

Council



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Thursday, 17 July 2025 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - Council Offices, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Members: Councillor Ian Selby, Chairman of the Council
Councillor Anna Kelly, Vice-Chairman of the Council

Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Steven Cunnington
Councillor James Denniston
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Phil Gadd

Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Zoe Lane
Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Habib Rahman
Councillor Rhea Rayside

Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Rob Shorrock
Councillor Vanessa Smith
Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley

Agenda

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01476 406080

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive

www.southkesteven.gov.uk

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

For those Councillors who wish to attend, prayers will be held at 1:55pm before the commencement of the meeting. Please be seated by 1:50pm.

1. Public Open Forum

The public open forum will commence at **2.00 p.m.** and the following formal business of the Council will commence at **2.30 p.m.** or whenever the public open forum ends, if earlier.

2. Apologies for absence

3. Disclosure of Interests

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

4. Minutes of the previous meetings

(Pages 3 - 17)

To approve the following sets of minutes:

- AGM held on 22 May 2025.
- Extraordinary Council held on 12 June 2025.

5. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

(Page 19)

6. Appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council

(Pages 21 - 23)

To approve changes to the membership of Council Committees.

7. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2024/2025

(Pages 25 - 46)

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees during 2024/2025.

8. Pay Award 2025/2026

(Pages 47 - 59)

To explain the reasons for a recommendation to implement a pay award in line with the National Employers' for Local Government Services final offer effective from 1 April 2025.

9. Members' Open Questions

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

10. Close of meeting

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 22 MAY 2025

2.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Paul Fellows Chairman
Councillor Ian Selby Vice Chairman

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

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

OFFICERS

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

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

1. Apologies for absence

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

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

2. Election of Chairman

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

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

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

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

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

OUNCILLOR IAN SELBY TOOK THE CHAIR

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

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

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

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

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

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

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

4. Public Open Forum

There were no public speakers.

5. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

6. Minutes of previous meetings

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

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

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

7. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted the previous Chairman's engagements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Cabinet Member for Housing outlined the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

DECISION

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

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

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

During discussions, Members highlighted the following points:

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

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

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

Debate ensued on the substantive motions:

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

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

DECISION

That Full Council:

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

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Employment Committee

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

Governance and Audit Committee

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

Licensing Committee

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

Planning Committee

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

Standards Committee

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 16.20 and resumed at 16.38.

11. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

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

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

DECISION:

That Full Council:

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

12. Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2024/25

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

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

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

DECISION

That Full Council:

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

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

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

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

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

DECISION

That Full Council:

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

3. Approve the UKSPF and Rural Prosperity Board Terms of Reference (Appendix B of the report).

4. Approve the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme and financing statement for 2025/26 (Appendix C of the report).

14. Appointment of Independent Persons

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

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

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

It was proposed, seconded, and AGREED:

DECISION

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

Councillors Rhea Raysia and Vanessa Smith left the Chamber.

15. Decisions Taken Under Urgency

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

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

16. Members' Open Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17. Close of meeting

The meeting concluded at 17.40.

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 12 JUNE 2025

11.00 AM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Ian Selby Chairman

Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Phil Gadd
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Philip Knowles

Councillor Robert Leadenhamb
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Habib Rahman
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Paul Wood

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects

David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer

Chris Prime, Communications Manager

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Gary Andrew, IT Services Manager

Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

18. Apologies for absence

The Chairman of the Council welcomed everyone to the Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:

Emma Baker
David Bellamy
Steven Cunningham
James Denniston
Ben Green
Graham Jeal
Gloria Johnson
Anna Kelly
Zoe Lane
Bridget Ley
Nikki Manterfield
Nick Robins
Penny Robins
Rob Shorrock
Vanessa Smith
Elvis Stooke
Jane Wood
Sue Woolley

19. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

20. Appointment of Interim Monitoring Officer

Members considered a report on the appointment of an Interim Monitoring Officer.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report. All political Group Leaders had been consulted about the interim appointment of Angela Wakefield, the Monitoring Officer at Rutland County Council.

It was outlined that the absence of a Monitoring Officer at the authority would cause problems, including (but not limited to) the following:

- one of the roles of the Monitoring Officer was to ensure the Council remained within the law when taking decision, and without anyone in post this would of course be difficult.
- Councillors would also lack crucial Constitutional guidance that a Monitoring Officer would give.
- The continued absence of a Monitoring Officer would lead to other staff being overburdened with emails and correspondence.

- The Monitoring Officer investigated any potential breaches of the Code of Conduct. There would be no-one to respond to any potential breaches in their absence.

The following points were highlighted during debate between members and by officers in response to member questions:

- Thanks were given to Graham Watts, the outgoing Monitoring Officer for his supportive advice and guidance during his time at South Kesteven District Council. Councillors wished him well for his future career.
- A point of order was raised about Mandatory Standing Orders and whether they had been followed in putting the recommendation within the report before Councillors. Rutland County Council had been subjected to a similar situation (the lack of a Monitoring Officer) in a previous year and had amended their Constitution to reflect that Council could take a decision on an 'interim' Monitoring Officer without the recruitment and selection process taking place through another Committee. However, it was clear that Full Council was the decision-making body for the appointment of Statutory Officers.
- Legal advice on the route to appointment of the Monitoring Officer had been sought, and whilst it would have been ideal for Employment Committee to scrutinise the appointment, there was a bigger risk that the Council would be left with no Monitoring Officer.
- An interim appointment had no definitive timescale, though the Chief Executive was hopeful that the position of Director of Legal and Governance would be subjected to Employment Committee's scrutiny by September at the earliest as the recruitment process for the position had already started.

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

DECISION

That Full Council:

1. **Approve the appointment of Ms Angela Wakefield as the Interim Monitoring Officer with immediate effect.**
2. **Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development to use the Local Priorities Reserve to fund any necessary costs associated with the interim staffing arrangements as well as the recruitment of a Director for Law and Governance.**

21. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 11:29am.

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Chairman's Engagements

14th May to 9th July 2025

Event Date	SKDC Ref	Organisation and Event	Location
Thursday 29th May 2025	IS0002	Feast of Title – Church Service	Church of Ascension, Grantham
Sunday 1st June 2025	IS0001	Mayor of Peterborough Civic Service	Peterborough Cathedral, Peterborough
Tuesday 10th June 2025	IS0003	Inspire+ Mini Olympics	Grantham
Monday 23rd June 2025	SKDC	Armed Forces Week Flag Raising Ceremony	Grantham
Tuesday 24th June 2025	IS0004	South Holland District Council Armed Forces Day Parade	Spalding
Tuesday 24th June 2025	IS0005	Rotary Swimarathon Presentation Evening	Harlaxton Church, Harlaxton Grantham

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Appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council

Report Author

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

 james.welbourn@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

All Political Group Leaders are responsible for nominating Members from within their respective Groups to each of the Committees/Panels, in accordance with the political proportionality of the Authority as appropriate.

Recommendations

Full Council is recommended to approve appointments to committee seats as proposed by respective political group leaders at 3.3 of 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 no financial implications as a result of this report. Any associated members expenses can be contained within existing budgets.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Appointments to the Council's Committees, or changes to their makeup must be agreed by Full Council.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 introduced statutory requirements that, where a relevant authority has a membership divided into different political groups, it must ensure that appointments reflect the political balance of the Council as a whole.
- 2.2 During the annual meeting of Full Council many seats on committees of Council were allocated to Councillors; any remaining vacancies were filled under delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with political group leaders.
- 2.3 Full Council can amend membership of committees.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 When making appointments, the following factors must be taken into consideration:
 - In order to demonstrate a robust and effective scrutiny process, no member of Cabinet may sit on an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - Membership of the Chief Executive's Appeal Panel must include at least one member of Cabinet.

- Members of the Chief Executive's Appeal Panel should not be Members of the Employment Committee. This is to ensure that any appeal lodged is considered by Members who have not previously been involved with any matters being challenged.

3.2 Political groups can 'gift' any of their allocated seats to another political group, or to a designated individual Member of the Council.

3.3 Following this a change to the membership of committees was requested by the following Group Leaders:

- Councillor Susan Sandall to replace Councillor Nikki Manterfield on the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Grantham Independent Group to gift their seat on Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to the Independent Group. This would see Councillor James Denniston replace Councillor Steven Cunnington as a member of this committee.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1. Full Council must make appointments as prescribed by legislation and the Council's Constitution. The report facilitates this requirement.

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Thursday, 17 July 2025

Report of Councillor Bridget Ley –
Chairman of Finance and Economic
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Annual Review of Overview and Scrutiny 2024/2025

Report Author

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

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Purpose of Report

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees during 2024/2025.

Recommendations

That Full Council notes the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/2025.

Decision Information

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

No

What are the relevant corporate
priorities?

All

Which wards are impacted? (All 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 As this is a look back at the previous year and is an annual report for noting, there are no financial implications.

Completed by: *David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 officer*

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Constitution requires that there is an annual report on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the previous year. The Constitution also allows for a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen to take place to discuss the content of the report; as occurred last year all Chairmen were consulted via email and asked to select notable pieces of work for the year. This is reflected in the Appendix to the report.

Completed by: *James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager*

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Under Article 6.4 of Part 2 of the Council's Constitution, the Chairmen of all Overview and Scrutiny Committees are required to determine the content of an annual report relating to each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The report is to be co-ordinated and signed off by the appointed Chairman of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.2 The five Overview and Scrutiny Committees are:
 - Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3 In addition to the above, there is also a yearly meeting of the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee which involves all Overview and Scrutiny Members.

- 2.4 The Constitution outlines that the Environment and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees can meet jointly to discuss certain issues, such as Planning and Licensing Policy. Other Overview and Scrutiny Committees can meet jointly as and when required.
- 2.5 This annual report covers those Committees that were in place during 2024/2025 and contains a summary of the topics that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has considered at their meetings during the municipal year.

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution prescribes that an annual Overview and Scrutiny report is produced.
- 3.2 The Council could opt to amend the content of the Annual Report, as presented. However, the report is only a summary of topics covered during the year. Minutes of each committee meeting are available on the Council's website, as are the webcasts.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 All Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees from 2024/2025 were asked by email to contribute to the content of the report. Any comments received have been reflected within Appendix 1.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/2025.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Report of: The Chairmen of the Overview
and Scrutiny Committees

Annual Report 2024-2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 During 2024/2025 South Kesteven District Council had five Overview and Scrutiny Committees, each comprising nine members of the Council.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees are responsible for discharging the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the discharge of functions under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, which require councils to put arrangements in place to designate a committee as a crime and disorder scrutiny committee.
- 1.3 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for monitoring the Council's performance, considering its decisions, questioning how those decisions are made and recommending improvements. The committees may also undertake external scrutiny to examine wider issues that affect the District.

2. Role of Scrutiny

- 2.1 There are four key functions of scrutiny:
 - 2.1.1 To provide a "critical friend" challenge to the Cabinet as well as external authorities and agencies
 - Challenge by scrutiny should be constructive, robust and purposeful
 - Scrutiny should work effectively with the Cabinet and senior management
 - Scrutiny should provide an effective mechanism for the Cabinet to demonstrate public accountability
 - 2.1.2 To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
 - Scrutiny should take a community leadership role by focusing on issues of public concern
 - Scrutiny should have a constructive relationship with the press and media
 - Scrutiny should create the conditions for plural views and concerns to be considered
 - 2.1.3 Scrutiny members should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public
 - Scrutiny should operate with political impartiality
 - Scrutiny should have ownership of its work programme
 - Scrutiny members should have a worthwhile and fulfilling role
 - 2.1.4 Scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services
 - Scrutiny should have access to timely and accurate performance information
 - The scrutiny work programme should be balanced, well co-ordinated and integrated into corporate processes
 - Scrutiny work should be carried out with strategic objectives in mind
 - Scrutiny should contribute to improving local public services

3. Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Bridget Ley

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Gareth Knight

3.1 The Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 14 January 2025 to consider the budget proposals for 2025/2026.

3.2 The Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered revenue and capital budgets associated with the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. It also included:

- Funding position for the General Fund
- General Fund proposals
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28
- Capital Financing
- Reserves and Balances

3.3 Other considerations included:

- The timetable for the setting of Council Tax and budgets for 2025/2026
- The net cost of services for 2025/2026
- Fees and charges including changes to car parking tariffs.
- Cost and Minimum Revenue Pressures, which included the current costs of St. Martin's Park and the Depot.
- Backlog maintenance to Council assets (including leisure centres and car parks
- HRA right to buys
- AN increase to the homelessness budget.

3.4 As part of its recommendations, the Committee expressed its support for the proposals in the Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development's report in respect of the General Fund (both Revenue and Capital) and the Housing Revenue Account (again, Revenue and Capital). The Committee also recommended to Cabinet the proposed Band D 3% increase in Council Tax.

4. Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Murray Turner

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Barry Dobson

During the 2024/2025 municipal year, the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on six occasions. Several update reports and reports for information were considered by the Committee. There were a number of performance reports on LeisureSK Limited throughout the year. An additional meeting focussing on LeisureSK Limited was held on 3 September 2024 and contained information relating to anticipated expenditure, cashflow, and a timeline for 2025/2026 budget information.

A summary of other key items considered by the Committee is set out below:

Play Area Strategy

4.1 The Committee considered the Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven. The Strategy would allow the Council to prioritise those areas that required capital investment whilst allowing work to continue with external stakeholders to identify funding opportunities. It was confirmed that there was £100,000 being allocated to the finance portfolio to be invested in replacement equipment.

As part of the Play Area Strategy the Committee scrutinised an action Plan to work alongside the Strategy, which was endorsed at their meeting on 3 September 2024.

The Committee recommended the overall Play Area Strategy to Cabinet.

Cultural Strategy

4.2 Since its adoption in July 2023, significant progress had been made towards delivering the strategy's objectives guided by key performance indicators. Members were informed of several achievements of the Strategy to date, such as the money raised by the 'Pay It Forward' Scheme.

4.3 Several ideas were put forward for cultural events in the district, such as a pop up cinema, a free-thinking festival, and a reinvention of the former Gravity Fields Festival.

Markets

4.4 A review of South Kesteven's Council-led markets was considered at the meeting held on 4 February 2025.

4.5 The Committee were informed that a grant of £58,200 had been awarded to improve markets through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), and this funding would cover a number of areas, such as stall covers, gazebos, wheeled cages, a stage, road closure barriers and signage and many other items.

4.6 A number of queries were raised by committee members, on the subjects of market stalls, market/high street loyalty cards and the financial position of markets.

Grantham Town FC

4.7 The Deputy Leader of the Council presented a report providing Committee with an update on the ongoing lease negotiations between the Council and Grantham Town Football Club. Discussions had been ongoing since the expiry of the previous lease on 31 December 2021.

4.8 The Committee supported a lease arrangement to be entered into with Grantham Town FC, predicated on understanding their future ambitions in terms of community activity and resulting benefits to the Council and wider town.

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2021-2026

4.9 The report gave an overview of the work undertaken to support the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. Physical activity initiatives for Council employees were facilitated throughout the year with opportunities such as an indoor cycling session in September 2024, an annual five-a-side tournament in December 2024, and a 'Step into 2025' steps challenge held in January 2025.

4.10 A full and detailed breakdown was also given of the work undertaken with the Council's leisure provider LeisureSK Limited to deliver the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. Such instances included wellbeing walks, half-term swim crash courses, Fighting Fit Cancer Rehabilitation classes, and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) swimming lessons.

4.11 Members praised the work of the Wellbeing team and noted that 30% of SKDC staff members had reported physical or mental health struggles. Members also raised questions about the GP Referral Scheme and whether it could be explored elsewhere in the district.

LeisureSK Ltd. Progress on Actions Requested by Cabinet

4.12 Members considered an update on the progress made with the actions requested by Cabinet in relation to LeisureSK Ltd, including an update on the leisure management options appraisal which was being undertaken.

4.13 Members of LeisureSK Ltd. answered a range of questions from members of the Committee. Further information was highlighted at the meeting:

- Administration support provided by SKDC was in place for LeisureSK Ltd. – however if this was no longer required it could be withdrawn. It remained the case that SKDC and LeisureSK wanted to work together.
- The Leader of the Council had written to the Board, predominantly over concerns with cashflow. A mitigation plan had been requested.
- The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture attended LeisureSK Ltd. Board meetings as an observer.

4.14 The Committee continued to receive regular updates on the progress of Leisure SK Ltd, and later in the year went onto recommend a budget to Leisure SK Ltd. and endorsed their business plan after an informative debate.

Support for Sports Clubs across South Kesteven

4.15 The report outlined that the Council had provided financial support to the following sports clubs through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to improve their club facilities:

- Barkston and Syston Cricket Club - £4,000
- Barkston and Syston Playing Field - £6,000
- Fulbeck Sport and Social Club - £4,910
- Grantham Squash and Fitness Club - £35,000
- Uffington Cricket Club - £8,000
- Harrowby United FC - £65,000

- The Rippingale Jubilee Playing Field Trust - £20,000

4.16 Through the Council's leisure provider, LeisureSK Limited, there were 50 affiliated clubs which have regular bookings at the centres across the district, covering Netball to Marshall Arts.

4.17 Furthermore, the Council worked closely with organisations such as Positive Futures, Inspire+, and Active Lincolnshire to promote initiatives with the aim of increasing the physical activity of levels of younger people through sport and 5 activity opportunities. Such initiatives were regularly promoted by the Council's website and social media platforms.

4.18 During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- The impact of 'peppercorn rents' as an indirect form of support. The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) confirmed that these arrangements would not be classed as a direct subsidy as the organisations were responsible for maintenance and costs.
- Whether there was scope to increase the amount of sports clubs regularly making bookings with the Council facilities. The Leisure, Parks, and Open Spaces Team Leader noted that 50 clubs was a positive amount and some facilities, such as Bourne, were regularly at full capacity of bookings.
- It was queried whether there was a directory of all sports clubs across the district. It was confirmed that no such directory was published but attention was drawn to the activity finder on the Council's website which was managed by Active Lincolnshire.
- The suggestion was made to invite Chairman and volunteers of all sports clubs across the district to an open forum to workshop how SKDC could best offer support.
- Clarification was sought whether central government could be urged to make sport and leisure statutory services considering the positive physical and mental health benefits. It was confirmed that such representations were being made to central government.
- Attention was drawn to the work of the Dysart Park Family Day.

5. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Ian Selby

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Emma Baker

During the 2024/2025 municipal year, the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions, and there were two further Joint Meetings involving its members. During the year, the Committee was visited by several members of the public, representatives from Rowleys Commercial Energy Assessment Limited and representatives from Lincolnshire County Council (who answered queries related to flooding). A number of update reports and reports for information were considered by the Committee; a summary of other items considered by the Committee is set out below:

Disposal of Vapes

5.1 Members considered an update on the sale and disposal of disposable vapes at their meeting in June 2024.

5.2 Officers were working with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) on an interim solution where they received SKDC's waste at their site. There was confidence on introducing this from September 2025; however, collection would not commence before it was ready. There was also the possibility of funding from Government.

5.3 The battery collection scheme would require education materials for residents. Councils had responded to Government to say that funding for this scheme was insufficient.

Twin Stream Update

5.4 Members considered an update on the roll out of the twin stream project and the timelines for the reintroduction of contamination monitoring process for the dry mixed recycling (DMR) bins.

5.5 Questions and comments raised by the Committee and officers present included:

- Contamination rates were present in around 30% of bins collected.
- Alongside a proactive educational campaign, a 'tag and take' exercise had been undertaken to highlight to residents the problematic items in their recycling waste; this included paper and card. This was paused in February 2024 due to a number of issues.
- When bins were rejected from w/c 10 June there would be a comprehensive rejection tab. A public apology for any mistakes made by the Cabinet Member was contained within the minutes of Full Council on 29 February 2024.
- The legislative requirements for recycling were vague; when something was 'recyclable' this simply meant that it could be recycled anywhere within Europe. If residents were still not sure after reading guidance from the Council on whether their packaging was recyclable, then they should use the black bin rather than potentially contaminate their recycling bin.
- It was pleasing to see the provision of additional staff training and resources. Resources and time would also be used to educate members of the public as to what they could or could not place into their bin.
- Not all waste in a black bin went to landfill, as some of it was sent to the local Energy from Waste plant.

Carbon Emissions

5.6 Members of the Committee received an update on the Council's carbon emissions for 2023/2024, and progress made towards a 30% reduction target.

5.7 Questions and comments raised by the Committee included:

- A query was raised on whether carbon efficient LED lights had been installed in Welham Street, Grantham car park.
- Members discussed the difficulties of reducing carbon emissions on the Council's waste freighters. Electric waste freighters had a short radius before requiring recharging which would be more challenging for South Kesteven as a rural District

- It was queried as to how refrigerants had been reduced by 100%.
- It was suggested that fuel emissions in waste freighters could be reduced by advanced driver training.
- One Member queried what was being used as a substitute for CFC's (Chlorofluorocarbons) in refrigerants

5.8 Members highlighted the impressive work undertaken by the Waste team.

Bulky Waste Collection Service

5.9 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste presented the report that provided responsiveness to community needs and Cabinet were requesting a steer from the Committee on an option to take.

5.10 The report revolved around the opportunity to expand the bulky waste service into a second vehicle and crew to reduce wait times, particularly for challenging items. The investment would enhance service efficiency and would increase revenue for the Council whilst addressing a growing public demand.

5.11 Questions and comments raised by the Committee included:

- bulky waste items had been found abandoned at the entrance to fields in their area, and so expanding the Bulky Waste Collection Service would likely reduce this issue.
- Could smaller items be taken on the day of the bulky item collection for an additional fee?
- the accuracy of the fuel calculation and whether the vehicles were being ran as efficiently as possible.
- Facilitation of a public skip.
- A suggestion of increasing fines as a deterrent.

5.12 The Committee suggested the inclusion of an additional vehicle and crew to be put into the budget setting process.

Re-wilding Ambitions

5.13 The Council had the opportunity to implement rewilding initiatives across the open public spaces it is responsible for. Actively rewilding areas of land provided the opportunity to restore healthy ecosystems, improve biodiversity and reverse the loss of wildlife. As well as contributing to the Council's carbon efficiency targets this could also reduce the costs associated with maintaining these areas in the longer term.

5.14 At their meeting in October 2024 the Committee agreed to endorse the Council's plan to adopt rewilding initiatives on trial sites; to recommend to capture learning and apply to future rewilding plans; and; receive a future report on the outcome of the trial and future plans.

Green Fleet Strategy Update

5.15 At the time of the report's publication, the fleet was made up of over 150 vehicles which were used across multiple service areas including Housing, Waste and Street Scene.

Varied in size and type, the vehicles covered everything from basic cars through to refuse collection vehicles. These vehicles were vital to the delivery of effective and efficient services in a district which was both large and predominantly rural.

- 5.16 Members of the Committee were encouraged that SKDC was being proactive and welcomed the consideration of alternative fuel sources.
- 5.17 Also suggested was establishing a fuel reduction target, and to take learning from work that other Council's had carried out on the same issue.
- 5.18 Members agreed to recommend the Strategy to Cabinet for approval.

Waste Policy Update

- 5.19 The purpose of the report was to codify operational changes within the service area that had been implemented over the previous year. The policies outlined within the report were all agreed and existing working practices.
- 5.20 Members discussed the updated Waste Policy, and made the following comments/suggestions:
 - Concerns over bins and sacks being left on narrow pavements.
 - Confirmation that residents with waste sacks rather than bins would be able to dispose of batteries
 - Confirmation that missed bins would be rectified within 5 days.
- 5.21 The Committee recommended the updated Waste Policy to Cabinet for approval.

6. Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Bridget Ley

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Gareth Knight

During the 2024/2025 municipal year, the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on seven occasions. The Committee as part of its remit considered several Financial Update and Budget Monitoring reports. In addition, there were regular updates on progress at the new Waste Depot on Turnpike Close and the development at St. Martin's Park, the UKSPF Programme and the East Midlands Building Consultancy, and reports related to the setting of the budget were considered by the Committee. Budgetary reports included information on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

A summary of other items considered by the Committee is set out below:

Council Tax Support Scheme - Veterans

- 6.1 This report arose from an earlier request to explore the feasibility of providing Council Tax relief to employed veterans residing in Band A properties. The financial implications on SKDC, Lincolnshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner were considered.

6.2 During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Councils were not obliged to give financial aid to veterans, but they should always be treated with fairness and respect in the community, the economy and society.
- Information was available on the Council's website regarding the support available to Armed Forces veterans and their families.
- Lincolnshire County Council had raised concerns around the introduction of a veterans' scheme as part of their consultation response in 2023.

6.3 The Committee, on a split vote requested that no further work was undertaken on the development of a Council Tax Support Scheme for veterans.

Grantham High Street Heritage Action Zone Completion Report

6.4 The report outlined successes, challenges and lessons learnt from the delivery of the programme and the additional associated cultural programme funded by Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which ran from 2021 to March 2024.

6.5 During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- It was pleasing that measures had been put into place aiming to prevent professional bidders securing grants ahead of independent traders.
- Concerns were raised on the current situation at the George Shopping Centre in Grantham, with regard to its high number of vacant units.

6.6 The Committee endorsed the report and were invited to share any comments with the Programme Board.

Grantham Future High Streets Fund/Market Place Footfall Activity/Grantham Town Centre Action Plan

6.7 The Future High Streets Fund, Grantham Town Centre Action Plan and Footfall activity was considered on several occasions through 24/25. In January 2025, the Grantham Town Centre Action Plan was endorsed.

6.8 The Market Place, Grantham works started on site on 7 May 2024 and included the reconstruction of the road from a tarmac surface to York stone sett paving, whilst also raising the current road height to deliver a single level structured and interconnected space. The scheme was scheduled to conclude on 19 August 2024. The contractors have mobilised which had caused some consternation among shopkeepers who feel that the works were having a detrimental effect on businesses. The reports of reduced footfall were potentially overstated, as presented in the graphs shown to the Committee. The report was centred around mitigation and action to be taken during the works and following the works.

6.9 Members raised the following points during their discussions on this topic:

- A high number of people seemed to have passed through Grantham in the month of March, queries were raised as to how sensitive the technology capturing this information was. It was however noted that the technology used was the best available.

- It was highlighted the geofence of the Grantham town centre included 2 large supermarkets, the residential area from the train station to the A52. It was felt the geofence boundaries needed altering.
- It was clarified that the town centre geofence included the railway station, meaning commuters were accounted within the footfall.
- The narrow Westgate Grantham market had a total of 152,000 visits a month, meaning under 5,000 per day, which equated to 500 an hour for 10 hours of the day.
- Progress had been made with a loyalty card scheme, which was due to be launched on the 1 October 2024.
- Discussion took place on the make of the Town Team and how its membership had been decided upon.
- It was queried and confirmed that an option considered was for SKDC to offer an initial rent-free four-week period for stall holders at Grantham market as an attempt to secure more stallholders at the market and subsequently increase footfall.
- There was reasonable coverage of public transport across the District, however, certain areas did suffer more than others. There was limiting 8 funding for the short term period, therefore, subsidising and planning bus routes was not within the action plan at present but would be considered in the future.
- Several units had been addressed in the report which had previously been vacant: the bookshop, cafes and other businesses which were seeking to bring business to Grantham.
- A Grantham Member stated they had monitored void retail units. In and around the centre of Grantham, 3 shops had been lost in over a year and a half, however, 12 shops had been occupied.

Provisional Outturn Position Report 2023/2024

6.10 The report provided the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee with detail of the Council's provisional outturn position for the financial year 2023/24. Throughout the financial year the Committee had been provided with regular and comprehensive budget monitoring reports which enabled members to be kept updated on what had been a particularly financially volatile year.

6.11 Members of the Committee raised several suggestions, such as diverting any interest rates income into the Budget Stabilisation Reserve, or Business Rate Volatility Reserve in the event of any unknown expenditures.

6.12 Members welcomed the balanced budget presented at the May 2024 Council AGM.

Economic Development Strategy

6.13 Members received a final draft of the Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028 at their meeting in September 2024. A Cabinet Member workshop had been created and all members of the Committee had been invited to take part and contribute.

6.14 Members received a number of clarifications within the document and asked that it be updated as and when required.

6.15 The document was recommended to Cabinet for approval.

Maintenance Strategy Action Plan Update

- 6.16 The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement introduced the report which provided the Committee with progress in respect of the implementation of the Council's Maintenance Strategy Action Plan for Corporate (General Fund) Property Assets. It was stressed that the maintenance of assets was important to the Council and the Cabinet had approved proposals for a Maintenance Strategy at the meeting on 10 September 2024.
- 6.17 The Committee raised points in respect of gas consumption particularly at the bus station, "packaging" large pieces of work together, the types of building involved (Victorian and Georgian) and the capacity within the industry together with moving away from fossil fuels.
- 6.18 It was stated that "Meet the Buyer" events were being held in both Stamford and Grantham to see what local suppliers could offer although it was acknowledged that larger pieces of work would be outside the remit of small local suppliers.
- 6.19 The Committee noted the positive steps being made in respect of the Action Plan and the Maintenance Strategy.

7. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Lee Steptoe

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Zoe Lane

During the 2024/2025 municipal year, the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions. Some update reports were included on most agendas, these included:

- Change4Lincs Update
- Social Housing Decarbonisation wave 2.1
- Grantham Earlesfield Project Update
- Build and Acquisition Update
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update

There have been several appearances by representatives of a Grantham-based voluntary organisation that advocates for the homeless, with points fully answered by the Cabinet Member for Housing and senior housing officers.

- 7.1 A number of policies were considered by the Committee, with many being recommended to Cabinet for adoption. The policies included:
 - Empty Homes Strategy
 - Repairs and Maintenance Policy
 - Damp and Mould Policy
 - Decant Policy
 - Mobility Vehicle Policy

New Build and Acquisitions Update

7.2 The scheme at Swinegate, Grantham was progressing and was still on target for completion by July 2025, roofing work on the project was due to start at the end of the month.

7.3 The planning application for the development of 11 units at Wellington Way, Market Deeping had been submitted and was waiting to be approved following which a tender process would be undertaken to appoint a contractor.

7.4 The small six-unit development at Gorse Rise was due to be formally submitted to Planning by the end of the month following pre-planning advice. Again, once approved a tender process would be undertaken to appoint a contractor.

7.5 Site feasibility in respect of Kesteven Road, Stamford had been ongoing, the proposed scheme had been reduced to 11 units to enable more green space to be retained. Ward Councillors had been contacted in respect of the site, although no response had been received to date.

7.6 The remaining properties which the Council bought via the Local Authority Housing Fund for the Ukrainian and Afghan refugees were completed on 24 January 2025. The properties were located in Bourne and were in the process of being occupied and offered to tenants.

7.7 The first phase of the 36 houses at the David Wilson Homes development in Corby Glen had been accepted and were now fully tenanted. Work was ongoing with them to try and bring forward the other phases sooner.

7.8 Bourne End Road, Colsterworth presented opportunities to demolish some of the existing stock and rebuild with biodiversity properties due to the size of the plots. It was hoped that a planning application would be submitted in November 2024 once a biodiversity net gain report had been received.

Rough Sleeper Initiative Update

7.9 The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which provided an update on the arrangements of the Change 4 Lincs team who were hosted by the Council. The Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding was allocated by central Government and funding was secured until March 2025.

7.10 Following a successful bid South Kesteven District Council were awarded funding for three years from 2022 until March 2025. South Kesteven District Council hosted the Change 4 Lincs Team on behalf of, North Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council.

7.11 The below is a summary of discussion points raised by the Committee at their meeting in November 2024:

- The current geographical area covered was large and presented challenges.
- The increase in homelessness/rough sleeping and the need for accommodation had increased costs significantly.
- Lessons learnt with the current model would be built into the new provision.
- Covid had impacted the initiative from when it was first set up which had affected the smooth running of the initiative from the start and had contributed to the huge overspends in the first few years.

- Due to the overspend focus had been more on support rather than accommodation with possibly more people being on the streets than the Council would have liked, this was caveated that some of the people in unsettled accommodation were reluctant to move on. People who were on the streets were more engaged to get off the streets than those who were already in some type of accommodation.
- Accommodation was not always the answer, it was stated that some of the rough sleepers had been offered accommodation but due to their own actions this accommodation had been lost.
- Many rough sleepers had complex issues and a holistic support package was required.
- Numbers of rough sleepers across the four districts were drastically different.
- When would the final arrangements be known, this was reliant on when central Government announced their plans for funding, as the funding finished in March 2025, which was a short timeframe from November the Government may roll the funding over to the next financial year.
- Funding maybe known by the end of November 2024 and the Government had indicated that they would be investing more in homelessness.
- A comprehensive spending review would be undertaken by the Government next year.
- The Government were keen to move away from “bidding” for funding to allocation.
- An example was given and it was stated that joined up support from key agencies was vital for getting people with complex needs off the streets.
- There was a Vulnerable Adults Panel which was part of a multi-agency partnership offering people bespoke support.
- How many rough sleepers were there in South Kesteven? The Head of Housing stated that she would have to come back with exact figures but she stated that a monthly return was completed and an annual count was taken every year. The annual counts had shown a clear increase and would be undertaken the following week.

Repairs Service Update

7.12 The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report which concerned the progress made following the internal repairs service audit report that had been received in April 2024. The report stated that the Council could take partial assurance that the controls to manage this area were suitably designed, consistently applied or effective. The report identified actions that were required to strengthen the control framework.

7.13 There was a total of 13 actions with two advisory actions. Ten of the actions were complete with one action due to be completed by 31 March 2025. The other actions concerned a new post and upgrades to IT systems which were due to be completed by 31 March 2025.

7.14 A question was asked in respect of new and old repairs to which the Head of Service (Technical Services) responded. A further question was asked about who made the call in respect of simple or complex repairs and it was stated that this was done in the Repairs centre with an example given of a complex repair which required different contractors to attend. More discussion followed in respect of Damp and Mould to which the Head of Service (Technical Services) replied. It was proposed that a report would come before the Committee every three months going forward.

Riverside Heating Upgrade Works

- 7.15 The Committee considered updates on the Riverside communal heating upgrade works on several occasions through 2024/2025.
- 7.16 The Cabinet Member for Housing confirmed that the new boilers had been installed and had been operational since December 2024. A temporary boiler had been installed whilst the works were being undertaken to ensure that residents had access to heating and hot water.
- 7.17 The Building Management System had been installed and was expected to go live during January 2025. There were still three immersion heaters to install, these had not been done due to gaining access to properties. The flushing of the secondary system and the installation of new thermostatic controls commenced the previous week. Chemicals would be added to the system to ensure the existing pipes were in working order and to ensure that the system worked efficiently.
- 7.18 It was noted that complaints had been received from residents, the most prolific complaint was due to residents' flats being too hot. The Council's Mechanical Contractor had shown residents how to lower the temperature which would be easier once the new thermostatic controls had been installed and so far, the project had been successful.

Stock Condition Surveys

- 7.19 A target of 1,759 stock condition surveys had been set for 2024/25, at the end of February 2025, 1,617 surveys had been completed. Of those properties surveyed a total of 67 had failed the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System risk assessment of which 33 were category 1. All those needing remedial works had been booked in with the repairs team.
- 7.20 Questions were asked about whether there was any commonality in respect of those who had Category 1 failures and whether the same contractor carried out the EPC surveys for consistency to which the Head of Service (Technical) responded. A comment was made about including voids in the 97.9% figure why were they voids and not let to which the Head of Service (Technical) stated that it could be that they were being brought up to the decent homes standard and required the relevant checks to be carried out and were not strictly part of the stock condition survey but were undertaken as two separate pieces of work. The Director of Housing and Projects stated that currently there were 66 major voids which accounted for 1% of the Council's housing stock which were included in the data shown.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey

- 7.21 The Committee received the results of the annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey at their meeting held in March 2025.
- 7.22 The survey allowed tenants to scrutinise the Council's performance, provided information on where services could be improved and provided information to the Regulator regarding how far the Council was meeting the outcomes of the consumer standards.
- 7.23 549 complete responses had been received which was comparable with the previous year.

8. Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Nikki Manterfield

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Steven Cunningham

During the 2024/2025 municipal year, the Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions.

The Committee received a number of standing updates throughout the year on topics such as UK Shared Prosperity Funding, the SK Community Fund, Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, Cost of Living and Customer Services.

A summary of other items considered by the Committee is set out below.

Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement

- 8.1 The document had been produced to provide background on the Council's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty and its Equality Objectives. It also provided a profile of the District and demographics – this was made up of information gathered within the 2021 national Census and Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Population Estimates and provided an insight into how the Council had continued to support its staff and customers. The Annual Position Statement outlined workforce statistics. These statistics had been used, where possible, to provide a comparison with the District's demographic.
- 8.2 Members highlighted issues for those without internet access, questions over the implementation of objectives in the Annual Position Statement and public awareness of the Annual Position Statement.
- 8.3 The Committee agreed to recommend the publication of the Annual Position Statement to the Cabinet Member for People and Communities.

Youth Council

- 8.4 The Youth Council Update was presented by the Cabinet Member for People and Communities. The Youth Council was formed in July 2023 and consisted of Members between the ages of 11 and 19. The three priorities identified by Members of the Youth Council were Mental Health & support available, Climate change/sustainability and Entrepreneurship of young people.
- 8.5 Members praised the work carried out by the Youth Council and registered their interest in attending meetings of the Youth Council where possible.

Road Safety and Speeding

- 8.6 At its meeting in February the Committee held a presentation with a representative from the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership.

8.7 During discussions, Members asked the following questions:

- How to secure electronic vehicle-activated speed alert signs in high risk areas of SKDC.
- Whether support could be offered to LCC with imposing urban 20mph zones and enforcing zig-zag line no-stop zones outside schools.
- Whether preventative measures could be undertaken at locations where there had been accidents, but nobody had been killed or seriously injured.
- A Member informed the Committee that they were in the process of establishing a Road Safety Partnership for South Kesteven. This was to be a non-political body that was open to all members and officers and had been backed by the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership. The Member clarified that six individuals had signed up so far and a minimum of three people were needed per-team, per-session.
- The issue was identified of driver's frustration when driving behind slow-moving vehicles. This was noted to be a matter of driver education.
- It was noted that during the 2024 Forbidden Forest event, 7920 vehicles were recorded as travelling through Denton, 56 of which were exceeding the speed limit.
 - It was queried whether the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership was consulted on planning applications and whether their advice was reviewed retrospectively when the physical impact of new developments was known.

Crime Disorder Local Partnership Working and CCTV Update

8.8 The Committee received a presentation from Inspector Hillson from Lincolnshire Police at their March meeting.

8.9 Inspector Hillson discussed statistics related to theft and domestic abuse victims.

8.10 Some Members voiced concerns about the impact of Lincolnshire Police being placed in special measures by the Home Office, particularly on the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). It was queried and confirmed that there were no longer any PCSOs based in the south of the South Kesteven district.

8.11 It was confirmed that there was no indication from central Government that funding for Safer Streets would continue following the end of March 2025. As a result, alternative funding was being pursued but was yet to be secured.

8.12 A Member confirmed that the feedback from their residents had been overwhelmingly positive about the Safer Streets Team.

8.13 The new CCTV Centre was confirmed to have 161 cameras across the district with 38 in Grantham.

9 Joint Committees

9.1 There were two Joint Scrutiny meetings held in year:

- **Joint Meeting of the Environment and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9 December 2024).** This was a meeting looking at Planning issues, specifically Planning policy, an Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement,

Revisions and Amendments to Planning Applications and an Extensions of Time Procedure and an Authority Monitoring Report.

- **Joint Meeting of the Environment and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (4 March 2025).** This meeting looked at the use of pesticides within South Kesteven. Recommendations were made to the Cabinet Member responsible for Environment and Waste.



17 July 2025

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter
Leader of Council and Cabinet Member
for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

Pay Award 2025/2026

Report Author

Jane Jenkinson, Senior HR Officer

 Jane.jenkinson@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To explain the reasons for a recommendation to implement a pay award in line with the National Employers' for Local Government Services final offer effective from 1st April 2025. The report was recommended to Full Council by Employment Committee at their meeting held on 9 July.

Recommendations

Full Council is asked to:

- 1. Note the National Employers' for Local Government Services final pay award offer of 3.2% for the financial year 2025/26.**
- 2. Note the current budget allocation for the pay award is only 2%.**
- 3. Agree additional budgets to fund the proposed pay award of 3.2% from 1 April 2025:**
 - £244k in order to fund the additional General Fund. This is to be funded from the Local Priorities Reserve.**
 - £76k in order to fund the additional Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This is to be funded from the HRA Priorities Reserve.**

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 As part of the 2025-26 budget process a predicted pay award of 2% was budgeted for so, based on the current final offer of 3.2% there is a shortfall of 1.2%. This shortfall equates to a budgetary impact of £244k on the general fund and £76k on the HRA which will require additional funding from reserves.
- 1.2 There is also a £9k impact on the members' allowances budget but, based on predicted savings within this service it is expected the impact can be contained within existing budgets.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 The proposed pay rise complies with the relevant legislation and regulations that govern the remuneration of local government employees including ensuring the bottom scale is above the predicted National Living Wage (NLW) rates ahead of a rise next April 2026. If the bottom grade falls below the 2026 NLW rate an instruction will be issued to employers to temporarily increase the bottom pay point(s) rate of pay to the NLW rate from 1 April for the period until the 2026 pay round is concluded.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The National Employers for Local Government Services (National Employers) are responsible for negotiating pay, terms and conditions of staff in many local authorities. They consult with councils and propose offers to relevant Trade Unions.
- 2.2 On 24 April 2025, the National Employers announced a full and final offer for Council employees (Appendix A).
- 2.3 The offer is to pay an increase of at least 3.2% across all National Joint Council pay spines and all payments above the maximum pay spine but graded below

deputy chief officer. The National Joint Council are the negotiating body for local government staff terms and conditions of employment.

- 2.4 On 22 April 2025, the National Employers' for local government services announced a full and final offer for Chief Officers of 3.2%.
- 2.5 On 16 June 2025 ALACE (Association of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers trade union), confirmed that the National Employers have also made an offer of a 3.2% pay increase for Chief Executives.
- 2.6 South Kesteven District Council is not part of the national consultation process and the Council's pay scales are not on the National Joint Council (NJC) scales. Instead, SKDC consults with local Trade Union Representatives and aligns to local agreements. However, in recent years, the pay award has mirrored the outcomes of national negotiations.
- 2.7 Aligning the national pay offer to the Council's own pay scales, the offer amounts to an increase of 3.2% on all pay points.
- 2.8 In recent years South Kesteven District Council has reflected the National Employers' final pay offer. This enables the council to recognise the hard work and dedication of its employees. Delaying the final pay offer could negatively impact some colleagues financially because receiving a larger lump sum back payment could affect benefit entitlements and payments.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The 2025-26 budget process predicted a pay award of 2%. Therefore, an offer of 3.2% would leave a shortfall of 1.2%.
- 3.2. This shortfall would equate to a budgetary impact of £244k on the General Fund and £76k on the HRA.
- 3.3. There would also be a potential impact of £9k on the budget for Members' allowances which currently increase in line with staff pay awards. However, it is anticipated that the impact would be contained within the existing budget.
- 3.4. The National Employers pay offer has not been accepted by the Trade Unions and it is therefore possible that it could change. If this were to happen, SKDC would need again to review budgets and consult with Trade Union representatives.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Not implementing a pay award would have a significant impact on: staff morale; employee relations; staff retention; and relations with the Trade Unions.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The staff award is a recognition of the hard work and dedication of our employees.
- 5.2. It is proposed to back date the pay award to 1 April 2025. A delay in implementation could negatively impact some members of staff.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The Trade Unions have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposed pay award.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix A – Letter from the National Employers

Appendix A

National Employers for local government services

**To: Chief Executives in England, Wales and N Ireland
(to be shared with HR Director and Finance Director)
Members of the National Employers' Side
Regional Employer Organisations**

24 April 2025

Dear Chief Executive,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2025

I am writing to update you on the work the National Employers have been doing on your behalf on the local government pay round for 2025.

You will recall that on 31 January, UNISON, GMB and Unite lodged their pay claim for:

- *An increase of at least £3,000 across all NJC spinal column points*
- *A clear plan to reach a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour*
- *One extra day of annual leave for all staff*
- *A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay*
- *The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay*

During February and March, employers in each of the nine English regions, plus Wales and Northern Ireland, were consulted at very well attended virtual pay consultation briefings; in total, more than 1,000 councillors and senior officers attended. The National Employers met initially on 24 March to discuss the key themes to come out of those briefings. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening, in person, on 22 April.

As explained at the pay briefings, we are in familiar territory: little has changed in terms of councils' financial challenges and how we deal with the relentless pressure from the proximity of the National Living Wage (NLW) to the bottom of the NJC pay spine. As such, the National Employers have again been faced with very difficult decisions when considering their response to the unions' claim.

The large response to our pre-briefing questionnaire was extremely helpful in assisting members' deliberations. I can assure you that information from every return was shared with the National Employer members and I thank you for the time you committed to this process.

Whilst the regional pay briefings are the most important part of a consultation process designed to provide the National Employers with councils' views, they are not, and never have been, intended to provide the employers with a negotiating mandate. The National Employers are tasked by their respective LGA political groups and the WLGA and NILGA to come to a decision based on all the information available to them to pitch a pay offer at

a level that they believe will attract the broadest political support and, ultimately, achieve an agreement with the unions.

In their meeting on Tuesday, the National Employers considered very carefully a number of different possible pay offers, which included various options for percentage or cash figures, all of which had pros and cons. The issue of whether to propose the deletion of pay points from the spine was debated at length. The responses to the pay briefing survey showed that many councils would not be affected by the removal of one or more pay points but for some others the impact would be significant in terms of cost and disruption to their grade structure; this is the case particularly in most Welsh councils and in a majority of schools across the country. However, in the event, members felt that deleting the bottom pay point next April was required to meet the NLW challenge. This issue is explained in more detail below.

The National Employers also considered it important that their offer, as set out below, should provide certainty from the outset to the unions' national committees and all union members, the wider workforce and local employers, that it is the maximum they are able to make. Conscious of the usual implementation date of 1 April and concerns raised by employers and employees alike when previous Agreements have been delayed, the National Employers therefore agreed that their offer should again be full and final, as explained in the offer letter to the unions.

The National Employers agreed by a majority to make the following one-year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026), full and final offer to the unions representing the main local government NJC workforce:

- **With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive and on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4¹)**
- **With effect from 1 April 2025 an increase of 3.20 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2024 NJC pay agreement circular dated 22 October 2024)**
- **With effect from 1 April 2026, the deletion of pay point 2 from the NJC pay spine**

This offer would achieve a bottom rate of pay of £12.65 with effect from 1 April 2025. The deletion of SCP2 would achieve a bottom rate of £12.85 from 1 April 2026 for the period until the 2026 pay round is concluded.

This offer means an employee on the bottom pay point in April 2021 (then earning £18,333) will have received an increase in their pay of £6,080 (33.17 per cent) over the four years to April 2025. For an employee at the mid-point of the pay spine (pay point 22), their pay will have increased over the same period by 22.48 per cent and for those on pay point 43, at the top of the spine, 14.33 per cent.

¹ The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

The NLW pressure

As was conveyed at the regional pay briefings, since 2016 the NLW has presented a huge challenge for local government in managing to maintain headroom between the bottom pay points and the statutory minimum.

At time of writing, the Low Pay Commission (LPC) has not published its forecast of the 2026 NLW. We understand this is because the LPC is yet to receive its remit from government, without which it cannot undertake the necessary forecasting. There is no indication when this situation will progress.

The employers' offer includes a proposal to delete the bottom pay point (SCP2) with effect from 1 April 2026; doing so would achieve a minimum hourly rate of £12.85 for the period from 1 April until the 2026 pay round is concluded.

When the NLW was introduced, the National Employers established a principle of seeking to ensure that the bottom rate of pay in local government is higher than the NLW, as they do not believe the sector should be a minimum wage employer. Meeting that principle each year has proved to be a challenge, given the significant annual increases to the NLW rate.

Since 2022, annual percentage increases to the NLW rate have been 6.60, 9.70, 9.80 and 6.70 respectively. The employers are well aware that an increase next year of more than 5.20 per cent (64p) will mean our (proposed) bottom rate of £12.85 will fall below the 2026 NLW rate. If this happens, we will move quickly to issue an instruction to employers that they should temporarily increase the bottom pay point[s] rate of pay to the NLW rate from 1 April for the period until the 2026 pay round is concluded.

Conclusion

The National Employers are eleven senior elected members, many of whom are, or have been, Leader of their council. They are all acutely aware of the additional pressure this year's offer, which would need to be paid for from existing budgets, will place on already hard-pressed finances, especially for those councils and schools with large numbers of employees on the lower pay points. The National Employers also acknowledged the difficulties faced by councils in recruiting and retaining key staff across and above the pay spine. However, for the reasons set out above, they believe their offer meets the immediate NLW challenge and is fair to employees, given the wider economic backdrop.

The National Employers continue to wholeheartedly support the principle of the NLW but their remit is limited to securing pay agreements with the trade unions. Responsibility for making clear to government the cost to the sector of its NLW policy, lies with the LGA, in partnership with the WLGA and NILGA, all of whom have made clear that if additional funding is not forthcoming, jobs and services will be at risk as employers struggle to accommodate this additional cost when trying to balance their budgets.

You will note in the employers' offer letter they have urged the unions to try and synchronise the timing and duration of their membership consultations in order that a

final agreement is reached so that employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

A copy of the letter sent to the NJC trade unions, along with a copy of the employers' media statement and details of the membership of the National Employers are set out on the following pages.

Please share this letter and subsequent updates on pay, with your colleagues in HR and Finance, and with elected members, as appropriate.

I shall continue to keep you informed of developments.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact a signature.

**Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary**

Mike Short, Kevin Brandstatter, Clare Keogh
Trade Union Side Secretaries
NJC for Local Government Services
c/o UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY

22 April 2025

Dear Mike, Kevin and Clare

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2025

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 31 January. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and met initially on 24 March to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The National Employers sought councils' views at the regional pay consultation briefings regarding your request that their offer should not be badged as '*full and final*'. Broadly speaking, whilst there was sympathy with your request for meaningful negotiations, a majority understood the pragmatic reasons behind making a '*full and final*' offer and the imperative of transparency and implementing the pay award as soon as possible and therefore were in favour of that being the approach taken again this year for all the negotiating bodies for which the National Employers have responsibility².

Accordingly, the National Employers have agreed that making such an offer would again provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

However, as you will be aware, on 11 June the government will be announcing the details of its spending review, and we are hopeful it will provide councils with a three-year funding settlement. A longer-term settlement would provide more financial planning certainty for councils which in turn could, from 2026 onwards, enable the employers to consider alternatives to the one-year pay offers of recent years. Multi-year pay offers / deals would by necessity require meaningful negotiations and once agreed, would allow the breathing space we need to concentrate our joint efforts on reviewing the pay spine and preparing for the transition of significant numbers of NJC staff into the two new national negotiating bodies being established by the government.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026) offer:

- With effect from 1 April 2025, an increase of 3.20 per cent to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive and**

² NJC for local government services; JNC for local authority Craft & Associated employees; JNC for local authority Chief Officers; and JNC for local authority Chief Executives

on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (*in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4*³)

- With effect from 1 April 2025 an increase of 3.20 per cent on all allowances (*as listed in the 2024 NJC pay agreement circular dated 22 October 2024*)
- With effect from 1 April 2026, the deletion of pay point 2 from the NJC pay spine

Once again, the most important factor in formulating this response has been affordability. We have a duty to balance your claim against the interests of local residents, in terms of the level and quality of services provided by local authorities. The proposed increase will again be very difficult to fund in a number of local authorities and anything beyond that would take many more authorities well beyond their level of affordability. In response to other elements of your claim:

- A phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible***
The Employers reject this element of the claim. In order to achieve this objective would require increasing the bottom pay point by 22.35 per cent over the period 2025-27. That, plus the subsequent knock-on effect of increases to all subsequent pay points would be prohibitively expensive for councils at any time, not least during the current difficult financial circumstances.
- One extra day of annual leave for all staff***
The Employers reject this element of the claim. All NJC employees currently receive a minimum of 23 days' leave (with a further three days after five years' service), plus two extra statutory days, plus public holidays. Many councils have a more generous basic leave entitlement.
- A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay***
The Employers reject this element of the claim in relation to a proposed 35-hour week (34 in London). Such a reduction would be out of line with norms in local government and would result in an increase in costs that would adversely affect local authority services.
- The ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay***
The Employers reject this element of the claim. With the impending reinstatement of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB), that will have responsibility for considering changes to pay and conditions for this group, we believe school employers in particular would have concerns about the NJC reaching a national agreement that gave all their non-teaching NJC employees the right to take “[at least] one day” off in term time. The cost of having not only to pay for that day but also for cover, would be significant at a time when schools are struggling financially and there is significant uncertainty about the SSSNB's remit and timetable.

The National Employers of course respect that each of your unions will have its own processes and procedures to follow, but we urge you all to please try and synchronise

³ The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

the timing and duration of your membership consultations, as you did last year, in order that a final agreement is reached and employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

A prompt settlement this year would give us the necessary opportunity to focus our efforts on negotiating a redesigned national pay spine, as well as continuing to discuss other complex issues, for example, the reinstatement (in England) of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Cooke

Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

PRESS RELEASE: 22 APRIL 2025

Council employees' pay offer announced

Following the announcement of a full and final pay offer for council employees, Chair of the National Employers for local government services, Cllr James Lewis, said:

"Council employees have been offered a pay increase of 3.20 per cent from 1 April 2025.

For the lowest paid (currently earning £23,656 per annum), the offer means their pay will have increased by more than £6,000 (33.0 per cent) over the four years since April 2021.

The offer also includes a proposal to delete the bottom pay point (SCP2) from the national pay spine on 1 April 2026.

The National Employers are acutely aware of the additional pressure this year's offer will place on already hard-pressed council finances, as it would need to be paid for from existing budgets. However, they believe their offer is fair to employees, given the wider economic backdrop."

Notes to editors

The National Employers negotiate pay on behalf of 350 local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that employ around 1.5 million employees.

The total increase to the national paybill resulting from this offer would be £793.17m (3.20 per cent).

The National Joint Council for local government services negotiates the pay, terms and conditions of staff in local authorities. It agrees an annual uplift to the national pay spine, on which each individual council decides where to place its employees. Each council takes into account a number of factors such as job size and local labour market conditions when deciding an employee's salary. There are no nationally determined jobs or pay grades in local government, unlike in other parts of the public sector.

Separate national pay arrangements apply to teachers, firefighters, chief officers, chief executives and craftworkers.

-ENDS-

NJC LGS EMPLOYERS (incl JNC CRAFTWORKERS; JNC CHIEF EXECUTIVES; JNC CHIEF OFFICERS) for the year ending 31 August 2025

LGA NOMINATED

LABOUR: Cllr Claire Douglas (York, Yorks & Humber)
Cllr James Lewis (Leeds, Yorks & Humber) **(Chair)**
Cllr Peter Marland (Milton Keynes, S East) **(Lead Member)**
Cllr Carole Williams (Hackney, London)

Sub: Cllr Nazia Rehman (Wigan, N West)
Sub: Cllr Thomas Renhard (Bristol, S West)

CONSERVATIVE: Cllr Joanne Laban (Enfield, London) **(Lead Member)**
Cllr David Leaf (Bexley, London)
Cllr Roger Phillips (Herefordshire, W Mids) **(Vice Chair)**

Sub: Cllr Eddie Reeves (Oxfordshire, S East)

LIB DEM: Cllr Keith House (Eastleigh / Hampshire, S East)

Sub: Cllr Michael Headley (Bedford, East of England)

INDEPENDENT: Cllr Doug McMurdo (Bedford, East of England)

Sub: Cllr Julian Dean (Shropshire, W Mids)

WELSH LGA NOMINATED

LABOUR: Cllr Anthony Hunt (Torfaen)

Sub: Cllr Jane Gebbie (Bridgend)

N IRELAND LGA NOMINATED

SINN FEIN: Cllr Christopher Jackson (Derry City & Strabane)

DUP: *Sub: Alderman Aaron Callan (Causeway Coast and Glens)*

NATIONAL ASSOC OF LOCAL COUNCILS NOMINATED

PARISH: vacant

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