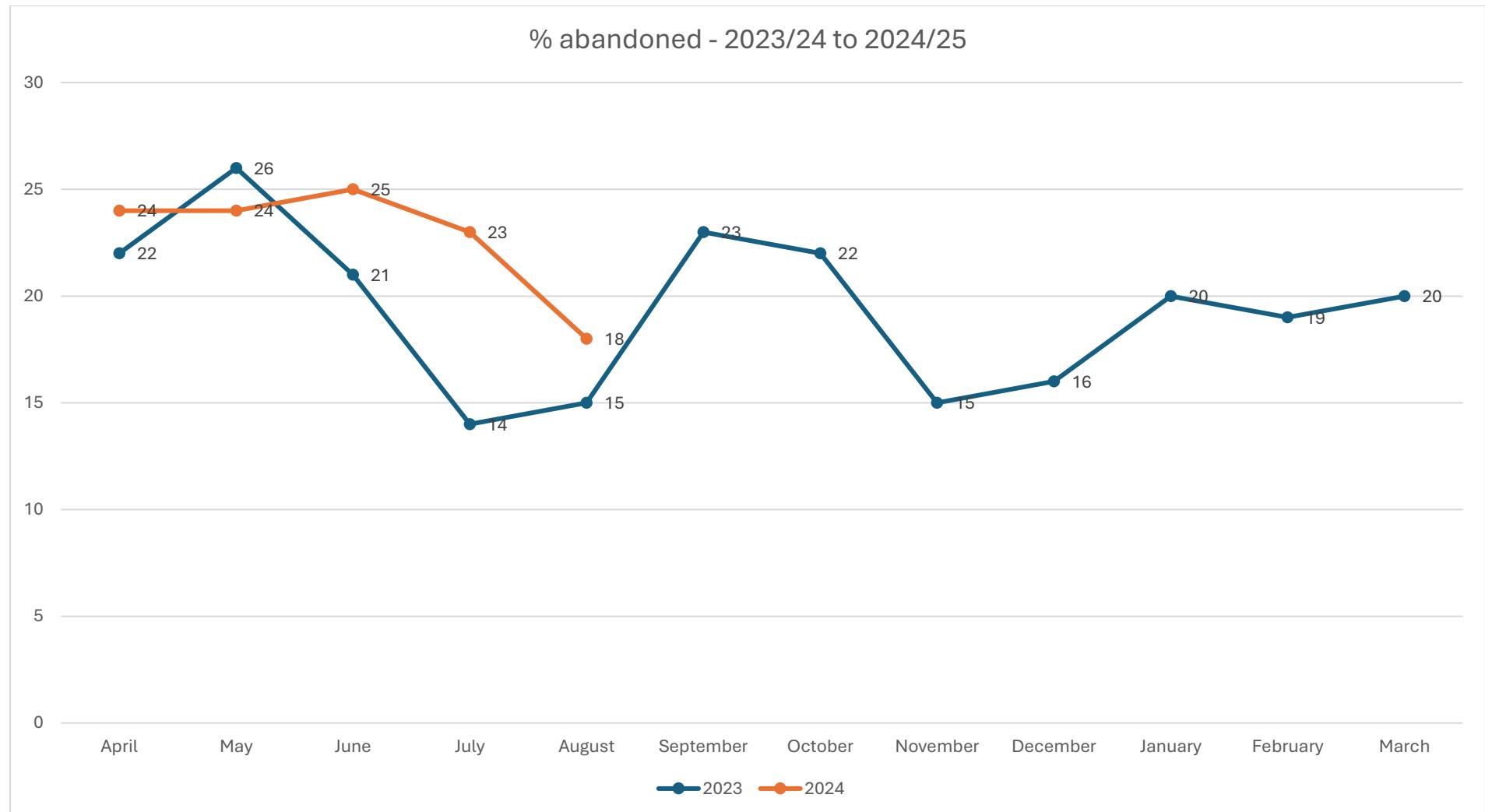
Calls handled and abandoned (%) – April 2024 to August 2024



% Calls handled – comparison 2023/24 to 2024/25



% Calls abandoned – comparison 2023/24 to 2024/25





Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 16 October 2024

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside,
Cabinet Member for People and
Communities

Youth Council

Report Author

Fran Beckitt, Head of Service – Human Resources and Organisational Development

 fran.beckitt@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report aims to update the members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress and activities of the Youth Council of SKDC.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? 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 There are no financial implications directly relating to this report.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy 151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. The Democratic Services Team have been actively involved in supporting the Youth Council, including the formation of their terms of reference and standing orders.

Completed by: Graham Watts (Monitoring Officer)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. South Kesteven's 'Youth Council' was formed in July 2023 and has met 7 times over the past 14 months.
- 2.2. The Youth Council consists of residents aged 11 to 19 who are committed to addressing key issues affecting young people in our district.
- 2.3. The Youth Council was established to provide a platform for young people in South Kesteven to express their views, influence decisions affecting them and take action on matters that impact their lives.
- 2.4. Members elected a Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Youth Council and vote on who this will be every 4th meeting.
- 2.5. The group meet regularly to discuss and work on their chosen priority areas as well as debate other topics of interest to the Youth Councillors. They have also completed governance activities such as designing their own terms of reference and standing orders.

Priority Areas

2.6 The Youth Council debated and voted on three priority areas which are:

- Mental Health of young people in South Kesteven
- Supporting young people in entrepreneurship
- Climate change and sustainability

2.7 Members of the Youth Council have acknowledged mental health is a critical issue for young people in South Kesteven and the Youth Council is therefore dedicating significant effort to this area. They are planning to work with a local charity to explore a programme for Mental Health First Aid for young people as well as looking at other ways they can make a difference to young peoples' mental health.

2.8 With climate change being a global issue affecting future generations, the members committed to taking local action. This included initiating an 'EcoCycle' project at a local school and a future focus on rewilding and supporting biodiversity at school and home.

2.9 Encouraging entrepreneurship among young people is another key priority for the Youth Council and they are currently exploring the possibility of a Youth Market in South Kesteven.

Future Plans

2.10 Having recently lost some members who have gone to University, the Youth Council would like to grow in membership. The group is currently advertising for new members who can apply to join via an application link - <https://forms.office.com/e/06DqYdm8i> It is being promoted through the schools, on social media and through current members.

2.11 The next meeting is planned for November when they hope to welcome new members, progress with the priority areas, discuss what young people want from Grantham town centre and elect a new Chairman. There is also a planned discussion around how the cost of living is effecting young people in the District.

Voices of the Youth Councillors

2.12 "Being a Youth Councillor has been a great experience. I am studying a Politics A Level and it's been interesting finding out more about local government as well as having an opportunity to debate with people from other schools. Being in the Council Chamber is also pretty fun."

2.13 "I've been involved since the start and really enjoyed being Chair and helping form what the Youth Council will do and how. I've gained a deeper understanding

of the democratic process and feel the Youth Council can make a real difference.”

3. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Youth Council Code of Conduct

Appendix 2 – Promotional materials and photos

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Youth Council – Code of Conduct

General Principles of Councillor Conduct

In accordance with the trust enshrined to me by the council, on all occasions:

- Act with integrity and honesty.
- Treat all persons fairly and with respect.
- Lead by example and act in a way that secures public and the councils confidence.

In undertaking my role:

- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage any person.
- I avoid conflicts of interest.
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence.
- I remember my role is to represent the young people of SK; and use every opportunity to find out other young people's opinions and make these known to decision makers.

Standards of Councillor Conduct

This section sets out the obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required.

1. Respect

- Treat other councillors and members with respect.
- Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech and the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. You can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

2. Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

Bullying is characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. It can be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one off incident, happen face to face or at school or on social media. Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic which include: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- I do not bully any person.
- I do not harass any person.
- I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

3. Meeting Conduct

- In order to ensure the effectiveness of meetings, I will endeavour to follow the agenda of the meeting and keep conversations to the relevant topics.
- I will ensure fellow Youth Councillors have the opportunity to contribute if they wish to do so.
- I recognise that it is important to listen to everyone's opinions and avoid talking over others, particularly in breakout groups. Champions are assigned to each group to help guide the conversation and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.
- I will try to minimise phone usage during meetings and discussions.
- When personal information is shared during discussion, I will maintain confidentiality outside of the meeting. If, however, I have concerns about anything I have heard, I should raise this with a trusted adult or member of the Youth Council team.

Signed By: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2024/25

WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE PRIORITY
16 October 2024				
Equality and Diversity Annual Position Statement	Carol Drury (Community Engagement Manager)	To provide a retrospective of 2023/24 relating to equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure the Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Committee will be asked to recommend the document for publication to the Cabinet Member for People and Communities.	Agreed at agenda setting meeting	Effective Council
Prevent Update	Carol Drury (Community Engagement Manager)	To provide an update on Prevent to include any changes in legislation, guidance etc and activities undertaken to raise awareness of Prevent that ensure the Council's compliance with the Prevent Duty.	Agreed at agenda setting meeting	Effective Council Connecting Communities
Customer Service Update – Q1 & Q2 (As of August) position	Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community)	To provide an update regarding Customer Service performance and specific activities impacting on Customer Service	14 th December 2023	Effective Council
Cost of Living Update	Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community)	To provide an update on the activities undertaken by the Cost	1 February 2024	Enabling Economic Opportunity

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE PRIORITY
		of Living Team and results achieved.		Effective Council
Health and Wellbeing Action Plan Update	Bethany Goodman (Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead)	To provide an update on the progress and delivery of the actions identified within the South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan		
Youth Council	Fran Beckitt (Head of Service – Human Resources and Organisational Development)	Update on the Youth Council, its aims, priorities and activity so far.	Agreed at the agenda setting meeting	Effective Council
12 December 2024				
Corporate Plan 2024-27 Key Performance Indicators: 2024/25 Mid-Year (Q2) Report	Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance)	This report would outline South Kesteven District Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2024-27 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from July-September 2024.		
Armed Forces Update	Debbie Nicholls (Armed Forces Officer)	To provide a retrospective of events, activity and support provided during 2023/24 relating to the Armed Forces Covenant and the Council's responsibilities under the Armed Forces Act.	Agreed at agenda setting meeting	Effective Council Connecting Communities
13 February 2025				

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE PRIORITY
Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2028	Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community)	Committee to review and provide feedback on the draft Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2028 as part of stakeholder consultation		
20 March 2025				
Cost of Living Update	Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community)	It will be intended for these to be every 6 months from 2025	1 February 2024 Last reported 16 October 2024	Enabling Economic Opportunity Effective Council
Customer Service Update – Q3 position	Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community)	To provide an update regarding Customer Service performance and specific activities impacting on Customer Service	5 July 2023	Effective Council
Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2028	Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community)	Committee to review and provide feedback on the outcome of stakeholder consultation and final Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2028		

113

Unscheduled Items

Report title	Issue	Originated	Corporate Priority
Car Parking			
Discussion around road safety and speeding in communities			
Impact of the Forbidden Forest Festival on South Kesteven's rural communities			
Crime Disorder Meeting			
Parish and Town Council liaison	To provide a review of the Parish and Town Council Conference	Agreed at agenda setting meeting	Connecting Communities

The Committee's Remit

The remit of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be to work alongside Cabinet Members to assist with the development of policy and to scrutinise decisions in respect of, but not limited to:

- Allotments
- Anti-social behaviour, community safety and local policing
- Benefit claims
- Community engagement & cohesion
- Community funding and volunteering
- Community right to bid
- Community well-being
- Customer services
- Disabled facilities grant
- Equality and diversity

- Parish and town council liaison
- Public conveniences
- Safeguarding and individual wellbeing
- Shop front designs and funding
- Street furniture