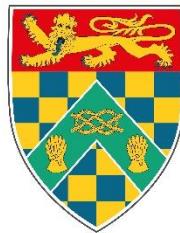


Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 4 November 2025



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Date of publication: 19 November 2025

Call in expiry: 26 November 2025. Decisions can be implemented on 27 November 2025 (if no call-in).

The Leader: **Councillor Ashley Baxter**, (Chairman)

The Deputy Leader: **Councillor Paul Stokes**, (Vice Chairman)

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Rhys Baker, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Councillor Richard Cleaver, Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement

Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Planning

Councillor Philip Knowles, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing

Councillor Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing

Non-Cabinet Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison

Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Councillor Ian Selby

Councillor Elvis Stooke

Officers

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)

Chris Prime, Communications Manager

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Emma-Jayne Abbott, Housing Strategy Manager

Patrick Astill, Communications Officer

55. Public Open Forum

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

56. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Rhys Baker; however, he was able to join proceedings partway through the meeting.

57. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

58. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

59. Housing Revenue Account Revenue Forecast 2025/26

Purpose of report

To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of September 2025.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the forecasted 2025/26 outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue and Capital budgets as at the end of September 2025.**
- 2. Recommended to Council that the forecasted overspend of £2.781m regarding repairs and maintenance costs was funded from the following HRA Reserves and that the HRA revenue budgets are increased accordingly.**
 - £1.000m from the Reactive Repairs Reserve**
 - £1.781m from the HRA Priorities Reserve**
- 3. Recommended that Council delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development to allocate up to £250k additional funding from the HRA Priorities Reserve to meet any additional financial pressures that may arise during this financial year.**

Alternative options considered and rejected

The option of not producing a monitoring report was discounted.

Reasons for the decision

Members should be updated regarding the financial position of the Authority. Effective budget management was critical to ensuring financial resources were targeted towards the Council's priorities.

Monitoring enabled early identification of variations against the plan and timely corrective action.

Cabinet need to seek Council approval to amend budget frameworks and to increase HRA budgets.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The forecasted pressures were highlighted in Budget Monitoring reports seen last month. The projected overspend was £2.781 million.
- The pressures were due to:
 - A clearance of the maintenance backlog
 - Tackling the void turnaround times and improving performance from 79 days in March 2025 to 54 days in August 2025. The number of void properties has reduced from 103 to 68 in the same period.
 - The poor condition properties are being left in by the outgoing tenant and therefore the scale of the works required before the property can be relet.
 - Increasing labour and material costs.
 - Emerging legislative responsibilities and new statutory obligations.
- A preliminary breakdown of the forecast overspend attributable to these factors revealed the following:
 - £1.700m addressing backlog voids and meeting new performance targets.
 - £0.350m inflationary and additional material costs.
 - £0.850m Regulation changes.
 - This report would also be scrutinised by the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 November 2025.
 - There had been an increased focus to decrease void turnaround times which had contributed towards an overspend on the HRA. However, this had led to increased rent receipts of £458k and reduced void times from 136 days to 79 days (as at July 2025).
 - An example of 'regulation changes' was the introduction of Awaab's Law. This UK legislation mandates social landlords to fix hazards like damp and mould within strict timeframes.
 - There were approximately 6,000 outstanding repairs to council-owned properties 18 months ago; this figure had been reduced to around 2,500.
 - The existing budget was being applied to a regular schedule of repairs to council-owned properties, alongside an inherited backlog.

60. 2025-2030 Housing Strategy

Note: Councillor Rhys Baker joined the meeting.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the adoption of the Housing Strategy which had been presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 June 2025.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the draft Housing Strategy.**
- 2. Delegate to the Director of Housing and Projects, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, the making of minor amendments to the Strategy, as required by changes to regulation or legislation.**

Alternative options considered and rejected

The 2020-2024 Housing Strategy could have been refreshed based on its current priorities and the data updated. However, the priorities were implemented in 2020 and the context for the priorities had changed considerably in the last 5 years with regards to national housing legislation, regulation and policy.

The Council could have chosen not to have a Housing Strategy as there was no statutory or legal requirement to have one in place. However, as outlined within the report, it was considered best practice to do so.

Reasons for the decision

A new Housing Strategy was agreed in order to provide a clear framework for all housing policy across the district for all tenures as this was considered best practice.

61. Finance Update Report – April to September 2025

Purpose of report

To present the Council's forecasted 2025/26 financial position as at the end of September 2025 with specific regard to the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

Decision

Cabinet noted the Finance Update.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The option of not producing a monitoring report was discounted because Cabinet should have oversight of the Council's budgets.

Reasons for the decision

Members should be kept up-to-date on the financial position of the Authority, because effective budget management was critical to ensuring financial resources were targeted towards the Council's priorities. Regular monitoring enabled early identification of variations against the plan and timely corrective action.

There was a forecasted surplus of £499,000 within General Fund (GF) Revenue. This was due in part to:

- Reduced inflation on fuel
- Utilities being purchased at a lower unit rate than budgeted
- Projected growth in car parking sales at the Cattlemarket Car Park, Stamford
- Higher than anticipated green waste income

There was no current cause for concern for the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.

The Council's current position was to internally finance the majority of its capital projects such as the new depot project and St. Martin's Park in Stamford due to the high cost of borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). However, if the capital programme were to become more ambitious then it would be less likely that the Council's cash balances could be relied upon.

The Business Rates reset would be difficult for some Councils to absorb; however, it was hoped that South Kesteven District Council would be resilient to most of the reset.

This report would also be presented to the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 November 2025.

62. Mobility Vehicle Policy

Purpose of report

To seek approval from Cabinet for the adoption of the Mobility Vehicle Policy having been recommended by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 March 2025.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approves the draft Mobility Vehicle Policy.**
- 2. Delegates authority to make minor amendments to the policy, as required by changes to regulation or legislation to the Director of Housing and Projects, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.**
- 3. Undertakes a review of the new Policy within 12 months.**

Alternative options considered and rejected

Option 1 – do nothing. Cabinet could have chosen not to implement this policy and the Mobility Vehicle Registration Scheme. The implication of this would have been continued fire, safeguarding and health and safety risks.

Option 2 – implement this policy but not implement the outside designated storage and charging facilities at the sheltered housing schemes. The implication of this would have been a reliance upon indoor designated storage and charging facilities at the sheltered housing schemes; some schemes had insufficient storage for the number of mobility scooters.

Reasons for the decision

To ensure the Council complied with legislation regarding fire, health and safety risks and provided a clear policy framework for tenants and leaseholders.

The creation of a Policy began as part of a far larger piece of work on 36 sheltered housing schemes. It became apparent that there were unusual ways of charging mobility scooters and consequently it was determined that a policy was required.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 required that fire risks in common areas are assessed, and actions taken to reduce these risks. In residential buildings, mobility scooter and other battery powered vehicle fires could pose a risk to safety and life of tenants, leaseholders, employees, firefighters, and others, when stored in communal areas and/or evacuation routes.

A review of the mobility scooter storage facilities at the Council sheltered housing schemes across the district established that many scooters were being stored and charged inside schemes or externally and adjacent to buildings, causing unacceptable fire and health and safety risks. The residents were using the Council's electricity supply (at no additional charge to the owner of each scooter). Furthermore, mobility vehicles were being stored in locations obstructing fire escape routes. Finally, officers reported that some mobility scooters were being charged outside via an extension cable through the window of resident accommodation which presented a further fire risk.

The number of scooters and other battery-operated vehicles would continue to increase, therefore it was essential to put a policy in place.

A Mobility Scooter Policy was first developed in 2021, and a widespread consultation took place. The policy had been revised since then and now encompassed other battery-operated mobility vehicles and was now the Mobility Vehicle Policy. The policy was presented to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in March 2025, and consultation took place on this during August/September 2025. All tenants in the sheltered housing corridor schemes and a sample of other sheltered housing and general needs housing residents were asked for their views.

The intention was to install charging pods so there was somewhere secure to store scooters. Residents could charge it as and when they liked, on a 'per cost' basis.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- Mobility scooter users were often forgotten and ignored whenever transport policy gets discussed. The Administration was committed to ensuring safe and convenient storage for these vehicles. Residents would not be required to pay towards the costs of installation.
- A comprehensive consultation was carried out. All issues raised within the consultation would be taken into consideration (including where storage pods would be).
- Storage pods needed to be as close as possible to the sheltered housing schemes. There may be additional costs for storage pods if they had to be attached to the side of a building rather than utilising existing space within the schemes.
- Some residents might not be able to walk from the proposed scooter storage to their room; however individual needs of residents would be considered when the work commenced, and one option could be to re-house tenants who were adversely affected.
- One visiting member felt that, although the Policy was a good start, some tweaks were required, particularly with regard to:
 - those with severe mobility issues
 - relocating residents, and
 - determining the priority given to storage allocations.
- The Council was under no obligation to provide storage facilities where none existed.
- If a resident presented with a greater need for an allocation than another then this would be considered and then a solution would be sought.
- The Policy had been presented to Housing OSC and a public consultation followed. Whilst it was true that only 30% of respondents had a mobility scooter, the Council could not compel people to respond to consultations or surveys.
- Residents would get a period of grace until a solution that is right for them is found.
- There were 54 scooters across 14 schemes. Storage pods would be installed initially at corridor schemes with the highest levels of scooters because they were currently being stored within a flat, a potential fire risk.

- There was currently no need to operate a waiting list for storage allocations. If high volumes of people apply for spaces, then a needs assessment may be required.
- The Policy was not an attempt to ban mobility vehicles; it was aimed at protecting people within these buildings.

Cabinet agreed to review the document within the next 12 months to reflect on its practical implementation and any scope for improvement.

63. Cabinet Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

64. Open Questions from Councillors

There were no questions to Cabinet Members. There were however some points highlighted by visiting members:

- It was the Remembrance season, and it was heartwarming to see displays around the district. Much work had been put in by officers, and by those serving parish and town councils around South Kesteven. The Leader of the Council had attended a '[Soldiers from the Sky](#)' event at Easton Walled Gardens.
- Thanks were given to staff who had supported the Halloween events at Wyndham Park, Grantham.
- The Chairman of Council thanked the Member Services Officer, Sam Selby for her support in preparations for Remembrance; in particular with procuring a purple wreath to commemorate the animals that had served in the two World Wars.
- Councillors Harrison and Cunnington were due to support the Grotto at Earlesfield Community Centre and would be grateful for any donations from staff for this.

The meeting closed at 5:08pm.