



Tuesday, 10 March 2026 at 4.00 pm
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Members: Councillor Ashley Baxter, Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Councillor Paul Stokes, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Rhys Baker, Councillor Richard Cleaver, Councillor Phil Dilks, Councillor Philip Knowles and Councillor Virginia Moran

Agenda

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

- 1. Public Open Forum**
The Cabinet welcomes engagement from members of the public. To speak at this meeting please register no later than one working day prior to the date of the meeting via democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Disclosure of Interests**
- 4. Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 5 - 17)
Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026.
Items for Cabinet Decision: Key
- 5. Contract Award for Microsoft Subscription Agreement** (Pages 19 - 23)
To approve the contract award for the Microsoft Subscription Agreement.

6. **MHCLG Statutory Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire: Response by South Kesteven District Council** (Pages 25 - 29)
To consider South Kesteven DC's response to the MHCLG Statutory Consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire.
7. **Local Plan Grant** (Pages 31 - 34)
To consider a Local Plan Grant from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
8. **Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven** (Pages 35 - 58)
To present to Cabinet the finalised Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven.
9. **Biodiversity Action Plan for South Kesteven** (Pages 59 - 99)
The South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed to report on the actions South Kesteven District Council will take to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the district as part of the Council's Biodiversity Duty.
10. **Tenancy Strategy** (Pages 101 - 128)
To consider approving the Tenancy Strategy.

Items for Cabinet Decision: Non-Key

11. **Revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** (Pages 129 - 141)
To seek agreement for a six-week consultation with minor amendments delegated to Portfolio Holder and Assistant Director.
12. **South Kesteven Design Code Statutory Consultation** (Pages 143 - 197)
To seek agreement for a six-week consultation with minor amendments delegated to the Portfolio Holder and Assistant Director.
13. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Update Report: Quarter 3 (April to December) 2025** (Pages 199 - 210)
To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of December 2025. The report covers the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme.
14. **General Fund Finance Update Report: Quarter 3 (April to December) 2025** (Pages 211 - 222)
To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of December 2025 with specific regard to the General Fund Revenue Budget and the General Fund Capital Programme.

Matters Referred to Cabinet by the Council or Overview and Scrutiny Committees

15. **Sport and Physical Activity Strategy** (Pages 223 - 243)
To provide a refreshed Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for 2026-2031.
16. **Body Worn Video Policy** (Pages 245 - 264)
To approve and adopt the Body Worn Video Policy.

Items for information

- 17. Cabinet Forward Plan** (Pages 265 - 273)
This report highlights matters on the Cabinet's Forward Plan.
- 18. Open Questions from Councillors**

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Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 February 2026



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Date of publication: 18 February 2026

Call in expiry: 25 February 2026

**Decisions can be implemented from
26 February 2026.**

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 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)

Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

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

Chris Prime, Communications Manager

Mark Rogers, Head of Service (Technical Services)

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Emma-Jayne Abbott, Housing Strategy Manager

Patrick Astill, Communications Officer

Jordan Brooks, Assistant Housing Systems Officer

Suniel Pillai, New Build Project Officer

95. Public Open Forum

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

96. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

97. Disclosure of Interests

There were no interests disclosed.

98. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

99. Budget Report for 2026/2027 including Indicative Budgets for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 - Housing Revenue Account

Purpose of report

To present the draft budget proposals and estimates for 2026/27 for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Decision

Cabinet made the following recommendations to Council:

- 1. Approve the HRA budget for 2026/27 and indicative proposals for 2027/28 and 2028/29 (Appendix A).**
- 2. Approve an increase of 4.8% for 2026/27 for the social housing dwellings.**
- 3. Approve the proposed increase of 2% for garage rents and 3.8% increase for service charges.**
- 4. Approve the HRA Capital Programme and financing statement 2026/27 to 2028/29 (Appendix B of the report).**
- 5. Approve the HRA Capital Programme budget carry forward of £10.416m from 2025/26 (Appendix B of the report).**
- 6. Approve the movements in HRA Reserves (Appendix C of the report).**

Other options considered

The alternative options were considered as part of the report in sections 3 to 7.

Reasons for the decision

The Council was required to set a HRA Budget each year and to set rent levels in accordance with the Government rent setting guidance.

The HRA budgets had been set in the context of delivering the aims of a housing strategy whilst balanced against the need to maintain a sustainable 30-year business plan.

The 2025-2030 Housing Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 4 November 2025 and set the vision for housing across the district. It also set out five priorities:

- A commitment to deliver new affordable and specialist housing in partnership.
- Continual improvement of the quality, standard and safety of homes
- Support people to live healthy and independent lives in their homes
- Facilitate housing to be sustainable
- Support communities to be sustainable.

The Financial challenges facing the HRA required Council in 2025/26 to allocate further resources in response to increasing revenue costs. These pressures continue into 2026/2027, and this financial growth was reflected in the proposed revenue budgets. It was also reflected in the projected financial reserve balances that were available; down from £35.7 million in March 2026 to £7.7 million in three years' time.

In the longer-term HRA Business Plan, projections indicated a projected need to draw on further reserves before potentially falling into a deficit position by 2032/2033. Therefore, spending plans would need to be reviewed to take corrective action to avoid a deficit. The recent Government announcement on 28 January 2026 outlined the outcome of the rent convergence proposals, which would provide an increase in revenue income. This may bring the business plan back into balance. Work would be undertaken to model the impact of the proposals and update the HRA business plan accordingly.

The announcement made on the 28 January 2026 regarding the outcome of the consultation also confirmed the following:

- From 1 April 2027 rent can be set with an additional £1 a week if this does not result in the rent exceeding formula rent.
- From 1 April 2028 rent can be set with an additional £2 a week as long as this does not result in the rent exceeding formula rent.

Council would be asked to consider this later in the year, and if taken forward it would be included in the 2027/2028 budgets.

The Section 151 Officer confirmed that financial modelling has taken place regarding the announcement from Government. It would mean in the region of £500,000 per year of additional income, if accepted by Full Council.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The current percentage of 'Decent Homes' achieved by the Council was 99.73%.
- The backlog of housing maintenance and repairs was reducing.

- Given that costs for repairs and maintenance were always rising, it was best to spend money now on the Council's housing stock, so that it could be in the best condition possible.
- Rent collected from tenants was reinvested into the homes they lived in.
- The repairs and maintenance budget was at the same level over the 3-year period of the budget report and was an ongoing challenge.
- Investment levels in housing stock were constant over the next 3 years, mainly due to Government pressuring local councils on this issue.
- Officers and Cabinet members had committed to do more work over the summer period to come up with a set of proposals to put the HRA on a better financial footing.
- The HRA cannot be subsidised through the General Fund (GF).
- Regular budget monitoring reports were provided to the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).

100. Budget Report for 2026/2027 including Indicative Budgets for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 - General Fund

Purpose of report

To present the draft budget proposals and estimates for 2026/27 for the General Fund.

Decision

Cabinet made the following recommendations to Council:

- 1. Set a General Fund budget requirement of £22.875m for 2026/27 inclusive of Special Expenses (Section 3 and Appendix A of the report).**
- 2. Propose a Council Tax level of £195.03 including Special Expenses for 2026/27 (Band D property) after consideration of the consultation responses.**
- 3. Note indicative Budget estimates for 2027/28 and 2028/29 (Appendix A of the report).**
- 4. Approve the General Fund Capital programme and financing statement 2026/27 to 2028/29 (Section 6 and Appendix B of the report).**
- 5. Approve the General Fund Capital Programme budget carry forward £1.389m from 2025/26 (Appendix B).**
- 6. Approve the movements in General Fund Reserves (Section 8 and Appendix C of the report).**
- 7. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Section 9 and Appendix F).**
- 8. To approve the Capital Strategy (Section 9 and Appendix G of the report).**

Other options considered

The alternative options were considered throughout the report.

Reasons for the decision

The Council was required to set a balanced budget each financial year.

At Joint Budget OSC it was highlighted that the Government has completed their fair funding review. For SKDC this resulted in a multi-year settlement to 2028/2029.

Whilst this provided some financial certainty, the Government has said that the latter two years may be subject to a future reassessment.

On 9 February 2026 the final settlement was confirmed by Government outlining that an element of business rate funding was being taken away from some local councils. The Government had committed to offsetting this loss to SKDC in 2026/2027 through an 'Adjustment Support Grant'. It was unclear whether this Grant was a one-off payment or would continue into future years. Without the Grant, the forecasted Budget for 2027/2028 would contain a deficit position.

In January 2026 SKDC launched their Council Tax consultation with residents. 61% of respondents supported the Council's proposals to increase Council Tax by 2.99% (£5.66 increase on a Band D property). This was an increase on the 55% support seen in the previous year's consultation.

A balanced budget had been achieved. Within this, £20,000 would be committed towards the 'Newton 300' celebrations, earmarked from the £100,000 events budget. Once the budget outturn position was known, it was likely that the £100,000 budget would be replenished. Funding for the district's market towns had also been made available.

There was a debate about fees associated with houses in multiple occupancy (HMOs) at Full Council on 29 January 2026. A 'sliding scale' of fees had been discussed; officers have since looked again at staffing resources in relation to HMOs, as well as benchmarking against other local authorities. A proposal would be brought back to Full Council on 26 February 2026.

Proposed recurring budget increases were:

Heading	Cost	Details
Employee Expenditure	£316,060	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enforcement Officer• Private Sector Housing Officer• Events Officer• Income Recovery Officer• Rough Sleeper Support Officer Roles• Housing Options Officer
Tree planting for SKDC open spaces	£62,000	Tree planting initiative across the District including in the award-winning parks
Tree maintenance for SKDC open spaces	£66,150	Allocation to respond to the actions arising from the Tree Management

		Policy
Events budget	£100,000	A programme of public events across the district during 2026/27. The programme to be presented to the Leisure and Culture OSC.
Funding for Compliance Works in General Fund Corporate Buildings	£100,000	Rolling programme of compliance works relating to DDA, Asbestos, Fire Risk Assessments across General Fund assets
Surface Water Drainage Clearance Programme	£60,000	Rolling programme of remedial repairs and maintenance of gullies and drainage systems.
Stock condition surveys	£40,000	Rolling programme of stock condition surveys across General Fund assets. 20% of assets to be surveyed each year
Increase in community grants	£100,000	Increase in the annual budget for the established community grant scheme from £100k to £200k
Total	£844,210	

101. Award of Contract for Christmas Lights

Purpose of report

To consider awarding a contract to the preferred supplier for the provision of Christmas lights in Grantham for five years.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the contract award for the Christmas lights in Grantham to Gala Lights Ltd at a cost of £56,720 per year, for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further two years.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture to extend the contract by up to a further two years or increase or extend the lighting provision should this be required.**

Other options considered

The Council had an option to purchase Christmas lights rather than hire them. However, purchase amount would be significant, and additional costs would be incurred in relation to their installation, storage and ongoing repair and maintenance.

Reasons for the decision

A compliant procurement exercise had been undertaken to identify a preferred supplier for the provision of Christmas lights in Grantham. Following the expiry of the appropriate standstill period the contract needed to be formally awarded.

As a Special Expense Area (SEA) Grantham taxpayers directly paid for services delivered to the parish by SKDC. The costs identified would be charged to the SEA.

The lights would be complemented by a Christmas tree, and family friendly activities. The 'Christmas Light Switch On' would take place on Sunday 29 November 2026.

Should Grantham Town Council wish to take on the responsibility for the provision of the Christmas lights then it was possible to novate the contract to them. They would then become responsible for honouring the remaining term of the agreement. It had not previously been possible for the Grantham Charter Trustees (predecessor to Grantham Town Council) to provide lights as they did not have the powers of a Town Council; for this reason SKDC had provided lights for the town.

102. Facilities Management Contract

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the award of the Facilities Management Contract to Key Integrated Services (Maintenance) Ltd.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the award of the Facilities Management contract to Key Integrated Services (Maintenance) Ltd for an annual sum of up to £450,000 for a period of 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 periods of 2 years.**
- 2. Delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to sign a Parent Company guarantee with Key Integrated Services (Holdings) Ltd in respect of the award of the Facilities Management Contract.**
- 3. Delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement to extend the contract by up to a further two periods of two years should this be required.**

Other options considered

The Council could have adopted an in-house maintenance model. However, this approach would have required the recruitment of specialist personnel to deliver

services in key technical areas such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), electrical systems and gas safety.

The Council does not employ any specialist maintenance operatives within the Corporate Property Team, and it would have required significant resource and financial investment to have established a capable in-house maintenance approach.

Reasons for the decision

By entering a new contract, SKDC could now:

- a) Continue with a structured approach to managing legal and health & safety obligations, including gas, electrical, and building safety requirements, ensuring a reducing risk of regulatory breaches.
- b) Ensure all assets and equipment were maintained in a safe and operational condition, supporting the continued availability and functionality of facilities.
- c) (through the Corporate Property Team) maintain and enhance the existing planned maintenance programme, monitor asset performance, and implement new initiatives to contribute towards SKDC's sustainability objectives.
- d) Operate within forecasted maintenance budgets, providing greater certainty and planning capability over the contract period.
- e) Continue to utilise providers with expert knowledge across a wide range of building maintenance disciplines, ensuring professional and effective service delivery.

103. Acceptance of funding for Cyber Security Enhancements

Note: Councillor Philip Knowles left the Council Chamber.

Purpose of report

This report recommended the acceptance of £200,000 from the Local Digital Cyber Team to support continued progress against the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) for local government.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the acceptance of £200,000 of funding to support the continued progress and improvements against the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF).**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer to allocate funding in accordance with the agreed criteria.**

Other options considered

It was not considered to be good value for money to reject the funding offer and use existing finances for cyber improvements.

Reasons for the decision

The Council had a great opportunity to improve its cyber security by utilising the funding and the additional support that was being offered.

The funding was offered to progress and implement projects that have been identified as 'business critical'.

Cyber threats to local government were constantly evolving. This funding would help the Council continue to improve and secure its systems whilst protecting customer information.

104. Grantham Canal Water Level Control and Safe Access Works

Purpose of report

To obtain authority to enter into a contract for water level control and safe access works at the Council owned 1kn section of Grantham Canal.

Decision

Cabinet approved the award of a contract to ECS Engineering Services Ltd. for water level control and safe access works at Grantham Canal for a value of £205,763.98.

Other options considered

Taking no immediate action was considered, however the Council had a legal obligation to maintain the canal and avoid risks to property and residents. Delaying the works any longer would have resulted in the canal structure further deteriorating, leading to higher costs and risks of failure in the future.

Reasons for the decision

The structure of the canal was deteriorating as evidenced by the water seepage and a report on condition carried out by JBA Consultants. Installing water level control features and safe means of access would mitigate the risk of failure in the short term whilst the longer-term future of the canal was decided.

The award to ECS Engineering Services Ltd. was based on an open tender and assessment of their pricing and quality of response, both of which scored higher than the other valid tender received, therefore the Council was choosing the most cost-effective tender.

Part of the Canal had been neglected for many years. The Grantham Canal Partnership had been resurrected and was chaired by Councillor Robert Leadenham to good effect. The Grantham Canal Society were also a valuable partner.

105. Wellington Way, Market Deeping - Approval of Contract Sum Increase

Note: Councillor Philip Knowles returned to the Council Chamber.

Purpose of report

To increase the approved construction contract sum for the Wellington Way, Market Deeping new build housing scheme by £190,000. This was following the findings of recent site investigations, and technical reports undertaken after the initial contract award in September 2025.

Decision

That Cabinet approve an increase of £190,000 to the approved construction contract sum of £1.926m for the Wellington Way, Market Deeping new build housing scheme. This was due to additional works arising from recent survey findings.

Other options considered

Not approving the additional funding would have resulted in delays to the project and could have compromised delivery of the scheme. This option was discounted due to the ongoing housing need and the importance of maintaining the certainty of the programme.

Reasons for the decision

Approval of the additional funding enabled the Wellington Way scheme to proceed without delay, ensuring delivery of high-quality, sustainable council housing whilst protecting the Council's investment.

Following the initial contract award, site investigations were undertaken which looked at ground conditions. Previously unknown areas of ground with historic contamination were discovered; this could not have reasonably been identified at the tender stage.

The works would be funded from HRA capital receipts.

106. Voids Policy

Purpose of report

To consider approving the new Voids Policy.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve and adopt the new Voids Policy.**

- 2. Agree that any future minor amendments (i.e. changes to wording to reflect changes in process) required through the life of the policy are delegated to the Head of Service – Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.**

Other options considered

Retaining the existing policy was ruled out as it was considered out of date and no longer fit for purpose.

Reasons for the decision

The Council was required to have strict void policies in place to ensure the safety of properties being let, whilst adhering to regulatory compliance and safety standards.

The Void Policy was required to minimise rent loss and it set out the Council's lettable standard to residents.

The following groups were consulted on the new Void Policy:

- Housing OSC
- Housing Department Management team
- Voids team
- Resident workshop and online consultation.

107. Updated Tenancy Agreement

Purpose of report

To consider the updated Tenancy Agreement for tenants living in Council owned properties.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the revised tenancy agreement.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Projects in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to make minor changes to the Policy (such as grammar and formatting).**

Other options considered

Not reviewing the tenancy agreement would have led to updates such as the domestic abuse and safeguarding chapters not being included. Opportunities such as the proposed change to the rent collection period would have also been missed.

Reasons for the decision

The resolution to approve the proposed revised tenancy agreement was made to ensure it complied with legislation. It also ensured that SKDC were managing tenancies, properties and neighbourhoods effectively, and ensured the tenancy agreement was easier for tenants to read and understand.

The agreement was last reviewed in 2020. Several changes were included to ensure compliance with current legislation.

Residents would often refer to 'free weeks', which in practice meant that their yearly rent was divided by 48/49 weeks, meaning there were approximately three weeks of the year where no rent was paid. This could have been an issue for people on Universal Credit, which was paid weekly. The new agreement meant that weekly payment amounts would reduce but would be due every week of the year.

All SKDC residents had been consulted on these changes, and further additions to the agreement had been made because of feedback. A letter would be sent to all tenants detailing the agreed changes.

The 52-week rent year would be implemented from April 2027. SKDC was obligated to give residents 28 days' notice of this change.

108. Housing Asset Management Strategy

Purpose of report

To consider the new Asset Management Strategy.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve and adopt the new Asset Management Strategy.**
- 2. Agree that any future minor amendments (i.e. changes to wording to reflect changes in process) required through the life of the strategy are delegated to the Head of Service – Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.**

Other options considered

Retaining the existing strategy was ruled out as it was considered out of date and no longer fit for purpose.

Reasons for the decision

The Council was required to have an up-to-date asset management strategy to set out how it would ensure that properties remained safe, suitable, affordable and efficient in the long term.

The purpose of this strategy was to:

- Manage available resources effectively to balance investment need across repairs and improvements ensuring the long-term viability of Council housing.
- Ensure: homes were safe, met modern standards and were suitable for diverse needs; improved tenant satisfaction; reduced void times.
- Ensure that properties met current regulations, energy efficiency and environmental standards and avoided non-compliance.
- Future proof properties against climate change and evolving tenant demands through planned investment.
- Optimise value for money and make informed decisions about maintenance.
- Link to the Council's Corporate Plan and key priorities.

The following groups were consulted on the proposed new Housing Asset Management Strategy:

- Housing OSC
- Housing Department Management team
- Resident workshop and online consultation.

109. Open Questions from Councillors

Councillor Elvis Stooke to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Councillor Stooke asked the Cabinet Member whether SKDC would be implementing a penalty scheme for placing waste items in the wrong bin. Councillor Rhys Baker confirmed that there was no plan to implement such a scheme.

110. Cabinet Forward Plan

The Chief Executive highlighted that Cabinet would need to consider a response to the LGR consultation at their meeting on 10 March 2026; that report would be added to the Cabinet's Forward Plan.

The remainder of the Forward Plan was noted.

The meeting closed at 5:27pm.

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**SOUTH
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DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

Report of Councillor Richard Cleaver -
Cabinet Member for Property and
Public Engagement

Contract Award for Microsoft Subscription Agreement

Report Author

Gary Andrew, IT Services Manager

 g.andrew@Southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To approve the contract award for the Microsoft Subscription Agreement for £540,000 for a 3-year period commencing on 1 April 2026.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to approve the award of the contract for the Microsoft Subscription Agreement at an amount of £540,000 for a period of 3 years commencing on 1 April 2026.

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
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

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The annual costs identified in the report have been included in the proposed budgets for the following 3 years.

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

Procurement

- 1.2 A number of frameworks have been reviewed and SBS have been found to have the lowest commission rates. Use of this framework is a compliant route.

Completed by: Helen Baldwin (Procurement Lead)

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 Due to the cost of the recommended agreement Cabinet are required to take this decision.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council's existing Microsoft Subscription Agreement expires on 31 March 2026. This contract is essential to ensure continuity of service across all corporate systems.
- 2.2 A Direct Award Approval Notice has been completed and authorised by both the SKDC Procurement Lead Officer and the Deputy Chief Executive, in line with SKDC Contract Procedure Rules. The contract is for a fixed period of three years with no extension provision and the annual cost is in accordance with the Framework prices.
- 2.3 These services will be procured via the NHS Shared Business Services (SBS) purchasing framework who offer a compliant framework for software licensing, including Microsoft, enabling SKDC to procure the required licencing to enable continuation of service. This framework was selected for the following reasons:

- The framework aligns and is compliant with SKDC's Contract Procedure Rules.
- It offers a low commission rate, delivering better value.
- A review of available frameworks concluded that the NHS SBS provided the most advantageous combination of compliance, cost and efficiency.

2.4 Following due diligence, we are satisfied that:

- The supplier offers best value through market comparison for the Councils requirements.
- The supplier can deliver the required licences within the Council's timescales
- The supplier scored the highest evaluated score for price/quality in the framework agreement evaluation.
- Will ensure continuity of service for Microsoft licences already deployed across the Council.

2.5 Based on the number of current licences the Council holds, the annual cost of this contract will be Year 1 - £165k, Year 2 - £180k and Year 3 - £195k. Totalling £540k over the life of the contract. This is an increase of £32k from the previous contractual arrangement due to an increase in user licences required, price increases from Microsoft and a higher level of licence requirement due to system changes.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The Microsoft Subscription Agreement is essential for all Council service areas and is needed to ensure the continuation of productivity, correspondence, email, device management, and cyber-security functions across the Council.
- 3.2. By progressing the Microsoft Subscription agreement, we will continue to deliver on our ICT Strategy which is made up of two key principles.
- 3.3. These are:
- ICT platform – end to end interactions are simple and streamlined as possible. Any pro-cess complexity is hidden from our customers.
 - A Digital Workforce – enabling our staff to have access to the right tools to do their job and be confident in maximising the use and benefits of technology in daily work.

3.4. The Agreement covers a comprehensive range of Microsoft applications, this includes:

- Microsoft 365 Licence (523 – E5 Licenses)
 - Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook) – essential for continuation of office productivity.
 - Exchange Online – provides for corporate email services.
 - Teams – ensures continued functionality for Council meetings and the communication platform used by officers and councillors.
 - Intune – ensures mobile and desktop device management for secure configuration.
 - PowerBI pro analytics – For report viewing or creation
 - Teams Phone – allows phone calls to be managed in the Teams application
 - Defender for Endpoint – provides Cyber-security protection for corporate devices in line with SKDC’s Cyber Security Strategy.
- Microsoft 365 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook) – specifically for tablet devices. (75 – F3 Microsoft Office Licences)
- Windows server licences for the VMware server environment (32 – Windows Data Centre Server Licences)
- Licences for Physical servers (8 – Windows Standard Server Licences)
- Other licences include Teams room for meeting rooms, Vision, Project and Universal printing. (2 – SQL Server Licences)

3.5. Loss of the Microsoft subscription would result in:

- Immediate cessation of email and Teams, affecting all communication across the Council.
- Inability to access Microsoft 365 applications used daily by staff.
- Loss of maintenance, updates, and security patches.
- Increased cyber-security risk through absence of Defender.
- Devices (laptops, mobiles, tablets) becoming unmanaged, non-compliant and insecure.
- Server environments becoming unlicensed, risking shutdown of major systems.

3.6. The operational impact of ceasing these licences would be significant, causing widespread service disruption and directly affecting service delivery to the residents of the district.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 Option 1 - Moving to an alternative environment. This option has been discounted for a variety of reasons.

4.2 These factors include that all laptops, servers, and applications would require full rebuilds or replacement. Many third-party software solutions used by the Council

are not compatible or tested on alternative provider platforms. Migration to a new environment would require significant external support, meaning periods of significant service downtime, along with the introduction of such a change would mean significant operational and security risks.

- 4.3 Option 2 - Not renewing the contract. This option is also not deemed to be viable as these licences provide critical business systems, including email, teams and file access meaning officers and councillors would be unable to perform core duties.
- 4.4 This option would also introduce significant security risk as devices would lose security protection, creating unacceptable cyber -security threat.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. A Microsoft Subscription Agreement is required to ensure the Council can continue to use Microsoft applications, which include Windows Server software, Email, Word and Teams applications. Microsoft Intune and Defender applications provide device management and cyber security on all corporate laptops, tablets and mobile devices.
- 5.2. Changing to another provider would be a massive undertaking meaning all devices would need to be rebuilt including servers and laptops. Servers would also need rebuilding, and most software suppliers do not test on non-Microsoft environments. Days of downtime and much external support would be needed to attempt this scale of change.

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**SOUTH
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COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

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

MHCLG Statutory Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire: Response by South Kesteven District Council

Report Author

Charles James, Policy Officer

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Purpose of Report

To seek a delegation to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Executive, to respond on behalf of South Kesteven District Council to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government ('MHCLG') Statutory Consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation ('LGR') in Greater Lincolnshire.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. Delegate authority to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to determine the form and content of, and to submit, South Kesteven District Council's response to the Government's statutory consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire.**
- 2. Approve publication of the Council's response to the statutory consultation following the conclusion of the consultation period.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes – this report could not be added to the Cabinet Forward Plan in time to give 28 days’ notice. A General Exception Notice (contain a waiver from call-in) is available online. The link is in section 7 below.
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

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

1.1 There are no direct finance implications associated with this report.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The submission of a response to a Government consultation is not a function reserved to Full Council under the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and therefore falls to be exercised as an executive function under the Council’s executive arrangements established pursuant to the Local Government Act 2000. Cabinet is therefore the appropriate decision-making body to consider and determine the Council’s participation in the consultation process.
- 1.3 Delegation to the Leader, in consultation with the Chief Executive, ensures the Council can respond within Government timescales whilst maintaining appropriate governance and officer oversight.
- 1.4 In formulating its response, the Council must act in accordance with public law principles, including taking account of relevant considerations and acting reasonably, and must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under

the Equality Act 2010. The Council should also ensure it remains compliant with the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity.

- 1.5 Publication of the response following the consultation period supports transparency and accountability whilst avoiding potential influence on other consultees during the statutory consultation.

Completed by: Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. On 5 February 2025, the Government issued statutory invitations to all Councils in the 21 two-tier areas across England, and smaller unitaries, to develop proposals for unitary (single status) local government.
- 2.2. On 28 November 2025, four separate proposals for reorganisation were submitted by the authorities of the Greater Lincolnshire Invitation Area (IA) to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).
 - South Kesteven District Council and North Kesteven District Council have proposed four unitary councils: a north/south division of the Lincolnshire county area and the status quo for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire
 - Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council and South Holland have District proposed two unitary councils: a unitary combining City of Lincoln and West Lindsey with North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire, and a unitary for the remaining Lincolnshire county area.
 - City of Lincoln Council has proposed four unitary councils: an expanded city through the inclusion of twelve North Kesteven wards and seven West Lindsey wards, a unitary for the remaining Lincolnshire county area, and the status quo for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.
 - Lincolnshire County Council (supported by North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire) has proposed three unitary councils: a single unitary on the current county footprint for Lincolnshire and the status quo for North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.
- 2.3 On 5 February 2026, MHCLG announced that it would undertake a process of statutory consultation on the four proposals. The statutory consultation commenced that day and will run for seven weeks closing on 26 March 2026.
- 2.4 As an existing authority, South Kesteven District Council was invited to submit comments on the four proposals for Greater Lincolnshire as part of the statutory consultation process.
- 2.5 South Kesteven DC was also invited to participate in the statutory consultation for directly geographically adjacent Invitation Areas, for example the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough IA. A policy of neutrality and non-participation is being pursued in respect to neighbouring Invitation Areas.

- 2.6 In a letter to Greater Lincolnshire leaders to launch the consultation on 5 February 2025, the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness Alison McGovern MP reminded local authorities to take particular care in ensuring compliance with the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity during the statutory consultation process. This means that local authorities cannot campaign for a preferred proposal or be perceived to be.
- 2.7 Therefore, to ensure compliance with the Code and the integrity of the consultation, it is understood that across Greater Lincolnshire, consultation responses will be submitted by Executives and published after the consultation has closed.
- 2.8 The Council's Constitution (Part 3b Executive Functions) includes a delegation to *Each individual Cabinet Member in respect of matters within their respective Portfolios: To respond to consultations by the Government, Government agencies and other Local Authorities on draft guidance, policies or regulations, or similar documents.* Given the extraordinary nature of issue under consultation, a confirming delegation is sought from Cabinet to enable the Leader of the Council to submit a response to Government.
- 2.9 The response will be aligned with North Kesteven DC, whom the Council partnered with to develop the LGR proposal. The proposal endorsed by Full Council on 20 November 2025 included a full options appraisal. That appraisal will provide the basis for the consultation response.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The Government has invited the Council to participate in the statutory consultation for LGR in Greater Lincolnshire.
- 3.2. To ensure compliance with the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity, it is understood that across Greater Lincolnshire consultation responses will be submitted by Executives and published after the consultation has closed.
- 3.3. A delegation is sought from Cabinet to enable the Leader of the Council to draft and submit a response to Government within the prescribed timeline.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council is under no obligation to submit a consultation response. However, the statutory consultation will be used to inform the final government decision on LGR. Therefore, if the Council does not submit a response, it will lose an opportunity to influence the government on LGR.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The Government has invited the Council to participate in the statutory consultation for LGR in Greater Lincolnshire. The statutory consultation will be used to inform the final government decision.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. On 20 November 2025, Full Council endorsed the Kesteven LGR proposal. The submission was the product of extensive engagement and included a full options appraisal. That appraisal will provide the basis for the consultation response.

7. Call-in waiver

- 7.1 <https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13929>

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks
Cabinet Member for Planning

Local Plan Grant

Report Author

Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)

✉ emma.whittaker@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To endorse the acceptance of a Local Plan Grant from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and to approve the creation of the appropriate revenue budget to enable the grant to be allocated and spent.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Endorse the acceptance of the Local Plan grant funding of £227,962.50 Local Plan Grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer to establish the appropriate revenue budgets to enable the Local Plan funding to be allocated in accordance with the grant conditions.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The Council has been awarded funds to support the delivery of the Local Plan. The funds (£227,962.50) are ringfenced to be spent on the preparation of the Local Plan, and the budgets will be amended to reflect this. The spending plan may cross over financial years and where required, funding will be formally carried forward as part of the revenue outturn process.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Council has power to accept grant funding under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.3 Acceptance and use of the grant must be applied solely for lawful planning purposes and in accordance with grant conditions.
- 1.4 As the grant exceeds the threshold for a key decision, the authority to accept the funds lies with Cabinet.
- 1.5 The creation of a budget line to allocate and spend the grant must comply with the Council's Financial Regulations (and other relevant provisions of the Constitution) and the statutory duties of the Section 151 Officer. Proper financial controls monitoring and audit arrangements must be in place.
- 1.6 Provided that the grant conditions are capable of being complied with and appropriate governance arrangements are in place, it is not thought there are any substantive concerns with Cabinet endorsing acceptance of the funding and approving the creation of the associated budget.

Completed by: Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Delivering the Council's Local Plan Review is an ambition identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027. The Local Plan sets out the Council's

strategic planning policies and identifies land to ensure sustainable growth including the delivery of housing and employment opportunities.

- 2.2 There have been many changes in recent years to the planning system including a significant increase in the amount of housing growth the Council is expected to plan for. The Government, in December 2024, increased housing requirements for Local Authorities across the country. The housing requirements for South Kesteven increased from approximately 650 dwellings per annum to 895 dwellings per annum. As a result, the Council has had review its local plan housing allocations to ensure that this increased housing need can be properly planned for.
- 2.3 Following the changes to the housing requirements, the Government announced funding to support local authorities with local plan delivery for those Council's that were at the Regulation 19 stage of Local Plan preparation. South Kesteven was not at this stage so was not eligible for any funding at that time.
- 2.4 The Government subsequently announced further funding for local authorities with local plan delivery for where the local plan was at Regulation 18 stage; this was the stage that South Kesteven was at. The purpose of the funding was to ensure that local authorities are well-equipped to support and implement the changes in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These changes included a significant uplift in the minimum housing requirements for South Kesteven from 650 dwellings per year to 895 dwellings per year.
- 2.5 The change to the Council's housing need requirements has meant that the Council has had to carry out additional work to identify additional housing sites in order to meet the Council's housing needs. This has also meant that an additional consultation at the Regulation 18 stage was required; this took place in Summer 2025. This has also resulted in additional cost to the Council because the evidence base for the Local Plan has had to be reviewed with additional work commissioned.
- 2.6 A total of 85 local authorities at Regulation 18 stage were awarded a share of £19,376,812. There was no requirement to submit an expression of interest or to agree to Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) around how the fund was to be spent however it will need to be ring-fenced for the Local Plan preparation work.
- 2.7 South Kesteven was awarded a total of £227,962.50. This funding is to support the additional work that is necessary as a result of the additional housing requirements and other changes to national planning policy.
- 2.8 Whilst there was no requirement to sign an MOU, the Government is monitoring how local authorities are using the funding and the Council will complete the questionnaires as required.

2.9 The grant has been provided to support local authorities with the additional costs associated with progressing local plans under the current regulations. It is anticipated that the funds will be used to fund the following activities:

- Project management support
- Additional work relating to the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessments (associated with the additional housing sites)
- Water cycle study (additional work due to new housing sites)
- Infrastructure delivery plan (additional work due to the new housing sites)
- Landscape sensitivity assessment and associated landscape evidence
- Additional highways modelling work

3. Key Considerations

3.1. The Council will need to carry out the additional work associated with the Local Plan preparation. The funding will therefore financially support the Council with this process.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 Whilst the Council could return the funds to government, the additional work still needs to be carried out, and this would place additional pressures on the Council's budgets; this option has therefore been discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1. The work will need to be carried out regardless of whether or not the Council uses the funding. By using the funding and not returning it to government, this will lessen the burden on the Council's own budgets.



**SOUTH
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COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday 10th March 2026

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker,
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven

Report Author

Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

✉ serena.brown@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present to Cabinet the finalised Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Approve the adoption of the Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director for Housing and Projects in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste to approve minor amendments to the South Kesteven Climate Action Plan.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards);

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The draft Climate Action Plan includes a column on the estimated cost for South Kesteven District Council of implementing the action, in order to provide a reference guide for the cost of actions. This level of detail does not consider factors such as grant funding contributions or expected payback periods on investment.
- 1.2 The Council has an existing climate change reserve of £500k for the 2025/26 financial year, which was established to help respond to the budgetary pressures driven by the increasing cost of energy, and the Council's stated ambition of carbon reduction across the Council's property portfolio. It is expected that the Committee will continue to receive annual reports on utilisation of the climate change reserve, including detail on projects funded and expected cost, energy and carbon savings.
- 1.3 Multiple projects referred to within the draft Climate Action Plan have their own budgetary remit outside of the climate change reserve. Where a project included in the draft Climate Action Plan is in the feasibility stage, each project will need to make a budget bid on a case-by-case basis in order to progress.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.4 It is good practice for a local authority to present a strategy on the issues and impacts of climate change within the district. South Kesteven District Council is one of the local authorities to have formally declared a climate emergency, which set carbon reduction targets for Council operations. The climate emergency declaration also noted the wider leadership potential of the Council to help fulfil the UK government's national target to reach net zero by 2050, and this activity helps to clarify that role.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.5 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy, approved by Cabinet in 2023, sets out the Council's role in facilitating the transition to net zero carbon for the whole district of South Kesteven. The Climate Action Plan provides a workplan for the goals of the Climate Action Strategy to ensure continued progress against local and national net-zero carbon goals and associated co-benefits.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. There is a clear role for local government to shape, drive, and deliver local action on climate change. South Kesteven District Council made a formal declaration of climate emergency on 26 September 2019 with cross party support. Alongside this, the Council confirmed the political ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by at least 30% by 2030, and to endeavour to become net-zero as soon as viable before 2050. Over three-quarters of local authorities in the UK have now taken the step of declaring a climate emergency
- 2.2. Following this declaration of climate emergency, the Council's updated carbon footprint was established, using baseline data from 2018/19, which was presented to [Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21st July 2020](#). This signalled some of the major categories of carbon emissions arising from council operations and highlighted projects to pursue to reduce carbon emissions.
- 2.3. South Kesteven District Council has continued to publish updates on progress towards the outlined carbon emissions target from the 2018/19 year onwards. The latest report covering the 2024/25 period reported a total carbon emissions reduction of 29.24%, discussed in detail at a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on [23rd September 2025](#).
- 2.4. The Council has also developed and delivered several key projects which contribute to either energy and carbon reduction for council operations, contributing to a reduction in operational carbon emissions, or energy and carbon reduction for the wider district. These initiatives include:
- Upgrading all SKDC-owned streetlights to energy efficient LEDs
 - Grantham Meres leisure centre decarbonisation, including installing a modern, upgraded heat pump heating system and additional solar PV panels to reduce running costs
 - Establishment of a climate change reserve fund for both General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts
 - Publication of a Green Fleet Strategy for South Kesteven, to drive forward efficiency and decarbonisation targets for Council owned vehicles

- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation upgrades for Council owned tenanted properties, with matched support from government *Warm Homes Plan* funding since 2021
 - Energy efficiency and decarbonisation upgrades for eligible private properties in South Kesteven, via support from government *Warm Homes Plan* funding since 2022
- 2.5. The South Kesteven Climate Action Plan as presented sets out how South Kesteven District Council, within its remit, will address and influence carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of extreme and challenging weather conditions. It is important that these duties are taken into account and the Climate Action Plan provides a framework for the Council to deliver on its ambitions.
- 2.6. The actions included in the Plan both address carbon emissions from Council operations (direct and indirect emissions principally from the operation of buildings and vehicles), as well as reviewing where services delivered by the Council can contribute to the goals of the Climate Action Strategy.
- 2.7. South Kesteven District Council’s direct emissions are a small fraction arising from the district of South Kesteven, but our wider work in the district, as well as ongoing work to support energy efficiency improvements in homes across South Kesteven, has the potential to drive much larger reductions.
- 2.8. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with the draft Climate Action Plan at their meeting on [10th November 2025](#). Minor amendments to the final Climate Action Plan, presented at Appendix A, have been made to adjust one of the co-benefits from “Reducing Fuel Poverty” to “Reducing utility bills” to better reflect the benefits within different contexts.
- 2.9. It is proposed that twice yearly reporting will be completed on the Action Plan, with updates provided by the officer lead. An annual report will also be presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update on actions. Any amendments to the plan, following formal adoption of the finalised draft by Cabinet, are proposed to be made by the Director for Housing and Projects in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The purpose of the draft Climate Action Plan is not only to track progress in implementing projects to drive down carbon emissions arising from direct Council operations (energy used in Council buildings, fuel used in Council vehicles), but also to set out actions for the Council’s wider service delivery and external-facing work with partners to address climate change for the region. Effective monitoring and reporting of all actions will be fundamental to the success of the Action Plan.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to publish a climate action plan as there is no statutory expectation for public authorities to develop or publish carbon reduction strategies. However, this would not be in line with the Council's stated ambition for carbon reduction ahead of the government target of 2050.
- 4.2 The Council could choose not to publish or report on the projects highlighted within the draft Climate Action Plan. However, publication and regular reporting on the Climate Action Plan will increase the visibility of various projects addressing carbon mitigation and adaptation from across the Council

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. Publishing a Climate Action Plan helps to clarify the specific projects the Council intends to implement and continue towards its ambitions both to meet its own interim net-zero carbon target, but also to contribute to national carbon reduction targets and adaptation strategies.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented with the draft Climate Action Plan at their meeting on [10th November 2025](#). Following discussion the Committee agreed to recommend the adoption of the final Climate Action Plan, without any recommended amendments, to Cabinet.
- 6.2. A public consultation was conducted to shape the Climate Action Strategy which provides the framework for the Climate Action Plan.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21st July 2020 - [CarbonFootprintReportEnvOSC_Final.pdf](#)
- 7.2 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23rd September 2025 - [23rd September 2025](#)
- 7.3 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10th November 2025 - [10th November 2025](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix A: Final Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven

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South Kesteven Climate Action Plan

Updated
November 2025

41



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Appendix A

Climate Action Plan Context

South Kesteven District Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019, joining the three-quarters of councils who have formally recognised their organisational role in tackling climate change.

As part of that declaration South Kesteven District Council set the ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions by at least 30% by 2030, and to endeavour to become net zero carbon as soon as viable before 2050. Alongside the aim of carbon emissions reduction for the Council, the declaration recognised the much more far-reaching impact of the Council's community leadership role in addressing our changing climate.

Working with sector specialists The Carbon Trust, the Council's carbon emissions were reviewed, a baseline from which to reduce carbon emissions was established, and a Carbon Footprint and Reduction Opportunities Report was published in June 2020. This provided recommendations and a roadmap to reduce carbon emissions across Council operations.

SKDC has since published annual reports tracking carbon emissions. A positive and sustained downward trend in carbon emissions has been reported, including the latest update from the 2024/25 year of a 29.5% reduction against the baseline.

The Council has also published a Climate Action Strategy in 2023, reviewing all aspects where SKDC can have a role or significant influence in tackling climate mitigation or adaptation throughout the whole district of South Kesteven. The Climate Action Strategy set out an eight-part framework for action against which progress will be measured.

This Climate Action Plan will follow up on those key ambitions, setting out work already underway or planned across the Council. To ensure success, the plan will be delivered across departments.

42



Our Journey So Far

Warm Homes Funding for South Kesteven District Council Properties

South Kesteven District Council has allocated over £15m since 2021 to upgrade council owned properties with energy efficiency and low-carbon heating measures. Delivered over two schemes with match funded support through the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Council have now established a dedicated team to oversee the successful delivery of upgrades to help sure properties are rated with an Energy Performance Certificate of C or higher.

Warm Homes Funding for Private Properties in South Kesteven

Alongside the programme to upgrade Council owned properties, SKDC has also delivered funding directed towards private properties with an Energy Performance Certificate of D or lower to also upgrade with energy efficiency and low-carbon heating measures. Delivered through a partnership including three other Lincolnshire authorities, 89 properties have been fully upgraded to date, helping to reduce energy costs for residents.

Streetlights Upgraded to Energy-Efficient LEDs

£1m was allocated to upgrade nearly 4000 SKDC owned streetlights throughout the district to energy-efficient LEDs in 2023. The programme of upgrades is due to be completed in late 2025, and there are expected electricity savings of 75% for every streetlight upgraded.

Grantham Meres Leisure Centre Decarbonisation

Following a successful bid into the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (phase 3c), works are currently underway to upgrade the heating system and supporting infrastructure in SKDC's largest leisure centre. Once completed in winter 2025/26, the new low-carbon system, alongside the new solar PV panels installed, will slash carbon emissions and help stabilise energy costs for the centre.



Our Journey So Far

Climate Change Reserve Fund

To respond to some of these opportunities for the Council to inwardly invest as well as reduce energy consumption and cost from council buildings and activities, SKDC has established a Climate Change Reserve Fund for both General Fund of £500,000 and Housing Revenue Accounts £100,000.

Trees and Woodland Strategy for South Kesteven

South Kesteven District Council developed and adopted an ambitious Trees and Woodlands Strategy in 2024 which sets the direction of travel for management of Council owned trees as well as trees within the wider district. The Strategy has set the long term goal to increase tree canopy cover throughout South Kesteven.

Green Fleet Strategy for South Kesteven

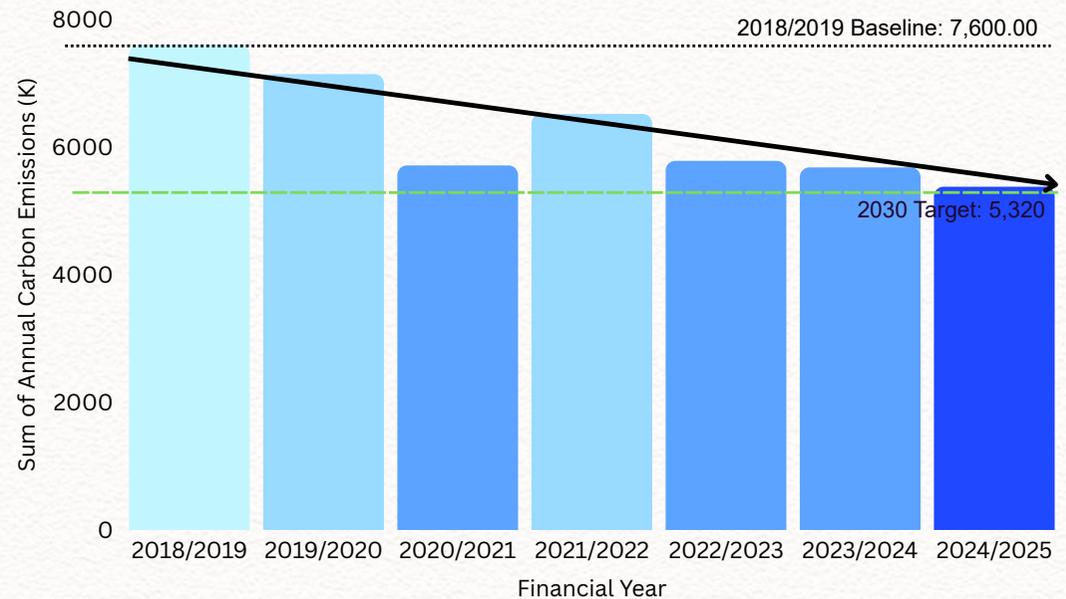
A Green Fleet Strategy was approved in 2025, which agrees several actions to improve the efficiency of the Council's fleet of vehicles and set a pathway for the wider adoption of electric vehicles and alternative fuels to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the operation of SKDC vehicles.

Reduction of Carbon Emissions from Council Operations

South Kesteven District Council's carbon emissions have seen a steady decrease in line with our carbon reduction target of at least 30% by 2030. The most significant reductions have been seen from gas and electric use in SKDC buildings as well as from energy use at leisure centres in the district.

South Kesteven District Council Carbon Emissions Tracker- Annual Comparison

Full details of the carbon reports can be found here: <https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/climateneews/our-action-council>



Measuring and Reporting

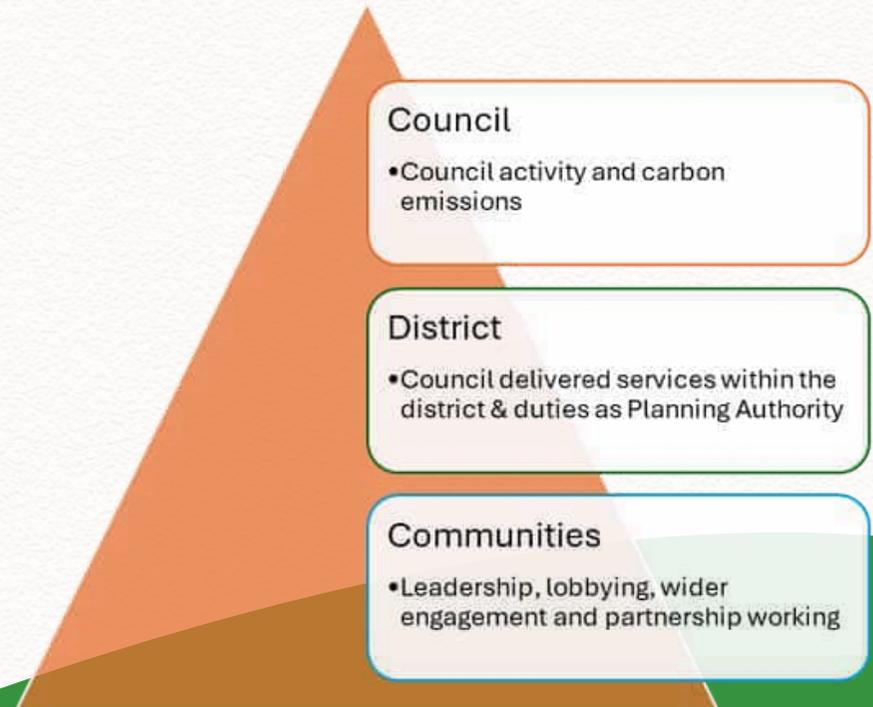
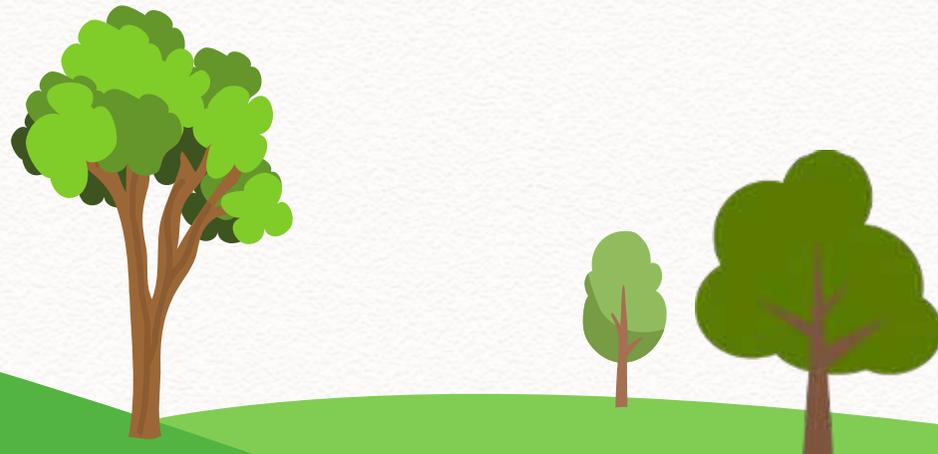
Since South Kesteven District Council's carbon baseline of the 2018/19 year was published in 2020, the Council have continued to publish annual reports stating the operational carbon emissions of the authority. A positive and sustained downward trend in carbon emissions has been reported, including the latest update from the 2024/25 year of a 29.5% reduction against the baseline.

The purpose of the Climate Action Plan is not only to track progress in implementing projects to continue to drive down carbon emissions arising from direct council operations (energy used in council buildings and leisure centres, fuel used in vehicles), but also to set out actions for our wider service delivery and external-facing work with stakeholders to address climate change for the region. Effective monitoring and reporting of each of these aspects will be fundamental to the success of the Plan.

Twice yearly reporting on the progress of the actions under the Climate Action Plan will be completed. This will be presented to the Corporate Management Team in line with ongoing performance monitoring against SKDC's existing Corporate Plan. An annual progress report will also be presented to the Council's Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any post-approval amendments to this Action Plan are to be approved by the Director for Housing and Projects.

The lead officer identified for each action is responsible for providing progress updates against the plan, as well as incorporating any new actions within their area to future versions of the Climate Action Plan.

Our framework for delivery is across three key strands:



Format of Climate Action Plan

Themes

South Kesteven District Council's Climate Action Plan is presented against our eight Themes, with relevant actions each assigned into an area.



46

Reference

A reference number is allocated to each action to aid correct references when monitoring the Climate Action Plan.

Action

This includes detail on the proposed action.

Focus

Our framework for delivery covers three key areas:

- Council
 - Council activity and carbon emissions
- District
 - Council delivered services within the district & duties as Planning Authority
- Communities
 - Leadership, lobbying, wider engagement and partnership working

Outcome

The outcome states what the action sets out to achieve within the scope of the Climate Action Plan.

Timeframe

The timeframe for actions state when the action is intended to be implemented:

- Short term- 2025 to 2027
- Medium term – to 2030
- Long term – 2030 and onwards

The Climate Action Plan also notes where relevant actions have already been completed or are underway.

Format of Climate Action Plan

Co-benefits

Integral to the Climate Action Plan is that actions will deliver co-benefits beyond the goal of climate mitigation or adaptation. Some actions may offer the potential to deliver multiple co-benefits.

We have mapped out eight key co-benefits of action:



Reducing utility bills



Improving health and wellbeing



Boosting jobs and growth



Improving air quality



Reducing the impact of flooding



Boosting Biodiversity



Reducing traffic congestion



Ensuring a fair society

Estimated cost

The below guide gives an indication of the estimated cost of implementing the action:

Cost code	Estimated cost
(£)	Internal cost
£	£1-£10,000
££	£10,001-£50,000
£££	£50,001-£500,000
££££	£500,001-£5 million
£££££	£5 million+

Services involved in delivery

Where an action is or needs to be delivered across multiple areas, this notes where service areas, beyond the officer lead, are included in delivery of the action.

Officer lead

This represents the senior officer lead responsible for the implementation of the action.

Cabinet lead

This represents the Cabinet Member lead with portfolio responsibility covering the action.



Built Environment

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
BE1	Continue to implement energy efficiency upgrades to council occupied corporate properties	Council	Reduce energy consumption and cost across council assets	Ongoing	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
BE2	Continue to implement energy efficiency upgrades to leisure centres	Council	Reduce energy consumption and cost across leisure assets	Ongoing	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
BE3	Complete PSDS funded decarbonisation project for Grantham Meres leisure centre	Council	Implement low-carbon heating system and associated supporting works	Ongoing	Boosting jobs and growth	££££	Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture	Cllr Rhys Baker
BE4	Complete energy efficiency and decarbonisation surveys for council occupied assets to understand path to net zero	Council	Produce a roadmap for future investment into council occupied properties	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	£	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
48 BE5	Complete energy efficiency and decarbonisation surveys for leisure centres to understand path to net zero	Council	-	Completed	Boosting jobs and growth	£	-	
BE6	Review feasibility of improving EPC standard for lettable properties to a minimum of a EPC "D" across the portfolio	District	Ensure energy efficiency of lettable properties owned by SKDC	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
BE7	Provide information and guidance to residents about energy efficiency in the home	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
BE8	Deliver improvements to private properties in South Kesteven with an EPC of D or below to implement energy efficiency and heating upgrades, using Warm Homes Plan funding	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Ongoing	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	££££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

BE9	Deliver programme of energy efficiency and heating upgrades to SKDC owned properties with an EPC of D or below, with support from using Warm Homes Plan funding	Council	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Ongoing	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	£££££	Head of Housing Technical Services	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE10	Ensure Sheltered Housing service charges review considers energy consumption and energy efficiency opportunities as part of recommendations	Council	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	£££	Director of Housing and Projects	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE11	Complete decarbonisation study of whole SKDC housing portfolio to understand pathway to achieve a minimum EPC C	Council	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	££	Head of Housing Technical Services	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE12	Review provision of energy advice services to residents across tenure types	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short tern	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
49 BE13	Enforce the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for private rented properties	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Ongoing	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	(£)	Environmental Health Manager - Environment and Private Sector Housing	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE14	Develop a policy to agree energy efficiency standard for Council owned new build properties and new asset acquisitions	Council	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	(£)	Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE15	Continue to review appropriate net-zero policy recommendations for the next Local Plan	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Ongoing	Reducing utility bills Fair society Health and wellbeing	(£)	Planning Policy Manager	Cllr Phil Dilks

Power

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
PO1	Review Council owned and occupied buildings for further solar PV potential	Council	Increase self-generation and reduce electricity cost across council assets	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
PO2	Review leisure centres for further solar PV potential	Council	Increase self-generation and reduce electricity cost across leisure assets	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
PO3	Review current SKDC portfolio of ownership for potential to develop utility scale solar PV	Council	Increase self-generation and offset cost and carbon emissions from property portfolio	Medium term	Boosting jobs and growth	££££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
PO4	Develop an options paper for the development of a council owned local renewable energy project, to offset unavoidable council carbon emissions	Council	Review options to increase self-generation and offset cost and carbon emissions from property portfolio	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
50 PO5	Continue to upgrade SKDC owned streetlights to LED	Council	Reduce electricity consumption and cost by 75% from streetlights	Ongoing	Boosting jobs and growth	££££	Corporate Facilities Lead	Cllr Rhys Baker
PO6	Review opportunities as part of Local Government Reorganisation to conduct a Local Area Energy Plan	District	Co-ordinate regional growth with energy considerations	Medium term	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Phil Dilks

Growing our Green Economy

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
GE1	Support SMEs within the district to reduce their energy use and decarbonise	District	Reduce energy consumption and cost for SMEs	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Economic Development Inward Investment Manager	Cllr Ashley Baxter
GE2	Review integration of energy and sustainability content in SKDC delivered Skills Summit	District	Increase awareness of skills to support the green economy	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	(£)	Economic Development Inward Investment Manager	Cllr Ashley Baxter
GE3	Review inclusion of green economy themes in emerging Tourism Strategy	District	Highlight opportunities for green tourism in district	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	(£)	Economic Development Inward Investment Manager	Cllr Ashley Baxter
GE4	Develop guidance for contract managers to deliver social value and sustainability aspects of contracts, in line with Contract Procedure Rules	District	Align procurement needs with SKDC strategic goals for sustainability	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	(£)	Assistant Director of Finance	Cllr Ashley Baxter

51

Natural Environment

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
NE1	Continue to implement the Trees and Woodland Strategy	Council Communities	Deliver the targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan	Ongoing	Improving health and wellbeing Improving air quality Reducing the impact of flooding Boosting biodiversity	£££	Tree Project Officer	Cllr Rhys Baker
NE2	Develop and implement new Biodiversity Action Plan for SKDC	Council Communities	Deliver the targets of the Trees and Woodland Strategy work plan	Short term	Improving health and wellbeing Improving air quality Reducing the impact of flooding Boosting biodiversity	££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

Transport

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
TR1	Implement the actions of the Green Fleet Strategy	Council	Deliver the actions of the Green Fleet Strategy	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	££££	Head of Waste Management and Market Services	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR2	Implement a sustainable travel plan for all staff and councillors, including reducing the need to travel where feasible	Council	Review business travel needs across SKDC and modes of travel.	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR3	Develop SKDC electric vehicle charging strategy to agree where and how new charging infrastructure will be included on SKDC properties	District	Agree operating model for future charge point provision and principles on locating new infrastructure	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR4	Ensure the existing EVCPs in SKDC car parks are reliable and offer good value to users	District	Improve accessibility and affordability of electric charging	Ongoing	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
53 TR5	Install further EVCPs in SKDC car parks	District	Improve accessibility and affordability of electric charging	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	£££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR6	Continue to work alongside Lincolnshire County Council to support rollout of charging infrastructure in the district	District	Improve accessibility and affordability of electric charging	Medium term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR7	Support the implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan for Grantham	District	Continue to monitor and work toward improving air quality within the Air Quality Management Area	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Environmental Health Manager - Environment and Private Sector Housing	Cllr Phil Dilks
TR8	Highlight opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling in the district	Communities	Increase uptake of active travel	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader	Cllr Paul Stokes

Resources

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
RE1	Ensure waste reduction messaging is included in SKDC comms on waste and recycling	Communities	Increase awareness of waste avoidance alongside waste recycling	Short term	Ensuring a fair society	(£)	Communications Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
RE2	Successfully implement kerbside food waste collections from April 2026	Council	Treat food waste through anaerobic digestion and remove from general waste stream	Ongoing	Ensuring a fair society	££££	Head of Waste and Markets	Cllr Rhys Baker
RE3	Review implementation of kerbside soft plastics	Council	Better separation of plastic waste in line with Environment Act (2021)	Medium term	Ensuring a fair society	£££	Head of Waste and Markets	Cllr Rhys Baker
RE4	Promote reusable alternative to common single-use items in SKDC Comms	Communities	Signpost waste reduction opportunities to residents	Short term	Ensuring a fair society	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
RE5	Review water consumption across Council owned assets and review reduction opportunities	Council	Identify leaks and reduce water consumption	Short term	Ensuring a fair society	(£)	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
RE6	Promote water conservation awareness and opportunities to SKDC tenants	Council	Help to reduce domestic water consumption for households	Short term	Reducing utility bills	(£)	Communications Manager	Cllr Virginia Moran
RE7	Review water consumption targets for new residential developments as part of Local Plan review	District	Help to reduce domestic water consumption for households	Short term	Reducing utility bills	(£)	Planning Policy Manager	Cllr Phil Dilks
RE8	Review implementation of lower-flow toilets across Council owned properties	Council	Help to reduce domestic water consumption for households	Short term	Reducing utility bills	££	Head of Housing Technical Services	Cllr Virginia Moran

54

Communities

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
CO1	Keep under review adverse weather plans for SKDC service areas and ensure effective mitigations are in place	Council	Improved forward planning and risk mitigation for adverse and extreme weather	Ongoing	Improving health and wellbeing Reducing impact of flooding	(£)	Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead	Cllr Richard Cleaver
CO2	Review and conduct analysis of areas of greatest risk from extreme and disruptive weather for the wider district	Communities	Improved forward planning and risk mitigation	Short term	Improving health and wellbeing Reducing impact of flooding	(£)	Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead	Cllr Richard Cleaver
CO3	Continue to work with partners on improving flood resilience within communities	Communities	Residents are better prepared for future flooding events	Short term	Reducing impact of flooding	(£)	Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead	Cllr Richard Cleaver
CO4	Continue incident response to major flooding events within the district, working alongside partners	District	Improved response to disruptive flooding events	Short term	Reducing impact of flooding	££	Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead	Cllr Richard Cleaver
55 CO5	Where possible support communities to engage with authorities and landowners to repair and maintain water and flood management assets.	Communities	Help to create proactive multi-agency working resulting in more resilient communities.	Medium term	Reducing impact of flooding	(£)	Environmental Health Manager - Environment and Private Sector Housing	Cllr Richard Cleaver
CO6	Implement external communications activity to update stakeholders on Climate Action Plan workstreams	Communities	Improve awareness of SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Communications Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
CO7	Agree delivery of SKDC led events focusing on sustainability within the district	Communities	Improve awareness of SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

Decision making

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
DM1	Review feasibility of a community grants scheme to support energy and sustainability projects in South Kesteven	Communities	Support partners to deliver their own energy projects	Short term	ALL	(£)	Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM2	Continue to ensure SKDC investments meeting the Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) factors as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy, whilst protecting the security of taxpayer funds	Council	Ensure investment strategy is aligned with SKDC strategic goals for sustainability	Short term	ALL	(£)	Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer	Cllr Ashley Baxter
DM3	Ensure the Corporate Projects list includes climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve visibility of energy and sustainability considerations for SKDC projects	Short term	ALL	(£)	Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change	Cllr Phillip Knowles
56 DM4	Implement internal governance to progress and monitor the Climate Action Plan	Council	Ensure actions are fit for purpose and delivery is progressing	Short term	ALL	(£)	Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change	Cllr Phillip Knowles
DM5	Complete review of comments included in climate change section of Committee report templates to ensure responses are fit for purpose	Council	Improve visibility of energy and sustainability considerations for SKDC led activity	Short term	ALL	(£)	Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change	Cllr Phillip Knowles
DM6	Publish internal guidance for officers on how to assess the climate impact and carbon emission considerations of major projects and proposals	Council	Improve visibility of energy and sustainability considerations for SKDC projects	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM7	Implement an internal communications plan to keep Councillors updated on climate action work, and signposting relevant resources	Council	Improve awareness of SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

DM8	Implement an internal communications plan to keep staff updated on climate action work, and signposting relevant resources	Council	Improve awareness of SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM9	Review grant funding opportunities and cascade information to key officers	Council	Improve access to relevant grant funding for Climate Action Plan projects	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM10	Offer bitesize training to all SKDC staff on climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve awareness of and potential for SKDC action and commitments	Ongoing	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM11	Develop ongoing training for senior leaders on climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve awareness of and potential for SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM12	Offer ongoing training for all staff on climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve awareness of and potential for SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM13	Develop ongoing training for Councillors on climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve awareness of and potential for SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

Contact Details

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

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker,
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Biodiversity Duty and Biodiversity Action Plan for South Kesteven

Report Author

Louise Case, Sustainability Project Support Officer

 louise.case@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed in response to the Biodiversity Duty for all public authorities (excluding parish councils). The new Plan will report on the actions South Kesteven District Council will take to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the district as well as deliver Biodiversity Net Gain as the Local Planning Authority.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Note the biodiversity duty for all public authorities and requirements to report on actions and progress.**
- 2. Approve the adoption of the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan.**
- 3. Delegate to the Director of Housing and Projects, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, the approval of minor amendments to the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan as new Government guidance emerges.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Sustainable South Kesteven
Which wards are impacted?	All wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan sets a framework for the Council to respond to the issue of biodiversity loss within the district. The implementation of this proposed Biodiversity Action Plan will need to carefully review the financial implications of all agreed actions, including any sources of external funding support or cost implications to the Council, on a case by case basis.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 As a local authority, South Kesteven District Council has a statutory duty to consider how it will conserve and enhance biodiversity across the district. This report considers the Council's plan to deliver biodiversity improvements to ensure compliance with Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021.
- 1.3 The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 November 2025 recommended the Plan to Cabinet.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.4 The South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Council's statutory role to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the district of South Kesteven. The Biodiversity Action Plan sets out key opportunities to restore healthy ecosystems, improve biodiversity and help reverse the loss of wildlife.

Completed by: Louise Case, Sustainability Projects Support Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. Our natural environment is currently facing a triple planetary threat of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Driven by the destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitats, biodiversity has deteriorated at an alarming rate. The effects of this biodiversity crisis have been observed worldwide.
- 2.2. England is now widely considered to be one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, given historic and ongoing declines in biodiversity. A recently published analysis by the State of Nature Partnership states that since 1970, UK species have declined, on average, by 19% and that nearly one in six species are threatened with extinction in Great Britain. Furthermore, a recent study by the Wildlife Trust has suggested that 90% of lowland grassland has been lost in the 20th century. This has contributed to a loss or reduction in insects, wildlife and grassland species which are an integral part of the UK's ecological infrastructure.
- 2.3. The compounding impacts of climate change, pollution and land use change are the principal drivers of the long-term decline in the health of our natural environment. The encroachment of industrial activity and intensified agricultural management have been identified as the most prominent contributing factors.
- 2.4. In recognition of the decline in the nation's biodiversity, Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 required that "every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity."
- 2.5. The Environment Act 2021, under Section 102, subsequently amended Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to strengthen this 'biodiversity duty' which now places a legal obligation on public authorities to:
 - Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
 - Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration
 - Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.
- 2.6. This legislation covers the Council in both its duties as a local authority, as well as a local planning authority (LPA).
- 2.7. In December 2023, the Council published a '[first consideration](#)' report which set out its initial consideration of what action could be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It was a requirement that policies and objectives would be agreed as soon as possible after this date. Following this, the Council was to report on achievements resulting from its actions, and actions it plans to take in the next reporting period. The end date of the first reporting period should be no later than 01 January 2026 and then reconsidered within five years of the previous reporting period.

- 2.8. The aim of this Biodiversity Action Plan is to produce a set of objectives and actions to assist in delivering and protecting strategic biodiversity networks, taking into consideration both local and national priorities.
- 2.9. The vision of the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan (Appendix B) is to firstly conserve and enhance habitats that create better and more interconnected places for wildlife across South Kesteven. The Council will also seek to increase awareness of biodiversity and encourage more people to connect with nature and by doing so take positive action that benefits biodiversity in South Kesteven.
- 2.10. The Biodiversity Action Plan and supporting documents were presented to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2025. The Committee recommended to Cabinet to approve the adoption of the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan. Since that date, further information has been included in supporting documentation. The changes to each item are as follows:
- Appendix A, the Progress for Nature Update, has been amended to clearly reflect the reporting period in which actions have been recorded (1st January 2024 to 31st December 2025) and now includes dedicated coverage of the Section 106 agreement between South Kesteven District Council and Boothby Wildland. This agreement is necessary to allow Boothby to sell biodiversity credits on the market to developers. This is a key element to supporting Biodiversity Net Gain.
 - The only notable change to Appendix B, the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan, has been the reclassification of action BAP37 from a short term to medium term ambition to reflect the scope of works.
 - A summary of Biodiversity Net Gain data has been produced following an update to Government guidance on fulfilling the Biodiversity Duty. This data, which relates to the Council's responsibility as an LPA, has been collated and published on the Council's website ([Biodiversity Duty | South Kesteven District Council](#)). This provides requested detail on the actions that the Council has carried out to meet its Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) obligations as a Local Planning Authority. This includes details of BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans approved from relevant planning applications. These biodiversity units have been categorised into their respective distinctive habitat and will be closely monitored under the planning theme of the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 2.11. The proposed Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the strategic approach the Council will take to help reverse biodiversity loss and make space for nature, incorporating three core themes, to reflect the remits where South Kesteven District Council will have most influence to improve biodiversity:

- Theme 1: Nature Recovery and Management
- Theme 2: People, Partnerships and Funding
- Theme 3: Planning and Policy

2.12. The decided themes were curated to align with the required elements set out in [Government guidance for biodiversity duty reporting](#).

- Section 1 requires the Council to explain the policies and objectives relevant to its biodiversity duty, and any actions taken in the previous reporting period (01 January 2024 to 31 December 2025) to benefit biodiversity.
- Section 2 recommends that organisations explain how they plan to fulfil their biodiversity duty over the next 5-year reporting period. To fulfil this, the Council has summarised its plans for future efforts in a dedicated table of actions.
- Also detailed within the Biodiversity Action Plan is the Council's role as a local planning authority in supporting the implementation of green infrastructure under the Local Plan, and its responsibility to enforce Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). To fulfil Section 3 of the guidance document, the Progress for Nature Update (Appendix A) details the actions the Council has carried out to meet BNG obligations, including the signing of a Section 106 Agreement with Nattergal's Boothby Wildland. Also provided within this report is a link to the BNG resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans that the Council has already approved. To ensure BNG obligations are met in the next reporting period, BNG will be monitored by a dedicated Officer who will annually review ongoing applications once planning permission has been granted.
- Sections 4 to 10 in the provided guidance were optional for all local authorities. The Council's Progress for Nature Update provides an in-depth summary of the actions it has taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity, including how the community has been engaged (Section 4). This report also highlights the top achievements of the Council (Section 5 and Section 10).
- To support Section 6, the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan details how existing strategies have been considered, with specific reference to the importance of upcoming strategies when informing local policy. Following an introduction to the Council's biodiversity duty as a public authority, the Biodiversity Action Plan sets out its background connection to the upcoming Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), to be

delivered by Lincolnshire County Council as a tool designed to guide action for nature recovery.

- To highlight the action that the Council has taken to raise awareness of biodiversity in the community (Section 8) the Update for Nature Report details the level of public engagement held on biodiversity matters to date.
- 2.13. The first of three themes, Nature Recovery and Management, largely focuses on the management of Council-owned open space. The area of South Kesteven covers 365 square miles and the Council delivers the maintenance of all Council owned land through its Street Scene team. In addition to General Fund and Housing Revenue Account open space, this includes the maintenance of three Green Flag accredited parks in Grantham, Grantham Cemetery, closed churchyards and sports pitches. Collectively, this presents significant opportunity to further explore the implementation of new biodiversity and rewilding initiatives.
- 2.14. The second dedicated theme focuses on People, Partnerships and Funding, and considers the responsibility of the Council to engage and educate the community on ways to support biodiversity and nature recovery within the wider South Kesteven environment. Also referenced is the potential for partnership working to deliver higher-value biodiversity initiatives.
- 2.15. Finally, the Planning and Policy theme largely reflects on the current responsibility of the Council, as an LPA, to reinforce the core actions required to support Biodiversity Net Gain, work with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership to embed the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and promote the incorporation of green infrastructure into more sustainable developments in South Kesteven.
- 2.16. Supplementary to the Biodiversity Action Plan, the Council has produced Appendix A, the 'Our Progress for Nature' report, to provide a comprehensive overview of the actions that have already been taken to support biodiversity in the district since 01 January 2024.
- 2.17. Many of these actions stem from the Council's formal declaration of a climate emergency in September 2019, which reflected the urgent need to reduce its environmental and climatic impact. To overcome the ongoing degradation of our environment, the importance of integrating green infrastructure into urban environments was identified as a crucial element of nature recovery. As set out in the Climate Action Strategy, it is the Council's vision that wildlife habitats are valued, maintained, enhanced and created in South Kesteven and that biodiversity is restored.
- 2.18. Furthermore, the Council's Corporate Plan (2024 – 2027) sets out the Council's mission to meet the challenge of climate change and ensure a clean, green and healthy natural and built environment for present and future generations. This is

under-pinned by an ambition to protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitats, working to actively restore and rehabilitate damaged ecosystems.

- 2.19. When developing the Council's plans for biodiversity it must be recognised that the public open space the Council maintains is used by residents in different ways, including dog walking and for informal leisure and physical activity pursuits. The benefits of implementing biodiversity measures must be balanced with local community need to avoid negative perception and publicity.
- 2.20. This report reflects both on the action that the Council has previously taken and proposes further actions to support biodiversity across the district as part of its wider Biodiversity Duty.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. It is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 that all local authorities (excluding parish councils) and local planning authorities must publish a biodiversity report.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 that all local authorities (excluding parish councils) and local planning authorities must publish a biodiversity report. Therefore, the option to 'do nothing' has been discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The Environment Act 2021 has strengthened the Biodiversity Duty of local authorities and as a result, it has become the legal obligation of South Kesteven District Council as a both a public authority and local planning authority to develop and implement a Biodiversity Action Plan.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan was presented to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2025. The Committee recommended to Cabinet to approve the adoption of the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 12th December 2023 - [Update on Local Authority Biodiversity duties Report.pdf](#)

- 7.2. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 10th November 2025 – [Biodiversity Action Plan for South Kesteven.pdf](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix A – Progress for Nature Update
- 8.2. Appendix B – South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan

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Progress for Nature Update January 2025



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Introduction

England is now widely considered to be one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, given historic and ongoing declines in biodiversity. A recently published analysis by the State of Nature Partnership states that since 1970, UK species have declined, on average, by 19% and that nearly one in six species are threatened with extinction in Great Britain. Furthermore, a recent study by the Wildlife Trust has suggested that 90% of lowland grassland has been lost in the 20th century. This has contributed to a loss or reduction in insects, wildlife and grassland species which are an integral part of the UK's ecological infrastructure.

The compounding impacts of climate change, pollution and land use change are recognised to be the principal drivers of the long-term decline in the health of our natural environment. The encroachment of industrial activity and intensified agricultural management have been identified as the most prominent contributing factors.

Supplementary to South Kesteven District Council's Biodiversity Action Plan, this progress document sets out the action that the Council has already taken to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district since the publication of its First Considerations Report in December 2023. This reporting period covers 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2025.

So far, the Council has facilitated initiatives on Council-owned land, supported external funding opportunities for town or parish councils and community groups, and enhanced staff knowledge of wildlife-friendly open space management.

Moving forward, the Biodiversity Action Plan will outline future priorities for habitats and species in South Kesteven. Ultimately, this will play an important role in the delivery of the Council's plans for climate change mitigation and adaptation, to provide value for wildlife and residents alike.



Section 106 Agreement with Boothby Wildland to support nature recovery

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Unless exempt, new developments must deliver a biodiversity net gain of 10% and result in more better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.

There are 3 ways a developer can achieve BNG.

- They can create biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a development site).
- If developers cannot achieve all their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
- If developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This should be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

Boothby Wildland, a 617-hectare site owned by nature restoration company Nattergal, sought to create, manage and maintain BNG Units as part of its landscape recovery ambitions. The uplift in biodiversity is measured by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2023) and translated into Biodiversity Units that can then be sold to developers where they are unable to achieve a net gain in biodiversity on-site.

The land which has been identified as dedicated Biodiversity Areas at Boothby Wildland totals 64.6 hectares, comprising four separate parcels of land referred to as Exton's Wood (14 ha), Ark Field (9.6 ha), Witherns (13 ha) & Kirkhill (28 ha).

The habitat enhancements are to be achieved through adherence to a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). The HMMP is a detailed plan that outlines how the Biodiversity Areas will be monitored and managed for at least 30 years in order to create and enhance habitats for the purposes of achieving BNG. To secure the use of land for biodiversity, a legal agreement was required to legally ensure the highest quality delivery of the habitats.

In September 2024, the South Kesteven District Council Planning Committee unanimously agreed to authorise the Assistant Director of Planning and Growth to enter into a Section 106 Agreement with Boothby Wildland Ltd to create, manage and maintain Biodiversity Net Gain Units for the purpose of satisfying BNG Obligations for developments for a period of 30 years.

It was desirable to have a site within South Kesteven that could provide local BNG units if developers cannot achieve BNG on-site. This would ensure that the BNG and associated benefits arising from new development would remain within South Kesteven, as opposed to being used elsewhere.

Moving forward, it is the Council's responsibility to ensure that the obligations set out in the Section 106 agreement are adhered to, through effective monitoring of the site. Monitoring of

the HMMP will be carried out by the Council as the Local Planning Authority, who will review progress of the habitat units against the proposed management objectives.

The HMMP is designed to be an adaptive, 'live' document and should be reviewed and amended regularly to ensure the management objectives remain fit to achieve their intended aims over the 30-year management period.

Monitoring will follow the method set out in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric for conducting condition assessments. A report should be produced after each monitoring visit and will include recommendations for action or alterations to the management prescription set out. Monitoring will be conducted annually for the first five years during June or July before the grass is cut for hay. After year 5, monitoring may be reduced to once in 2 years, and eventually to once in 5 years as habitats become more stable, for the 30-year duration.

To ensure that the monitoring costs of the Council are covered for the lifetime of the agreement, a monitoring fee of £35,000 was to be provided to the Council.

Biodiversity Net Gain in Planning – Approved Metrics

The Council is responsible for monitoring the Biodiversity Net Gain resulting, or expected to result, from biodiversity gain plans that the Council has approved. The below table summarises the planning applications, dated between January 2024 and January 2026, that have been subject to BNG requirements.

Planning approved BNG applications 01/01/2024-13/01/26		Off-site	Off-Site Credits	On-site	Ha
Quantity of Planning applications containing BNG requirements	63	8	0	55	211.52

Planning applications conditions discharged	6
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On-site base Line (units)			On-site post-intervention (units)			On-site net Change (units)					
Habitat	Hedgerow	Wetland	Habitat	Hedgerow	Wetland	Habitat	%	Hedgerow	%	Wetland	%
495.03	90.75	26.82	722.64	139.11	33.78	227.92	144.54	48.23	2809.89	6.96	413.92

For each application and completed biodiversity metric, the impact on biodiversity units has been collated to inform the following data:

- For each application, the on-site base line refers to the existing ecological baseline before any development.
- The on-site post-intervention references the end number of biodiversity units post development.
- The on-site net change describes the additional units being added.



Witham Slea Blue Green Corridor Initiative

SKDC was the lead partner for the £1.2m [Witham/Slea Blue Green Corridor initiative](#) which was funded from the European Regional Development Fund, with financial contributions and partnership support from North Kesteven District Council, the Environment Agency and the National Trust. The resulting river restoration and biodiversity project taking in the Witham through Grantham was shortlisted as a finalist for the prestigious UK River Prize 2024.

This Blue/Green project formed a crucial part of the overall, long-term, Upper Witham Restoration, a habitat improvement programme that has been ongoing for more than 10 years overseen by the Upper Witham sub-catchment partnership who submitted the area for the prestigious award.

Work in and around Grantham began in 2019 and ended in Summer 2023, supporting and developing areas alongside the River Witham and River Slea. It saw rivers linked with their floodplains, new habitats created, and existing habitats improved to support a more diverse range of species.

The 14 individual projects of the Upper Witham Restoration, including four in the Sleaford area, were designed to improve the freshwater habitat, support the ecosystem and benefit local communities.



Image – Belton Floodplain Improvements

Examples of work undertaken include tree planting and the introduction of bird boxes and wildflower meadows. Other work included:

- River channel improvements to restore straightened and over widened sections of the river to reinstate natural processes, improving habitat for people, places and wildlife
- Wetland creation, creating rare landscapes and supporting a wide variety of special native species, such as amphibians and water voles previously limited by the lack of habitat
- Wildflower meadow creation, establishing a wide range of flora, and creating habitat for many important species through refuge and food provision, as well as benefiting pollinators
- Flushing meadow creation, creating a spring-fed meadow to support diverse flora
- Tree management to support native species by introducing light and adding woody material for habitat creation
- Footpaths to bring essential transport links throughout the town, making enjoyable riverside walks more accessible

The work on the river was well received and set a good example of how river restoration projects can enhance public green spaces for the benefit of local users whilst also supporting wildlife.

The wider Upper Witham Restoration involved partnership work between the Environment Agency, East Mercia Rivers Trust, Wild Trout Trust, The National Trust, Grantham Angling Association Fly Fishing Section, South Kesteven District Council and the University of Lincoln.



Image – [In-channel Restoration](#) of the Papermill Weir, Grantham

Coronation Community Orchards Funding

New mini-orchards were planted across the district following a Coronation Living Heritage grant awarded to SKDC to celebrate the accession of King Charles III. Parish councils, community groups and parent/teacher associations could apply for funding to plant fruit trees on publicly accessible sites, with protective spirals, information signage and protective fencing as required.

It was recognised that Orchards deliver on several fronts through the provision of organic fruit, engaging the community and helping to withstand climate change, increase carbon sequestration and the filtering of pollutants. The choice of fruit trees was down to local preferences, though successful applicants were required to outline plans for aftercare of the orchard to ensure it is maintained permanently.

Green Flag Status – Wyndham Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and Dysart Park

SKDC manages three formal parks in the district: Wyndham Park, Dysart Park and Queen Elizabeth Park, all of which are situated in Grantham. All three parks have accredited Green Flag status, acknowledging them as among the very best in the East Midlands.

The Green Flag Award is the benchmark international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom and signifies that a park is well-maintained and welcoming. In addition, the award acts as a tribute to SKDC staff and community volunteers who give their time freely to help maintain the parks to a standard befitting Green Flag status.

Biodiversity Officer Working Group

An internal working group was formed to help steer the Council's biodiversity plans. This working group includes officers from a range of departments and meets monthly to achieve the following objectives:

- Understand the current health of the natural environment in the district and identify areas of improvement.
- Set out the council's remit to influence the natural environment and improve biodiversity.
- Consider the council's role as a local planning authority and the new expectations for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new developments.
- Consider the council's role as a local authority and the specific actions and projects we intend to implement to improve biodiversity.
- The working group will provide regular updates on the council's biodiversity plans to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Summer 2025 Biodiversity Consultation

Residents were asked for their views on South Kesteven District Council's approach to wildlife habitat, nature and biodiversity in a four-week consultation which opened early June 2025. The consultation illustrated SKDC's commitment to setting aside land for nature and provided an opportunity to identify what support other organisations would like to help promote biodiversity. Responses were sought from residents, landowners, organisations and other stakeholders to help it refine and develop its future direction and actions.

Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback on existing rewilding and wildflower sites and suggest areas of Council owned land that could be suitable for a biodiversity scheme. The Council was also keen to establish how best it can support other organisations and community and voluntary groups to set aside areas of their own land for the benefit of nature.



Biodiversity Training for Council Staff

Establishment and Management of Wildflower Areas in Amenity Turf

In May 2025, the Council organised a training day course at Boothby Wildland, a Nattergal rewilding project situated here in South Kesteven. The course, which focused on the successful establishment of wildflower areas in amenity turf, was delivered by Dan Carne of Woodmeadow Makers, supported by the Boothby Wildland team.

The desired outcomes of the course were:

- For staff to have the relevant knowledge and skills to successfully turn areas of amenity turf into wildflower areas that a) look attractive and b) provide benefit to wildlife.
- For example, equip staff with the knowledge to evaluate diverse site conditions and tailor techniques for varying soil types, microclimates, and other local factors.
- For staff to learn how to mimic ecological processes to achieve outcomes a) and b) in the long term with minimal cost.

The outline of content delivery covered:

- Site assessment and planning
- Preparation and establishment
- Management and maintenance

Arboricultural Knowledge Training Course

To ensure that Officers can make informed decisions regarding tree-related issues in their work and align tree-related decision-making across departments to improve service delivery and consistency, training was provided by local Arboricultural consultant, Andrew Belson.

The course focused on providing a foundational understanding of tree biology, identification and best management practices. The training was directed to Grounds Maintenance staff, Climate and Sustainability Officers, and Officers from Planning and Planning Enforcement.

Basic Tree Inspection

As a follow up to the foundational Arboricultural Knowledge training course, a follow-up day was dedicated to Basic Tree Inspection so that staff were equipped with the skills to recognize hazardous trees and assess risk. Delivered in SKDC's very own Wyndham Park, the content supported Officers in the early identification of potential tree-related safety issues, reducing the need for reactive interventions.

Make Space for Nature Biodiversity Projects Scheme

In August 2024, the Council announced its Make Space for Nature scheme. Following a successful bid to the South Kesteven UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Council was awarded £54,490 to support town and parish councils implement biodiversity initiatives.

A 'Rewilding Menu' guide was developed by SKDC to support town and parish councils in their endeavour to tackle local biodiversity loss and improve the health and wellbeing of residents. It presented a menu of rewilding options with projected costings that could provide inspiration for new rewilding initiatives within the district. Ideal sites were identified as areas of open space with existing public access that were underutilised within residential areas. It was the responsibility of the town or parish council to identify areas of interest within the district and manage the organisational element of project work, although Officers were on hand to provide advice and shape new project ideas.

The Council has also developed a Tree Planting Guide to provide practical advice to town and parish councils and other partners who are intending to plant new amenity trees in their area. This document guides the reader through the process of planning, site assessment, species selection, procurement of nursery stock, the practical act of planting the trees, and post planting maintenance. Considering each of these elements in turn will provide a new planting scheme the best chance of success.



Image: Wyndham Park Biodiversity Paddock, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund under South Kesteven's 'Make Space for Nature' scheme.

South Kesteven's Trees and Woodland Strategy

Lincolnshire has some of the lowest levels of tree cover in England, although this is expected given the agricultural land use in the County. SKDC's Trees and Woodlands Strategy will inform how the Council can protect and enhance the district's tree population, with specific reference to tree preservation orders, development control and tree canopy cover increase through public and partnership engagement. In doing so, the Strategy will play a key role in the Council's ambitions to increase biodiversity and represents a significant opportunity to increase tree cover and help tackle the effects of climate change.

The Strategy was developed with the support of Treeconomics, who have worked with other local authorities, in recognition of the pivotal role trees and woodland play in cutting carbon emissions.

The public consultation on the Strategy closed in February 2024, with approximately 900 responses. 99% of these respondents agreed that trees and woodlands were valuable assets, and 96% agreed that planting, maintaining and protecting trees was a worthwhile investment. This demonstrated a clear desire from residents for the Council to develop a strategic approach to the management of its tree assets.

The Council appointed a dedicated Tree Project Officer whose role will involve securing funding opportunities and engaging with local communities.



Rewilding Trial Sites

SKDC's commitment to increase wildlife habitat and improve biodiversity is a key strand of the Council's Corporate Plan, which seeks a Sustainable South Kesteven and following the 2019 declaration of a Climate Emergency, states: "We will protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitats, working to actively restore and rehabilitate damaged ecosystems."

Rewilding involves the restoration of healthy ecosystems, aimed at increasing biodiversity and reversing the loss of our wildlife. By developing and protecting existing habitats, we can build towards a more resilient landscape that is better positioned to adapt to the effects of climate change. Furthermore, rewilding serves a dual purpose of reconnecting people with nature, at minimal cost. By altering our approach to the management of our open spaces, we can provide better habitats for wildlife, improve biodiversity, and increase amenity value. This is especially important as many people are spending a significant amount of time indoors where a busy, technology-mediated life leads to a disconnect with nature. The incorporation of green space within our environment can foster a deeper sense of connection to nature, reduce stress and promote healthier living. Encouraging people to spend more time moving in nature-focused environments can also help lessen the effects of mental and physical illness.

To align with biodiversity initiatives, specific pocket sites across the district can be maintained differently to attract a diverse range of beneficial species. The creation of rewilding areas may be complemented by regularly mown sections and pathways, maintaining the visually appealing environment of South Kesteven whilst supporting local wildlife populations. By considering the environment, wildlife species and need of local people in individual locations, a tailored approach can be taken to ensure maximum benefit across the wider community.

New community rewilding areas have been and are still being identified across South Kesteven to enable pockets of land to go back to nature. New locations will be proposed with guidance from SKDC ward members, parish councils, and the Council's Sustainability and Climate Change team and its grounds maintenance staff. The idea is that these areas would receive minimum essential maintenance and be allowed to grow as nature intended. The Council acknowledges that not everywhere is appropriate for rewilding initiatives, as the recreation use of green space and safety aspects to each site must also be considered.

Proactive work has already taken place in key locations across South Kesteven. An area of the Foxglove Road playing field at Rutland Heights in Stamford has already been allowed to go back to nature. Grasses and other plants flourish there as a haven for wildlife, insects, birds and mammals. Similarly, Tattershall Drive, in Market Deeping, is blooming thanks to an area which is building a sustainable balance between recreational use and conservation in a public open space. Lastly, the Grantham rewilding site is part of the Blue Green Corridor project in Queen Elizabeth Park, to restore and reconnect the river and river corridors through the urban area of Grantham. The initiative has shown the way to restore, protect and increase local biodiversity.



Image: Wildflower Bund down Tattershall Drive, Market Deeping

More recently, the Council developed a Biodiversity Paddock in Wyndham Park, Grantham. Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund under South Kesteven's 'Make Space for Nature' scheme, the project incorporated native tree planting, wildflower segments and several benches for residents and visitors to sit and enjoy the space.



Image: The 4,000sqm paddock is located on the east side of Wyndham Park, adjacent to Sandon Road.

Each site is marked with an information board advising the public why some strips and pockets of open space are left unmown, and to ask people to refrain from walking on the natural environment.



Image: The Council's standard rewilding site signage



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South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan

Our vision, aims and high level ambition to conserve and enhance biodiversity in our District



85

Appendix B



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Our Biodiversity Duty



Biodiversity, or biological diversity, refers to the variety of life on Earth, in all its complex forms and interactions. This term encompasses all plants, animals, their habitats and the natural systems that support them, the collective interactions between each being known as an ecosystem. Healthy ecosystems form an intricate web that maintain and support life.

South Kesteven's wildlife, habitats and ecosystems are vitally important, from the services they provide, through to their role in climate regulation and access to nature for health, wellbeing and recreation. Biodiversity can be subtle but its associated ecosystem services are critical to human well-being, fundamental to both planet and people. These key functions include:

- **Provisioning** services (the provision of food, water, timber and fibre)
- **Regulating** services (helping to regulate climate change and carbon storage, air and water quality, flood management and disease control)
- **Cultural** services (providing recreational, aesthetic and cultural benefits, such as a sense of place and supporting human wellbeing)
- **Supporting** services (providing space for wildlife to flourish through pollination, photosynthesis, soil formation and nutrient cycling)

However, we have witnessed a startling decline in the biodiversity that underpins our natural world. Driven by the destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitats, biodiversity has deteriorated at an alarming rate. The effects of which have been observed worldwide. England is now widely considered to be one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, given historic and ongoing declines in biodiversity. A recently published analysis by the State of Nature Partnership states that since 1970, UK species have declined, on average, by 19% and that nearly one in six species are threatened with extinction in Great Britain.

The impacts of climate change, pollution and land use change are the principal drivers of the long-term decline in the health of our natural environment. The encroachment of industrial activity and intensified agricultural management have been identified as the most prominent contributing factors.

In September 2019, South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) formally declared a climate emergency, reflecting the urgent need to accelerate carbon emission reductions. To overcome the ongoing degradation of our environment, the importance of integrating green infrastructure into urban environments has been identified as a crucial element of nature recovery. As set out in the Climate Action Strategy, it is the Council's vision that wildlife habitats are valued, maintained, enhanced and created in South Kesteven and that biodiversity is restored. This report reflects on the action that SKDC has taken to support biodiversity across the district as part of its wider Biodiversity Duty.



Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 required that:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

The Environment Act 2021 subsequently amended Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to strengthen this ‘biodiversity duty’ which now places a legal obligation on public authorities to:

1. Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration; and
3. Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

This legislation covers SKDC in both its duties as a local authority, as well as a local planning authority (LPA).

In December 2023, SKDC published a ‘first consideration’ report which set out its initial consideration of what action can and is to be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It was a requirement that policies and objectives would be agreed as soon as possible after this date. Following this report, the Council must report on achievements resulting from its actions, and actions it plans to take in the next reporting period. The end date of the first reporting period should be no later than 01 January 2026 and then reconsidered within five years of the previous reporting period.

The aim of this Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is to produce a set of objectives and actions to assist in delivering and protecting strategic biodiversity networks, taking into consideration both local and national priorities. It is the vision of the Council to:

- Conserve and enhance habitats that create better, and more interconnected places for wildlife across South Kesteven
- Increase awareness of biodiversity and encourage more people to connect with nature and by doing so take positive actions that benefit biodiversity in South Kesteven

Timeframe

The timeframe for actions state when each is intended to be implemented:

- Short term- 2025 to 2027
- Medium term – to 2030
- Long term – 2030 and beyond

This BAP sets out the strategic approach the Council will take to help reverse biodiversity loss and make space for nature, incorporating three core themes:

- **Theme 1:** Nature Recovery and Management
- **Theme 2:** People, Partnerships and Funding
- **Theme 3:** Planning and Policy



Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) are a new system of spatial strategies for nature recovery, legislated for in the Environment Act 2021. The Defra Secretary of State appointed 48 responsible authorities (in most cases county or combined authorities) to lead the preparation of the strategies. Each strategy will agree priorities for nature recovery and the wider environment and propose actions in the locations where they would have the most impact in helping to deliver those priorities. The current rollout of LNRSs across England presents an opportunity for all local authorities to help shape and implement the vision for nature in their area.

As place leaders for their area, all local authorities have a key role to play in preparing and delivering LNRSs. As a supporting authority for the Greater Lincolnshire LNRS, SKDC has the opportunity to:

- Work closely with Lincolnshire County Council (the responsible authority) and other supporting authorities in the area to help shape the LNRS, ensuring it aligns with the Council's needs, existing strategies and priorities.
- Provide local data and input information from other relevant strategies, such as South Kesteven's Trees and Woodland Strategy. This will assist in mapping 'areas of particular importance for biodiversity'.
- Periodically review and agree drafts of the LNRS. The Regulations provide all supporting authorities with the opportunity to review and agree drafts ahead of public consultation and publication to ensure widespread agreement on the content and approach.

The LNRS legislation requires that responsible authorities involve all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in the preparation process. This includes SKDC within its role as LPA.

Supporting authorities are expected to be key users of LNRSs. As such, the Greater Lincolnshire LNRS will be instrumental in directing and delivering on nature-based objectives in the future. For example, the LNRS will:

- Inform the rollout of Biodiversity Net Gain, by helping to guide where offsite habitat is created and enhanced.
- Provide important evidence that will need to be considered in the making of Local Plans.
- Be considered as part of the Council's statutory duty to take action, consistent with its functions, to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Inform how future funding and investment in nature recovery is targeted, e.g. via initiatives like the Water Restoration Fund.



Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development. In England, BNG became mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and ensures that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development.

Unless exempt, developers in England are required to provide 10% BNG on all habitats within the redline boundary of their development, whether they are impacted or not. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development. Separate arrangements apply to on-site irreplaceable habitat.

For the purposes of BNG, biodiversity value is measured in standardised biodiversity units. A habitat will contain a number of biodiversity units, depending on factors such as its size, quality, location or type. Biodiversity units can be lost through development or generated through work to create and enhance habitats.

An ecologist can be consulted to assess the biodiversity value of an existing habitat and advise on suitable habitat creation or enhancement for the land. There is a statutory (official) biodiversity metric tool, which is used to measure how many units a habitat contains before development, and how many units are needed to replace the units of habitat lost and to achieve 10% net gain.

There are 3 ways a developer can achieve BNG.

- They can create biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a development site).
- If developers cannot achieve all their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
- If developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This should be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

The landowner is legally responsible for creating or enhancing a habitat for BNG. A detailed habitat management and monitoring plan (HMMP) will be required to outline how the land will be managed for at least 30 years to achieve the target condition. This applies if you make on-site gains or sell off-site gains on a site you own. If you buy off-site units, you are paying the land manager to manage the land for 30 years to achieve the target condition. If anything is changed on the land, a new base line would need to be produced with a new HMMP so that monitoring can be maintained by the Council and developer in question.

Once published, the LNRS will be used to guide BNG offsite habitat creation and enhancement into strategic locations for nature. Specifically, the BNG metric includes a 15% “strategic significance” uplift in biodiversity units per hectare for delivering proposals in the locations mapped by the LNRS.





Biodiversity in South Kesteven

South Kesteven is a largely rural landscape, populated by only a very small urban area. The district is divided into four National Character Areas (NCAs) by Natural England; The Fens, Kesteven Uplands, Trent and Belvoir Vales, and the Southern Lincolnshire Edge. These are further subdivided into seven Landscape Areas, each with its own distinctive characteristics.

The Kesteven Uplands, the largest and central part of the district, contains a high proportion of ancient woodlands, both semi-natural and replanted, and is abundant with species-rich calcareous grassland. Rivers Witham, East Glen and West Glen dissect the area, their valleys containing species-rich meadows, grazing marsh and woodlands.

In accordance with established practice, landscape character assessment is used as the basis for determining landscape sensitivity and capacity. SKDC commissioned FPCR to prepare the [South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment](#) (SKLCA) in January 2007, which builds upon the previously described NCAs at a finer grain of assessment. The SKLCA has since been used by the Council to inform its Landscape Policy.

South Kesteven has a variety of nature reserves and protected sites. These sites should be seen as part of an ecological network, managing, restoring and creating habitat in the right places helps rebuild a resilient network and enables species to thrive not just in one place but across wider landscapes. There are two Natura 2000 Special Area of Conservation (SAC) sites in the district: Baston Fen and Grimsthorpe Park. A summary of nature sites present in the South Kesteven District can be seen below (*Figure 1*).

Designation	Number of Sites
Natura 2000 (Special Areas of Conservation)	2
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	27
National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	None
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	228
Sites of Nature Conservation Interests (SNCI)	64
Local Geological Sites (LGS)	15
Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological sites (RIGs)	4



Planning and Policy

Adopted Local Plan

The South Kesteven Local Plan sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and policies for the future development of the district up to 2036. Whilst it must be noted that the Plan was adopted before BNG was implemented, Chapter 10 is dedicated to ‘Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Built Environments’ of South Kesteven.

Policy EN2: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity seeks to protect internationally, nationally and locally designated sites for their biodiversity and geodiversity importance.

The EN2 policy also seeks to enhance ecological networks and to deliver a net gain on all proposals, where possible. It is important to note that the language used here does not mandate delivery of net gain but seeks it, where possible.

Policy EN3: Green Infrastructure requires development proposals to enrich biodiversity habitats

The EN3 policy stipulates that ‘the green infrastructure network in the district will be maintained and improved by enhancing, creating and managing green space within and around settlements. Development proposals should ensure that existing and new green infrastructure is considered and integrated into the scheme design, taking opportunities to enrich biodiversity and habitats, enable greater connectivity and provide sustainable access for all. Proposals which may result in recreational and visitor pressure on designated biodiversity sites will be particularly expected to provide such green infrastructure.’ By improving existing and requiring new residential proposals to provide green infrastructure, the policy makes a key contribution towards providing a more extensive inventory of nature destinations in the proximity to new homes. This will be a key driver in deflecting recreational pressure from habitat sites.

Emerging Local Plan

The emerging Local Plan, the most recent published draft of which was the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan up to 2041, includes a revised environment chapter. The revised chapter was written in consultation with the Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England and Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership. The Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping and Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping and the associated policies and appendices were produced by the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.

The revised environment chapter not only includes a reviewed and strengthened policy EN2: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity, but also includes a new policy: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains. The Green Infrastructure policy has also been strengthened to include reference to Green Infrastructure Mapping.



A Report for Habitats Regulations Assessment, prepared in July 2025 for SKDC, concluded that the wording within Policy EN2 (Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and Policy EN3 (Green Infrastructure) protects habitats sites and strengthens South Kesteven's green infrastructure network.

Co-benefits of tackling the biodiversity crisis

Through our three identified themes, we outline the multiple co-benefits of supporting biodiversity action for each area. We recognise that, beyond conserving and enhancing biodiversity, many of the actions needed will also provide wider benefits for people, climate adaptation and the environment.

By altering our approach to the management of our open space, we can ensure better habitats for wildlife, provide quality green space, and increase amenity value. By developing and protecting existing habitats, we will build towards a more resilient landscape that is better positioned to adapt to the effects of climate change, helping to improve the wellbeing of our residents.

We have mapped out six key co-benefits of enhancing biodiversity:



Community Resilience & Adaptation



Carbon Sequestration & Mitigation



Climate Regulation



Health and Wellbeing



Healthy Environment (air, water and soil)



Flood Protection



Strategic Objective	Reference	Priority Actions	Action Owner	Timescale	Co-Benefits
Theme 1: Nature Recovery and Management					
Within areas of direct influence, the Council will seek to enhance the natural environment and support the sustained delivery of ecosystem services.	BAP1	Develop a 'biodiversity hierarchy' to outline best practice for maintaining Council-owned or managed grassland areas with each step designed to increase biodiversity and environmental resilience.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Short term	
	BAP2	Prioritise quick wins by improving biodiversity around council sites, such as installing bird boxes and insect holes.			
	BAP3	Develop a process to support the delivery of measures which improve biodiversity and climate adaptation in social housing communal open spaces. This will be based on tenant engagement outcomes, with a focus on co-benefits and ensuring a balance with the existing recreational use of the space.			
	BAP4	Conduct a survey or audit of selectively identified SKDC owned open space to help assess district wide potential to improve biodiversity. This will combine trial sites identified across the wider portfolio with resident-led suggestions.			
	BAP5	Existing data about wildlife and habitats in the local area should be reviewed before the commencement of new projects.			
	BAP6	Consult the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy once published to identify what actions will benefit specific areas.			
The Council's actions and decisions should seek to support and protect pollinators (including bees, moths, butterflies, and other insects) and their associated habitats as they are vital to the resilience of a healthy and biodiverse ecosystem.	BAP7	Endeavour to plant pollinator friendly plants where possible and include a diversity of species, colours, shapes, and flowering times to support a variety of pollinators.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture	Medium term	Carbon Sequestration Climate Regulation Healthy Environment
	BAP8	Support existing wildflower projects and develop new opportunities with the focus on 'feeding, breeding and sheltering' local wildlife.			

<p>The Council will include measures to reduce and/or prevent environmental damage resulting from our operations.</p> <p><i>Environmental damage can arise from activities which disrupt natural processes or negatively impact the natural environment (land, air, and water), habitats or living species. Sources of environmental damage include Greenhouse Gas emissions, chemical pollution, air pollution, land degradation, nitrogen and phosphorous loading, and the exploitation of natural resources.</i></p>	<p>BAP9</p>	<p>In recognition of the critical role peatlands play in carbon storage, biodiversity, and water regulation, the Council will avoid the direct use of peat in its operations, using only peat-free compost for planting initiatives and ornamental bedding displays.</p>	<p>Street Scene Manager</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>Healthy Environment</p>
	<p>BAP10</p>	<p>The Council acknowledges that peat-free composts are not yet universally viable in all settings or for all applications, including nursery tree production. Where viable, the Council will prioritise nursery suppliers who use certified peat-free alternatives, with a view of phasing out to those using sustainable alternatives as they become available.</p>			
	<p>BAP11</p>	<p>Within the Council's wider operations, plant protection products (PPP) will be used with care and only as a last resort on land where it is safe to do so and does not present a health and safety concern or impact of the aesthetics of an area. The Council will actively seek to further reduce PPP use where safe to do so.</p> <p>Licensed pesticides may still be used where there is a strong public health justification. For example, on areas of hardstanding or justified applications against pests e.g. Oak Processionary Moth.</p> <p>Herbicides remain the most cost-effective way of managing competing vegetation around amenity trees and preventing unwanted regrowth on tree stumps. Herbicides may also still be used on invasive species such as Japanese knotweed.</p>			
<p>Ensure the Council's local tree planting programmes contribute to climate adaptation objectives in line with SKDC's Trees and Woodland Strategy.</p>	<p>BAP12</p>	<p>Educate residents on the positive impact trees have on biodiversity and their role in alleviating the effects of climate change.</p>	<p>Tree Project Officer</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>Climate Regulation</p> <p>Flood Protection</p>
	<p>BAP13</p>	<p>To minimise and control the spread of diseases and pests, the Council will only source new trees from suppliers that can demonstrate adherence to the Plant Health Management Standard, the gold standard for biosecurity.</p>			
	<p>BAP14</p>	<p>The Council will diversify its tree population to support resilience against pests, disease and the adverse impacts of climate change, helping to support biodiversity where possible. Trees species will be chosen to match the site conditions and constraints and may include a mixture of native and non-native species.</p>			

	BAP15	The Council plans to support and further encourage local bat populations by providing bat boxes and identifying trees where they can roost.			
Ensure the ongoing monitoring of the impact rewilding measures have on local biodiversity.	BAP16	The Council will monitor and report on its actions to meet the biodiversity duty by collecting data on specific performance indicators and including a specific section within the Council's Annual Environment Key Performance Indicator Report.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Medium term	
	BAP17	<p>A range of indicators will be developed to monitor the Council's action on biodiversity, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of native tree species planted • Number of instances of pruning practices to promote biodiversity (veteranisation, preservation of cavities and deadwood). • Number of habitat piles created (e.g. from arboricultural arisings) • 25-year projected canopy cover from newly planted amenity trees. • Species diversity of newly planted trees (number of families, genera, and species) • Area restored for natural flood management • Metres of hedges planted • Area of wetland created or restored 			



Theme 2: People, Partnerships and Funding

Continue to engage with residents to understand how they would like public Council-owned land to be best managed to support green infrastructure, increased opportunities for biodiversity in open spaces, and to facilitate climate adaptation.	BAP18	Provide regular updates across the SKDC website and supporting communications e.g., social media.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Ongoing	
Support small enhancement projects across the district through the development of a funding matrix.	BAP19	To enable the delivery of community focused nature improvement and regeneration projects which maximise co-benefits for residents, the Council will continue to actively explore potential streams of grant funding which can be filtered down to support local biodiversity initiatives.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Ongoing	All
Facilitate Council-led community engagement events to foster a culture of biodiversity stewardship among residents, schools, and businesses.	BAP20	Annual participation in Great Big Green Week with supporting biodiversity consultation.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Ongoing	Community Resilience
	BAP21	The Council will explore hosting Citizen Science projects and BioBlitz events.			
	BAP22	Seek to involve staff and local communities in tree planting events and accompanying nature-based processes.			
	BAP23	Signpost residents and local businesses to best practice advice.			
Be committed to partnership working with neighbouring local authorities and organisations to maximise wildlife benefit.	BAP24	Share data and best practices with other local authorities.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Medium term	Healthy Environment
	BAP25	Apply jointly for biodiversity funding opportunities e.g., DEFRA, Natural England, National Lottery Heritage Fund.			
	BAP26	Encourage the adoption of sustainable food production methods and raise awareness of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes.			

Theme 3: Planning and Policy

<p>The Council will review its commitment to enhance the natural environment linked to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties.</p>	<p>BAP27</p>	<p>Conduct a review of the Council's approach to Biodiversity Net Gain in relation to its new build properties and future affordable housing developments.</p>	<p>Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Planning</p>	<p>Short term</p>	
<p>The Council will work to ensure the promotion of green infrastructure, prioritising proposals that contribute to biodiversity net gain and enhancement of green infrastructure, in particular Priority habitats and species, in line with an increasing level of mandatory action.</p>	<p>BAP28</p>	<p>Ensure developments in South Kesteven minimise their environmental impacts and deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity of at least 10% in line with existing policy and statutory legislation.</p>	<p>Planning Policy Manager Cabinet Member for Planning</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>Climate Regulation Flood Protection Health and Wellbeing</p>
	<p>BAP29</p>	<p>Promote as standard the guidance on biodiversity in new housing developments: creating wildlife-friendly communities produced by the National House Building Council (NHBC) Foundation, ensuring landscaping schemes are complied with following completion, and undertaking enforcement action where required.</p>			
	<p>BAP30</p>	<p>Promote the mandatory requirements of the forthcoming Design Code, once published, to enhance the uptake of green infrastructure and ecologically friendly measures.</p>			
	<p>BAP31</p>	<p>Adhere to the national standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to ensure new developments include biodiversity features such as wetlands, swales, and ponds to support aquatic and terrestrial species where appropriate.</p>			
	<p>BAP32</p>	<p>Continue to improve the biodiversity value of new build development in line with the adopted Design Guide and existing Supplementary Planning Document.</p>			
<p>Work with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership to embed the Local Nature Recovery Strategy into site allocation, priority habitat creation, and BNG offset location decisions.</p>	<p>BAP33</p>	<p>Leverage the GLNP's Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping to guide site allocations and planning decisions using key Geographic Information System (GIS) outputs.</p>	<p>Planning Policy Manager Cabinet Member for Planning</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>Climate Regulation Carbon Sequestration</p>
	<p>BAP34</p>	<p>Prioritise the protection of high-quality ecological network zones, buffer Priority habitats, and target creation areas for new habitat enhancement.</p>			

The Council will review the resource needed to successfully deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in the district.	BAP35	Provide ongoing ecological and biodiversity baseline training for planning staff and decision-makers to improve understanding of ecological issues and BNG implementation.	Planning Policy Manager	Short term	
	BAP36	If required, the Council could seek to engage a planning ecologist to scrutinise planning reports for improvements to biodiversity in new developments, and to support BNG.	Cabinet Member for Planning		
Within its role at local planning authority, the Council will review and enforce the protection of trees across the district.	BAP37	The Council will conduct a review of its Tree Protection Orders (TPOs), of which many trees are in high target low canopy coverage urban areas.	Tree Officer - Planning Cabinet Member for Planning	Medium term	All
	BAP38	Develop an agreed policy for enforcement of unauthorised works to protected trees (TPOs and trees in conservation areas) in accordance with Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) as amended and the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.	Tree Officer – Planning Cabinet Member for Planning	Short term	All
	BAP39	The Council will maintain a record of TPO replants and all 5-day notices issues.	Tree Officer - Planning Cabinet Member for Planning	Short term	All
	BAP40	The Council will have regard to government guidance associated with ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees, as a material planning consideration in decision making.	Planning Policy Manager Cabinet Member for Planning	Ongoing	All

Strategies relevant to the Biodiversity Duty – additional policies to consider

Strategy/ Plan	Current contribution to Biodiversity
Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our Corporate Plan commits us to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in South Kesteven. This means actively working to restore and rehabilitate damaged eco-systems, respecting the rural nature of the district to promote green and open spaces where nature and wildlife can thrive.
South Kesteven Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The adopted South Kesteven Local Plan serves as a strategic document guiding development and planning decisions within the district. It outlines the vision, objectives, and spatial strategy for the area, including policies to address environmental considerations and the enhancement of green infrastructure to support biodiversity recovery (EN2 and EN3). The plan aims to ensure sustainable growth, meet the needs of the community, and protect the district's character and environment. ○ The emerging Local Plan, the most recent published draft of which was the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan, includes a revised environment chapter. This includes a reviewed and strengthened policy EN2: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity, alongside a new policy: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains. The Green Infrastructure policy has been strengthened to include reference to Green Infrastructure Mapping.
Climate Change Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Council published its first Climate Action Strategy, endorsed by Cabinet in November 2023, following an extensive consultation exercise and engagement with Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Strategy was developed to set out South Kesteven District Council's aspirations to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Strategy set out eight key themes, reflecting the broad scope of work needed to effectively address climate change in South Kesteven. It is the vision under the Natural Environment theme that 'wildlife habitats are valued, maintained, enhanced and created in South Kesteven and biodiversity is restored'.
Climate Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SKDC's Climate Action Plan is in development to support the previously published Climate Action Strategy.
Trees and Woodland Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increasing canopy cover and urban greening will create and enhance habitats providing habitats for pollinators, birds, and other urban wildlife. This will further contribute to regulating services such as carbon sequestration, air and water quality improvement, and flood mitigation, which are vital for maintaining biodiversity. ○ By promoting the value of trees and woodlands, the strategy helps to raise awareness of biodiversity. ○ By focusing on species diversification, the strategy supports a resilient tree population capable of thriving under changing climatic conditions.



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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Tenancy Strategy

Report Author

Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing Services)

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Purpose of Report

To seek approval of the Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031 which was recommended by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 5 February 2026.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Approve the adoption of the Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031 subject to the outcome of the consultation with tenants.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Projects to make minor alterations and amendments to the Policy post adoption as required by changes to regulations and expectations by the Regulator for Social Housing**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The Tenancy Strategy itself does not create financial commitments. However, the approach to tenancy types, sustainment, and efficient use of stock supports long term financial sustainability by helping to reduce tenancy failure, homelessness pressures, and void turnaround costs.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Council is required under the Localism Act 2011 to publish a Tenancy Strategy. The draft Strategy meets this statutory requirement and provides a clear framework for Registered Providers operating within South Kesteven. It reflects relevant legislation including the Housing Act 1996, the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Equality Act 2010, and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Localism Act 2011 requires all local housing authorities in England to publish a Tenancy Strategy to set the framework for which Registered Providers of social housing should follow when developing their own tenancy related policies.
- 2.2. South Kesteven District Council's existing Tenancy Strategy is due for review. The draft Tenancy Strategy 2026–2031 has been developed to ensure the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations while responding to local housing need, demographic change, and pressures on the availability of affordable housing.
- 2.3. The Strategy provides guidance on:
- The types of tenancies that may be granted.
 - The circumstances in which particular tenancy types should be used.
 - The length of fixed-term tenancies and the approach to renewal.
- 2.4. The Strategy also aligns with the Council's wider housing and corporate strategies, including the Housing Strategy, Housing Allocations Policy,

Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and SKDC's Corporate Plan.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Members are asked to consider the following key aspects of the draft Tenancy Strategy:

Security and Stability for Tenants

- 3.2. The Strategy seeks to balance flexibility with security of tenure, promoting the use of secure or assured tenancies wherever appropriate, particularly for families, older residents, and households with long-term support needs.

Best Use of Housing Stock

- 3.3. The Strategy supports the efficient use of social housing by encouraging regular tenancy reviews, addressing under-occupation and overcrowding, and supporting existing tenants to move to accommodation better suited to their needs.

Consistency and Clarity

- 3.4. Clear guidance is provided to Registered Providers to ensure tenancy approaches across the district are transparent, fair, and aligned with local priorities.

Partnership Working

- 3.5. Registered Providers play a key role in delivering affordable housing locally. The Strategy establishes shared expectations while allowing flexibility for providers to manage their stock effectively.

Safeguarding, Equality and Domestic Abuse

- 3.6. The Strategy reinforces expectations around safeguarding, equality, and the protection of victims and survivors of domestic abuse, in line with statutory duties and best practice.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The option of not reviewing or updating the Tenancy Strategy was considered. This option was discounted as it would risk non-compliance with statutory requirements and would not reflect current legislation, policy guidance, or local housing pressures.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The Tenancy Strategy provides an up-to-date, legally compliant framework that supports the Council's housing objectives and promotes sustainable, balanced communities.

- 5.2 Adopting the Strategy will ensure compliance with the Localism Act 2011 which requires all local housing authorities in England to publish a Tenancy Strategy to set the framework for which Registered Providers of social housing should follow when developing their own tenancy related policies

6. Consultation

- 6.1. A workshop held with the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 January 2026, where this document was presented for comments.
- 6.2 A two-week public consultation went live on 27 January 2026 and closed 10 February 2026. This was emailed to all local Housing Associations however; no responses were received. Four responses were received from members of the public which were broadly positive, with most respondents finding the information on tenancy types clear and expressing strong support for tenant involvement in policy development.
- 6.3 Consultation is currently underway with Council tenants who we hold email addresses for. If there are any major changes required to the strategy following the conclusion of the consultation the strategy will be represented to Cabinet for approval.
- 6.4 The consultation report is attached at Appendix 2.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1. SKDC's current Tenancy Strategy can be accessed at the following link:
[Tenancy Strategy final.pdf](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix 1 - Draft Tenancy Strategy 2026–2031
- 8.2. Appendix 2 – Consultation report

South Kesteven District Council Tenancy Strategy 2026–2031 (Draft)

1. Introduction	2
2. Aims and Objectives.....	2
3. National context.....	2
4 Local Context	3
5. Guidance for Registered Providers	5
6. Existing Tenants.....	7
7. Rental types.....	7
8. Monitoring, Review and Governance	7
Appendices	8

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1. Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 states that all Local Authorities in England must produce a Tenancy Strategy which provides a strategic framework for social landlords (including the Council and Registered Providers (RPs)) operating within South Kesteven to consider when developing or reviewing their tenancy policies.

The Strategy provides guidance to RPs relating to:

- the types of tenancies they will grant.
- the circumstances in which different types of tenancies will be granted.
- where fixed-term tenancies are granted, the length of the fixed term and the circumstances in which a further tenancy will be granted when the fixed term expires

2. Aims and Objectives

The South Kesteven Tenancy Strategy provides guidance to Registered Providers of Social Housing on the types of tenancies, the length of fixed-term, review processes, and circumstances for granting further tenancies. It aims to balance tenant security, efficient use of housing, and local housing needs.

Key Aims:

- **Security of Tenure:** Provide long-term stability for tenants.
- **Protection of Lifetime Tenure:** Ensure tenants who held a secure or assured lifetime tenancy when Section 154 of the Localism Act 2011 came into force and who have remained social housing tenants since. Retain the same level of security if they move to another social rented home, regardless of landlord.
- **Best Use of Housing Stock:** Promote efficient use of homes and reduce under-occupation and overcrowding.
- **Choice, Clarity and Consistency:** Ensure tenants clearly understand tenancy options.
- **Sustainability of Communities:** Support balanced, mixed communities.
- **Collaboration with Registered Providers:** Align tenancy policies with local needs.

3. National Context

The Localism Act 2011 introduced several key changes to the affordable housing sector

- It amended the Housing Act 1996 to give councils more local control over homelessness duties, social housing allocations, and tenancy management.
- Local authorities were provided with more freedom to decide how social housing is allocated and managed to meet local need.

- It made it easier for tenants to move home nationwide by strengthening the rules on mutual exchanges.
- It also aimed to expand the use of fixed-term tenancies in social housing and reduce the standard use of lifetime tenancies. These changes gave councils more flexibility to manage housing and ensure homes are allocated to those most in need. Later, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 built on this by introducing fixed-term tenancies for most new council tenancies.
- It updated homelessness legislation, giving councils the flexibility to resolve homelessness by offering suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.

4 Local Context

4.1 Housing and Demographic Profile

South Kesteven, encompasses the four towns, Grantham, Stamford, Bourne, and Market Deeping, and has diverse housing needs across rural and urban areas. Social rented housing plays a key role in supporting vulnerable households who cannot meet their housing needs in the private market.

As of mid-year 2024, the population of South Kesteven is estimated to stand at 147,151, consisting of approximately 62,850 separate households.

The 2021 Census remains the key source for data on rates and patterns of housing tenure. As of March 2021, 43,574 households own or partly own their home (owns outright 23,765, mortgage or loan 19,155, shared ownership 654). This is 69.33% of all households in the district, this is substantially above the national proportion of 62.3% and slightly above the Lincolnshire rate of 67.15%. 11,422 households (18.17%) live in private rented accommodation. 7,851 households (12.49%) live in social rented accommodation.

Home ownership heavily correlates with age as 73.92% of residents aged sixty-five plus own their homes outright compared with 7.81% for residents aged between thirty-five and forty-nine. The proportion of residents in social housing is broadly similar across all age groups.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of housing tenure by age as per the 2021 census

Age Cohort	Total Households Headed By	Tenure Type (%)					
		Owned: Owns outright	Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	Social rented: Rents from council or Local Authority	Social rented: Other social rented	Private rented: Private landlord or letting agency	Private rented: Other private rented or lives rent free
Aged 16 to 24 years	1,116	3.41%	17.92%	13.80%	9.50%	49.73%	24.19%

Aged 25 to 34 years	7,015	3.09%	42.51%	9.76%	5.72%	35.07%	4.99%
Aged 35 to 49 years	14,591	7.81%	53.53%	8.94%	4.54%	22.79%	2.02%
Aged 50 to 64 years	19,021	35.60%	39.24%	8.09%	2.68%	12.84%	2.34%
Aged 65 years and over	21,103	73.92%	6.42%	8.78%	3.01%	5.76%	0.00%

Rates of home ownership varies across the district and correlates to the rural/urban split and the level of deprivation. Home ownership rates (outright and via mortgage) is more common in rural areas. Renting is more common in the towns.

Table 2: Shows the breakdown of housing tenure by area as per the 2021 census

Table 2: Sub District Housing Tenure, South Kesteven, Census 2021							
Area	Total Households	Tenure Type (%)					
		Owned: Owns outright	Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	Social rented: Rents from council or Local Authority	Social rented: Other social rented	Private rented: Private landlord or letting agency	Private rented: Other private rented or lives rent free
Ancaster, Caythorpe & Claypole	3,097	45.01%	33.65%	7.27%	1.68%	9.69%	2.71%
Long Bennington, Allington & Barrowby	4,031	50.24%	29.40%	7.22%	2.70%	8.11%	2.33%
Grantham Northeast	4,373	36.45%	26.69%	18.41%	3.13%	12.92%	2.40%
Grantham Northwest	4,377	35.71%	37.13%	4.39%	3.22%	17.66%	1.90%
Grantham Southwest	2,930	22.87%	25.43%	30.85%	4.88%	14.16%	1.81%
Grantham Southeast	5,589	24.33%	27.73%	5.65%	6.21%	33.57%	2.50%
Corby Glen, Ropsley & Grantham Outskirts	4,163	41.53%	32.98%	3.41%	1.80%	16.86%	3.41%
Morton & Billingborough	3,372	41.96%	32.98%	8.90%	1.90%	11.39%	2.88%
Harlaxton, Colsterworth & South Witham	3,184	34.74%	29.81%	9.20%	5.75%	17.81%	2.70%
Bourne West	3,544	38.54%	39.84%	3.61%	2.51%	13.74%	1.75%
Bourne East	4,171	33.45%	32.80%	8.13%	4.94%	18.82%	1.87%
Langtoft, Thurlby & Uffington	4,151	51.29%	32.72%	4.48%	1.28%	8.34%	1.90%
Market Deeping	3,112	41.77%	31.91%	5.91%	8.48%	10.28%	1.64%

Deeping St James & Frognall	3,131	40.40%	36.95%	4.18%	3.07%	13.41%	1.98%
Stamford North	4,178	32.31%	29.51%	17.69%	3.09%	15.08%	2.32%
Stamford Central, West and South	5,444	38.59%	28.29%	6.65%	4.15%	20.28%	2.04%

4.2 Council Housing Stock and Management

South Kesteven District Council manages a significant social housing portfolio (approximately 6,000 properties) and continues to integrate tenant support services, tenancy sustainment measures, and partnership working with other landlords.

Currently, around 900 households are registered as requiring social housing on the Choice Based Lettings System in South Kesteven. In 2024/2025 SKDC re-let 344 properties which is 6% of the total housing stock.

4.3 Strategic Alignment

This strategy complements the Council's wider housing and corporate strategies, including:

- Housing Strategy (to provide sustainable, good-quality homes).
- Lincolnshire Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- Housing Allocations Policy.
- Tenant Voice Strategy
- SKDC's Corporate plan

5. Guidance for Registered Providers

5.1 Overview of Tenancy Types

Tenancy Type	Usage
Introductory Tenancies	These tenancies are used by the local authority for new tenants who have not previously held a council tenancy, providing a probationary period of up to 12 months.
Starter Tenancies	These are offered to applicants of Registered Providers who have not previously held a tenancy, providing a supported introductory period of up to 12 months.

Assured or Secure Tenancies	These are recommended for most Council and Registered Provider tenants offering long term stability.
Assured Shorthold Tenancies	These are typically used by Registered Providers or private landlords to offer flexible, time-limited housing arrangements, usually for a fixed term.
Flexible Tenancies	These are granted for a fixed term, typically five years for general needs cases, or a minimum of two years in exceptional circumstances with tenancy lengths clearly explained to tenants. However, South Kesteven District Council generally offers secure tenancies after the introductory period.
Demoted Tenancies	These are used following a Court order when tenants breach their tenancy, often due to anti-social behaviour. They offer a structured period with reduced tenancy rights, encouraging positive change while maintaining the opportunity to return to a full secure tenancy

Registered Providers should:

- Offer secure tenancies for families, older people, or those with care needs.
- Ensure probationary tenancies comply with statutory standards.
- Use fixed-term tenancies for flexibility and efficient stock use.

5.3. Renewal and Review of Tenancies

Review at End of Fixed Term

- Comprehensive review before expiry.
- Engage tenants about housing needs and future options.
- Offer further tenancies in the same or alternative properties if appropriate.

Circumstances Affecting Renewal

- Accommodation suitability for household needs.
- Under-occupation or overcrowding.
- Changes in finances, care needs, or household composition.

Communication and Dispute Resolution

- Providers must communicate decisions clearly.
- Provide reasons for non-renewal and appeal options.

6. Existing Tenants

To make the best use of housing stock, the Council actively supports tenants to move to homes that are better suited and more manageable for their current needs, offering incentives, tailored guidance, and additional rehousing priority for those under-occupying. We also encourage Registered Providers to take the same approach, helping more residents find the right home for them.

7. Rental types

7.1 Affordable Rent

Affordable Rent enables Registered Providers to charge up to 80% of market rent, helping to fund the delivery of additional affordable homes. The Council supports this approach but expects rents to remain genuinely affordable, ensuring homes remain accessible to those in need. Where affordable housing is delivered as part of a wider private development, S106 agreements regulate rent levels to ensure these homes are offered at an affordable level.

7.1. Social Rent

Social rent is a type of affordable housing rent that is set at a lower level than market rents, regulated by national guidelines. It is designed to be genuinely affordable for low-income households and is typically offered by local authorities or Registered Providers.

8. Monitoring, Review and Governance

8.1 Monitoring and Performance Indicators

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this strategy

- Distribution of tenancy types.
- Fixed-term tenancy numbers and outcomes.
- Overcrowding and under-occupation levels.
- Tenant satisfaction and sustainability measures.

8.2 Review Cycle

Reviewed every five years, or sooner if legislation, policy, or housing market changes.

8.3 Consultation and Engagement

Council consults landlords, partners, tenants, and stakeholders during reviews.

8.4 Safeguarding and Domestic abuse

South Kesteven District Council expects all Registered Providers operating within the district to have robust safeguarding arrangements in place that protect and promote the welfare of children, young people, and adults with care and support needs. Registered Providers should adopt their own safeguarding policies and procedures that are consistent with national legislation, statutory guidance, and recognised best practice.

Safeguarding encompasses a range of legal duties and responsibilities designed to protect individuals' health, wellbeing, and human rights. Providers should take a proactive approach to identifying concerns at an early stage, preventing harm, abuse, or neglect, and ensuring appropriate support and intervention where risks are identified.

Registered Providers are expected to ensure that tenants and household members know how to raise safeguarding concerns and how to access advice and support. Where there is reason to believe that a person may be at risk of harm, appropriate referrals should be made to Lincolnshire Children's or Adult Safeguarding Services in line with statutory requirements.

Providers should also ensure that relevant safeguarding information is clearly communicated to tenants, including signposting to further advice and support through tenant information, handbooks, or digital channels.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires RPs to ensure that existing lifetime social tenants fleeing domestic abuse are offered a new tenancy on a lifetime basis. We expect RPs to adopt this approach for victims/survivors of domestic abuse, including where a resident is rehoused through our Housing Register.

8.5 Equality and Diversity

The Council is committed to delivering housing services that embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. We treat all households fairly and with respect, regardless of background or protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this Tenancy Strategy, and no additional mitigations are required. We will continue to review our policies to ensure they remain inclusive and responsive to the needs of our communities.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Glossary of Tenancy Terms
- Appendix B: Relevant Legislation and Policy References

Appendix A: Glossary of Tenancy Terms

Term	Definition
Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)	short-term, flexible tenancy, usually for a fixed period, often used by private landlords or housing providers.
Council Housing/Social Housing	Homes offered at below-market rent to households who cannot afford private housing, provided by the council or housing organisations.
Registered Provider	A housing organisation that provides and manages affordable homes.
Tenancy Review	The process of checking a tenancy at the end of a fixed term to decide whether it should be renewed, moved, or ended.
Tenant Sustainment	Support provided to help tenants maintain their home, including guidance on finances, managing the property, or moving to a more suitable home.

Appendix B: Relevant Legislation and Policy References

Legislation	Summary
Localism Act 2011	Requires all local authorities in England to produce a Tenancy Strategy. Provides councils with greater flexibility in tenancy types, fixed-term tenancies, and allocation of social housing.
Housing Act 1996 (as amended)	Governs the allocation of social housing, introduction of flexible tenancies, and provisions for introductory tenancies.
Housing and Planning Act 2016	Introduced fixed-term tenancies for most new council tenancies, and updated rules on homelessness and housing supply.
Equality Act 2010	Ensures housing policies and tenancy management practices comply with equality and anti-discrimination requirements, protecting households with protected characteristics.

Local Policies and Strategies

Policy/Strategy	Summary
South Kesteven Housing strategy 2026-2031	Sets out the Council's overarching housing objectives, including supply, quality, and sustainable communities.
South Kesteven Housing Allocations Policy 2023	Details the allocation framework for council and Registered Provider properties, including priority criteria and lettings procedures.
Lincolnshire Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027	Guides partnership approaches to preventing homelessness and supporting vulnerable residents.
South Kesteven Voice of the Tenant Strategy	Ensures tenant participation in housing management, including tenancy review and policy consultation.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Tenancy Strategy Consultation
February 2026



Deborah Wyles – Consultation Officer
South Kesteven District Council
February 2026

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	Page 2
Purpose of report	Page 2
Background	Page 2
Purpose of consultation	Page 3
Legislation	Page 3
Scope, objectives and methodology	Page 4 -5
Results	Page 5
Conclusion	Page 12



Executive Summary

1. Tenants were asked for their views on SKDC's Tenancy Strategy in a two-week consultation which took place during the latter part of January and the first few days of February 2026.
2. Opening on 27 January 2026, the consultation was open for two weeks, closing on 10 February 2026. Four responses were received.
3. Setting out how SKDC will determine which type of tenancy should be offered to an individual, tenants were asked if they thought the scope and purpose of the policy had been communicated clearly. One tenant (25.0 %) said that the parameters of the document had been clearly identified. One tenant (25.0%) said that they hadn't, and two tenants (50%) didn't know.
4. When asked if they thought that the information provided about each of the different types of tenancy in the Tenancy Strategy was clear and easy to understand three quarters of tenants (3 or 75.0%) said that it was.
5. There was strong support for tenant involvement in the drafting and preparation of housing documents like the Tenancy Strategy. When asked, all respondents (4 or 100%) said that it was very important that tenants be involved in this process.

Purpose of report

6. The purpose of this report is to update South Kesteven District Council (SKDC), Cabinet and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the results of the consultation that took place with tenants during January 2026 on its Tenancy Strategy.

Background

7. Respondents were informed that the Tenancy Strategy will provide South Kesteven District Council and other social housing providers with a strategic framework to refer to when granting tenancies, for the next five years – from 2026 to 2031.



8. The strategy, they were told, sets out how South Kesteven District Council determines which types of tenancies to offer its tenants. It also provides guidance for other social landlords (registered providers) operating in the district to consider when developing or reviewing their tenancy policies.
9. The document includes:
 - A recommendation on the type of tenancies local social landlords should grant
 - The circumstances under which different types of tenancies will be granted
 - Where fixed-term tenancies are granted, the length of the fixed term and the circumstances in which a further tenancy will be granted when the fixed term expires
10. Tenants were told that the strategy had been reviewed to ensure that it responds to local housing needs, takes account of new legislation including the Domestic Abuse Act 2021¹, and reflects local housing market conditions.

Purpose of consultation

11. The purpose of this consultation is to ensure that tenants can feedback on the structure and content of SKDC's Tenancy Strategy prior to its implementation. It has been updated to incorporate new legislative requirements.

Legislation

12. The Tenancy Strategy has been drafted in accordance with the requirements set out in:
 - The Localism Act 2011 -section 150²

Other pieces of legislation include:

¹ Section 79 of The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which protects a victim's security of tenure. This means that when a lifetime social tenant is rehoused by an authority due to domestic abuse, the new tenancy must also be a secure (lifetime) one

² Section 150 of the UK's [Localism Act 2011](#) places a duty on local housing authorities in England to create and publish a **Tenancy Strategy**, outlining their approach to social housing tenancies, including lengths of fixed-term tenancies and circumstances for granting further ones, guiding registered social housing providers on their policies and promoting sustainable communities

- The Housing Act 1988³
- The Housing Act 1996⁴

Scope

13. This consultation was open to all SKDC tenants.

Aims and Objectives

14. The aims of the strategy are to balance tenant security, efficient use of housing and local housing needs.

They include:

- **Security of Tenure:** To provide long-term stability for tenants
- **Best Use of Housing Stock:** To promote efficient use of homes and reduce under-occupation and overcrowding
- **Choice, Clarity and Consistency:** To ensure tenants clearly understand tenancy options
- **Sustainability of Communities:** To support balanced, mixed communities
- **Collaboration with Registered Providers:** To align tenancy policies with local needs

15. The objectives of the consultation were to:

- Ensure tenants and registered providers were given an opportunity to review and comment on various elements of the draft Tenancy Strategy document
- Check that the Tenancy Strategy meets local needs
- Check that tenants understand the strategy
- Measure the degree of support for the draft Tenancy Strategy
- Inform the decision that will be taken by Cabinet in respect of the draft Tenancy Strategy

³ Section 5 of The Housing Act 1988. This established security of tenancy for assured tenancies

⁴ The Housing Act 1996. This formalised **housing allocation schemes**, giving **reasonable preference to vulnerable groups**, introduced measures to tackle **anti-social behaviour**, and established the framework for tenants to gain **Right to Manage**

Methodology

16. The responses to this consultation were collected over a two-week period (27th January through to 10th February 2026). Four responses were received. The data was gathered via a web link to an on-line survey. Printed copies of the survey were made available to tenants who requested them. For those who wanted more detail, the survey included a link to the draft Tenancy Strategy.

17. A workshop was held with councillors to discuss the proposed changes on 7 January, and members of a Tenants Focus Group were also asked to review the document on 14 January 2026. The feedback from each of these meetings has already been collated and is the subject of a separate submission.

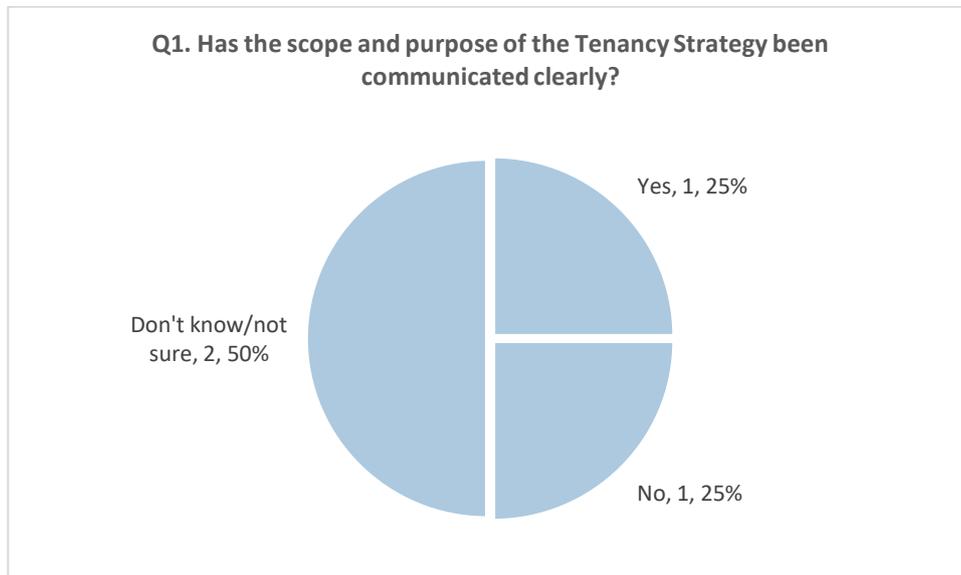
18. The survey included the following sections:
 - An introduction to the consultation, why tenants help was needed and how their feedback will be used
 - Why a Tenancy Strategy has been drafted
 - An option for the consultees to make further comments on various elements of the strategy including aims, types of tenancy and clarity
 - An opportunity for the consultees to supply their details so they can be contacted, if they so wish
 - A thank you and closing date

The results

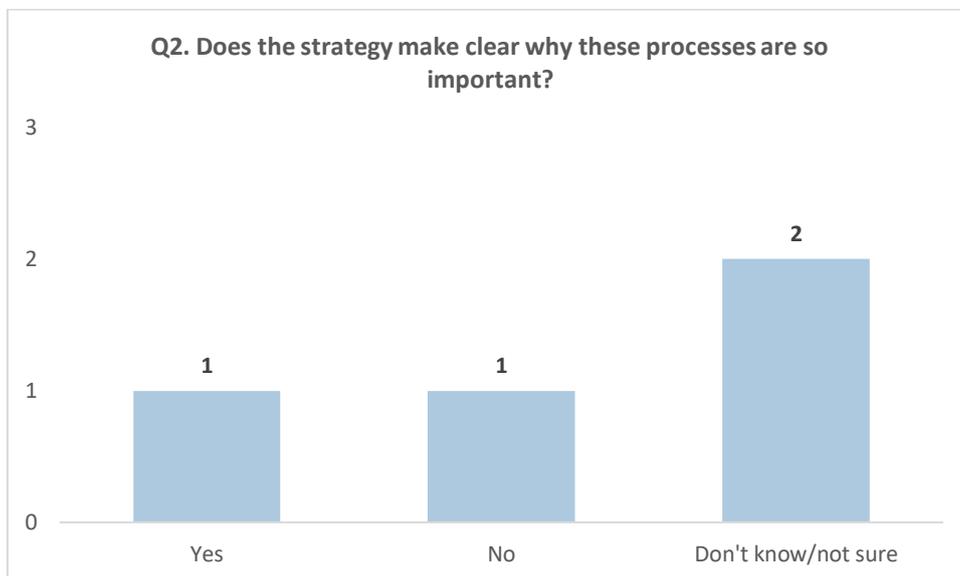
19. The first section of the survey asked tenants about the scope and purpose of the Council's Tenancy Strategy. They were told that the document sets out how SKDC will determine the types of tenancy it offers its tenants.

20. It also provides guidance to Registered Providers of Social Housing on the types of tenancies, fixed-term lengths, review processes, and circumstances for granting further tenancies.

21. When asked if the scope and purpose of the strategy had been communicated clearly, one respondent (25.0%) thought that it had been. One (25.0%) thought that it hadn't. Half of those taking part didn't know or weren't sure, as illustrated in the graph below:



22. This level of uncertainty was also apparent in the answers to question 2. This asked respondents if it was clear in the strategy why the processes to grant tenancies were so important. One respondent (25.0%) said that it did, one (25.0%) said that it didn't, and two respondents (50.0%) didn't know or weren't sure.



23. One respondent (25.0%) said that it did, one (25.0%) said that it didn't, and two respondents (50.0%) didn't know or weren't sure.

24. Those who chose to answer either no or don't know/not sure were asked what would improve things. Three suggestions were received. These were:

- a request to make things clearer
- to use Plain English
- to highlight the changes between the old document and the new one

These points are illustrated in the quotes below:

“Changes should be made clearer”

“It would be nice to have it explained in plain English rather than legal speech created to deliberately confuse”

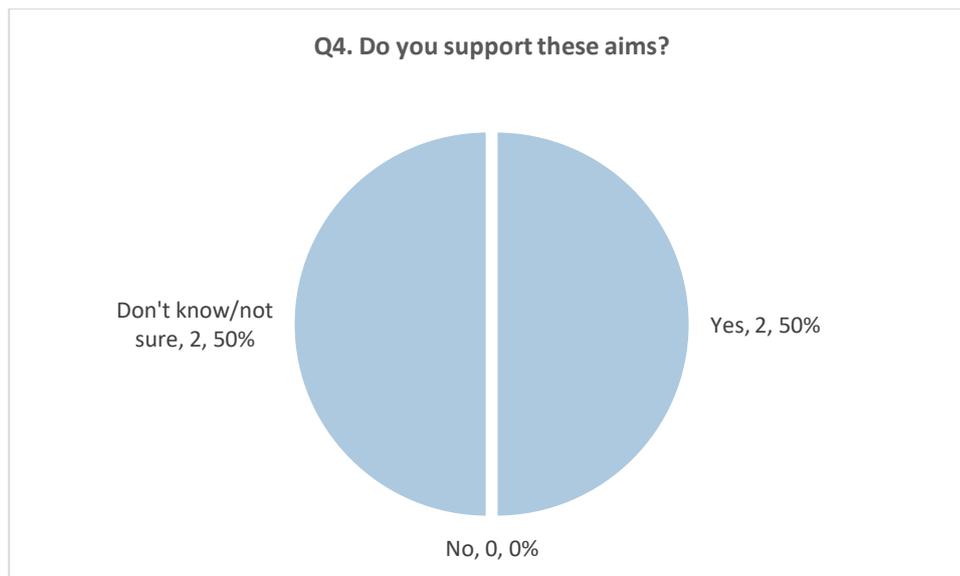
“How is the new agreement different to the old one?”

25. The fourth question on the survey asked tenants if they agreed with the aims set out in SKDC's Tenancy Strategy which are to balance tenant security, efficient use of housing and local housing needs.

The aims of the strategy are:

- **Security of Tenure:** To provide long-term stability for tenants.
- **Best Use of Housing Stock:** To promote efficient use of homes and reduce under-occupation and overcrowding.
- **Choice, Clarity and Consistency:** To ensure tenants clearly understand tenancy options.
- **Sustainability of Communities:** To support balanced, mixed communities.
- **Collaboration with Registered Providers**

26. Half of the tenants that participated in this consultation (2 or 50.0%) agreed with the aims listed in the strategy. Half of them (2 or 50.0%) didn't know or weren't sure, as illustrated in the graph overleaf:



27. When asked which of the aims was most important to them, two responses were received. One respondent chose “To promote the best use of housing stock, to reduce under-occupation and overcrowding” and the other chose “Security of Tenure - To provide long term stability for tenants. Their comments are below:

“Reducing under-occupation and overcrowding”

“Providing long-term stability for tenants”

28. Two respondents wanted SKDC to focus on other aims. One was within the scope of the Tenancy Strategy, one related to repairs and maintenance. These were to provide a safe tenancy for people and to put right issues arising from repairs.

“Providing a safe tenancy for people”

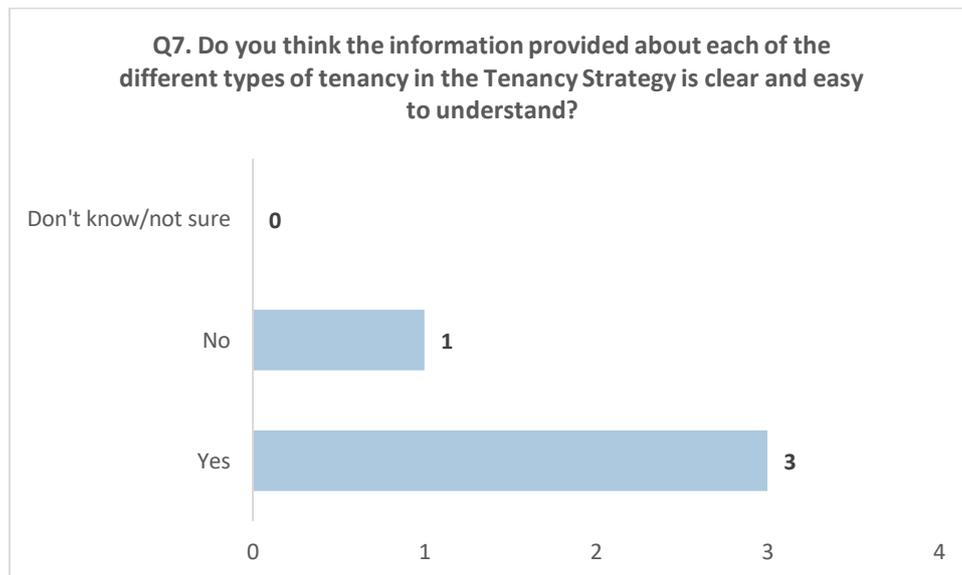
“Correct repair work over bodge jobs”

29. Respondents were then asked about the types of tenancy outlined in SKDC’s Tenancy Strategy. These included:

- Introductory tenancies – used by the Council for new tenants for an introductory period of up to 12 months

- Starter tenancies – used by registered providers for new tenants for an introductory period of up to 12 months
- Assured or secured tenancies – recommended for most Council and Registered Provider tenants – they offer long term stability
- Assured shorthold tenancies – used by Registered Providers or Private Landlords they offer flexible time limited housing arrangements
- Flexible tenancies – granted for a fixed term of between 2 and 5 years
- Demoted tenancies – used following a court order when tenants have breached their tenancy, they encourage positive behaviour with reduced tenancy rights

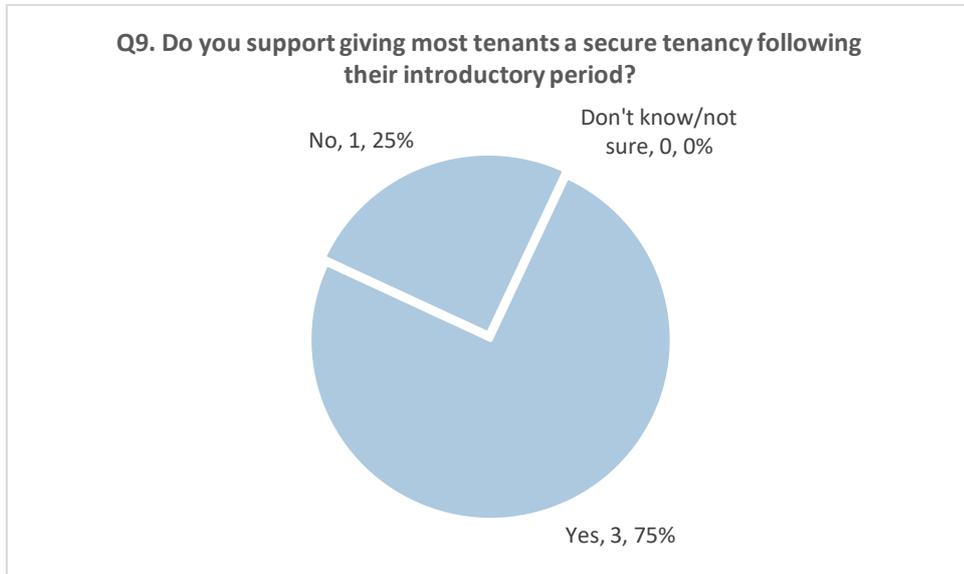
30. The next question on the survey asked tenants if they thought the information provided about each of the different types of tenancy in the Tenancy Strategy was clear and easy to understand. Three quarters of respondents (3 or 75.0%) thought that it was, and one respondent (25.0%) thought that it wasn't. This is illustrated in the chart below:



31. When given the opportunity to explain why they had answered no, and what would make the explanation more straightforward the respondent asked that the contents of the strategy be provided in plain English.

“For me it really needs to be put in very plain English”

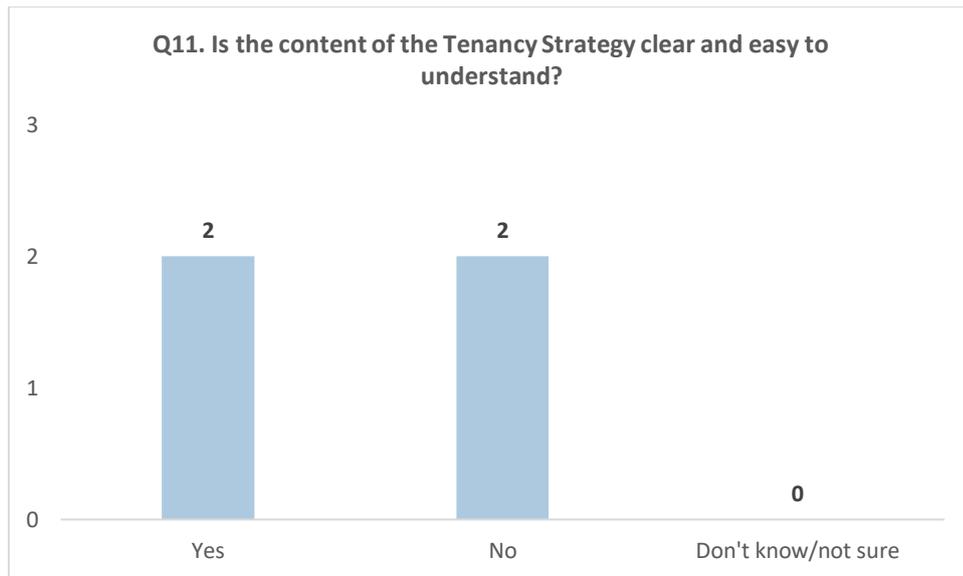
32. The strategy states that SKDC prefers to offer secure tenancies to its tenants, once their introductory period is completed. Those taking part in the consultation were asked if they supported this course of action. Three quarters (3 or 75.0%) said that they did, as shown below:



33. When invited to expand on their answer, the reason for the respondent’s lack of support becomes clear. Focusing on a housing management issue – anti-social behaviour- rather than on granting tenancies, the explanation for their reticence is illustrated below:

“Some people need better screening when it comes to it as I’ve nothing but issues with drugs and bad neighbours”

34. The next section of the survey asked tenants for feedback on the format of the document. When asked if they thought the content of SKDC’s Tenancy Strategy was clear and easy to understand, half of those taking part (2 or 50.0%) thought that it was. The other half (2 or 50.0%) thought that it wasn’t. This is illustrated in the graph overleaf:

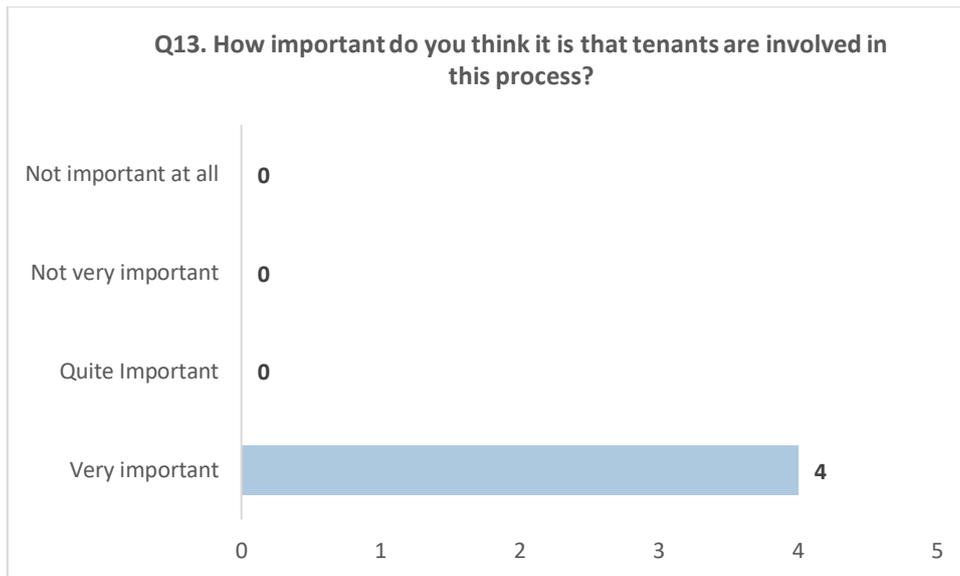


35. The next question on the survey asked respondents, if they had answered either no or don't know/not sure, what would make things more straightforward. Rather than providing an explanation of why they think the strategy is not easy to understand, one tenant used the opportunity to raise an area of concern. The other asked if changes between the old and new versions could be highlighted. These viewpoints are illustrated in the quotes below:

“Because people still feel the need to go against it all”

“How are the new documents different from the old ones?”

36. Respondents were told that the Council thinks it is important that tenants are involved in the preparation and drafting of documents like the Tenancy Strategy because it helps to ensure their needs and priorities are reflected in SKDC's policies and procedures. When asked how important it was for tenants to be involved in drafting new policies and procedures, all tenants (4 or 100.0%) stated that it was very important, as illustrated overleaf:



37. The final question on the survey asked respondents if there were any other changes they would like to see made to SKDC’s Tenancy Strategy. One comment was received. This focused on a housing management issue –evicting tenants for anti-social behaviour – rather than granting tenancies, as illustrated in the quote below:

“Make it easier to evict tenants for antisocial behaviour.”

Conclusion

38. The feedback from this consultation has been reasonably positive but is limited by the number of responses that have been received. Because this is so low it means that it is difficult to draw robust conclusions from the data that has been collected. The limited number of responses may be due in part to this consultation being one of three tenants have been asked to comment on within the same timeframe, the others being consultations on the Asset Management Strategy and the Voids Policy.

39. Analysing the comments from respondents revealed good levels of understanding in some areas. Three quarters of respondents (3 or 75.0%) thought the information provided about each of the types of tenancy was clear and easy to understand. One respondent didn't think that it had been explained as clearly as perhaps it could have been, as summarised by their quote:

“For me it really needs to be put in very plain English”

40. It might be worth investigating if the inclusion of additional diagrams in the document would help tenants to understand the process, and what is included and what isn't. One tenant also requested that the differences between the existing and updated strategy were highlighted, as this would aid their understanding.
41. Members are asked to note the results of this consultation. A key document for the Council, the strategy will help SKDC to determine which type of tenancy should be offered to an individual. It will also be used to provide guidance to Registered Providers of Social Housing on the types of tenancies, fixed-term lengths, review processes, and circumstances for granting further tenancies.

Deborah Wyles

Communication and Consultation

South Kesteven District Council

24th February 2026





**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

10 March 2026

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks
Cabinet Member for Planning

Revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Report Author

Jessica Morris, Interim Planning Policy Manager

✉ jessica.morris@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Cabinet reviews the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and agrees to carry out a public consultation for a minimum of six weeks.

Recommendations

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Approve the public consultation of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) available at Appendix 2.**
- 2. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning & Growth, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to make any minor changes to the appearance, format and text of the SCI document, in the interests of clarify and accuracy prior to its publication for consultation.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The work required can be contained within existing resources.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Council is legally required under section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to produce an SCI, which sets out how it will engage with communities who have an interest in matters relating to development in their area.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 It is a corporate Priority in the Council's Corporate Plan (2024-27) to be an effective Council. To do this, the Council will actively and effectively engage with and listen to our residents; this includes through public consultation and engagement with our services including Planning.
- 2.2 The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in accordance with Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the Council intends to seek the views of different sectors of the community during the preparation of planning policy documents and when planning applications are received.
- 2.3 The National Planning Practice Guidance states: "*Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement, which should explain how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing their Local Plan and determining planning applications. The Statement of Community Involvement should be published on the local planning authority's website*"
- 2.4 The current SCI was adopted in 2021. Since then, there have been changes in legislation. The SCI, therefore, needs to be reviewed and updated not only to

reflect the most up to date legislation and regulation changes but the lessons learnt from several years' experience of using it.

- 2.5 The Council is legally required to consult stakeholders, including the public, on a range of planning matters and the minimum requirements are set out in legislation. The SCI will set out the legislative requirements along with any additional steps that the Council will choose to do, as a minimum, when consulting on planning matters. The relevant planning matters include planning applications as well as planning policy documents.
- 2.6 Having a clear arrangement for carrying out consultation will help establish a two-way process between the community and the Council. It provides communities with a clear understanding of when they will be consulted and how they can engage in planning matters in a transparent way.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The SCI sets out how the Council will engage with the community on planning policy preparation, including neighbourhood planning, and on planning applications. It also covers planning appeals and enforcement.
- 3.2 The draft SCI is set out in five sections:
- Introduction
 - Planning Policy Documents
 - Neighbourhood Planning
 - Who is involved in the Plan Preparation Process
 - Community Involvement in Planning Applications
- 3.3 Information is presented in a clear and transparent way for the wider audience and includes clear Headings and Fonts. Tables are used to help guide the reader to make it user friendly.
- 3.4 The SCI also contains links to all the relevant pages on the Council's website and other external sites so the reader can easily find out more information if they wish.

Proposed amendments to the SCI

- 3.5 The reviewed SCI follows a similar format to the existing SCI for the Council. The following changes have been made to the revised SCI in order to update the document and ensure the Council's approach to consultation is robust:
- Update of Council Office Address
 - Consultation text added to explain the role of the consultation, how long the document will be consulted on and how comments can be made
 - To reflect the change in the Coronavirus Act 2020

- Details on why the SCI must be reviewed every 5 years
- Details on the requirements of the Local Plan to be reviewed at least every 5 years from the date of adoption
- Details on the data protection issues
- Additional consultation section updated when consulting on Conservation Areas
- Any out-of-date references, such as consultees that no longer exist or documents that have been revised, have been updated.
- Removal of LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) from the list of Abbreviations as this longer exists
- Inclusion of GLCCA (Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority)

3.6 Under previous planning regulations the SCI was required to undergo an independent examination. This requirement has been removed, and the SCI can be approved and brought into effect more easily by a resolution of Cabinet. Whilst the content and process for preparing a SCI is no longer prescribed by regulation, it is considered good practice to hold a period of public consultation on a draft SCI prior to consideration of representations and subsequent adoption by Cabinet.

3.7 It is proposed to commence the public consultation on the draft SCI on the 13th March 2026 for a period of six weeks. Subject to the number and nature of any representations received, it is anticipated that the representations, together with an officer response to them, will be reported to Cabinet, potentially in July 2026 at which time Cabinet will be requested to adopt the revised SCI.

3.8 The following consultation methods will be used:

- Publish the draft design code on the Council's website and consultation portal
- Hard copies of the document along with consultation forms will be available at the Council offices
- The consultation will be promoted via the Council's social media channels
- Notification emails will be sent to all stakeholders (individuals, organisations or bodies) including Parish and Town Councils.

3.9 The revised draft SCI is located at:

<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s50125/Statement%20of%20Community%20Involvement%20SCI.pdf>

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 To not review and update the SCI and continue to use the existing document. However, the existing SCI does not reflect current requirements set out in legislation or regulations. The Council is also required to review the SCI every five years. The do-nothing option has therefore been discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The Council is required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement and to subsequently review that document every five years. Whilst it is not mandatory to consult on the draft document, it is good practice to do so.
- 5.2 It is therefore recommended that Cabinet reviews the draft SCI and agrees that it is consulted on to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duty.

6. Background Papers

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- Link to current adopted SKDC SCI- [Statement of Community Involvement | South Kesteven District Council](#)
- National Planning Policy Framework https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/N_PPF-December-2024.pdf
- Corporate Plan 2024-2027- [South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan - 2024 to 2027.pdf](#)

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Stage 1 Equality Analysis

Appendix 2: SCI link



SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

SKDC – Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2025

Service Area: Planning Policy Development and Growth	Lead officer: Jessica Morris	Date of Meeting 02/12/25
	Assessors: Jessica Morris	
	Neutral Assessor: Jhanvi Shukla	

1. Name and description of policy/service/function/strategy

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council will consult on planning policy documents (including the Local Plan), engage with and support neighbourhood planning, and consult on planning applications. As a local authority, we are required by the Equality Act 2010 to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means we need to carry out an equality analysis of our services and any proposals for change. We need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, services and functions, both current and proposed, give proper consideration and due regard to the needs of diverse groups to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity and access, and
- Foster good relations between different groups in the community

Is this a new or existing policy? Existing

2. Complete the table below, considering whether the proposed policy/service/function/strategy could have any potential positive, or negative impacts on groups from any of the protected characteristics (or diversity strands) listed, using demographic data, user surveys, local consultations evaluation forms, comments and complaints etc.

Equality Group	Does this policy/ service/ function/ strategy have a <i>positive, neutral or negative impact</i> on any of the equality groups? Please state which for each group	Please describe why the impact is positive, neutral or negative. If you consider this policy etc is not relevant to a specific characteristic, please explain why
Age	Neutral	The SCI document has a greater emphasis on online consultation methods and removes the minimum consultation requirement to have libraries and council offices as deposit points, which could disproportionately impact older people who are less likely to be online. However, the Council can still choose to deposit the documents at these points at their discretion and there is an option for hard copy documents to be sent out via post if required. The document also makes commitment to make reasonable adjustments for equalities purposes upon request. Overall, this would maintain the advancement of equality of opportunity.

Disability	Positive	The SCI document makes a commitment to make reasonable adjustments for equalities purposes by providing alternative formats upon request. This would particularly benefit individuals with certain disabilities. Overall, the aim of this is to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity to respond to consultations.
Race	Negative	It is recognised that there may be challenges in engaging all racial groups due to language barriers, or cultural differences. To address this, the local plan consultation database has attempted to include the contact details for a range of different organisations representing different racial groups who will be notified of any consultations.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Benefits of the SCI document would be equal as they apply to the public generally.
Religion or Belief	Neutral	Benefits of the SCI document would be equal as they apply to the public generally.
Sex	Neutral	Benefits of the SCI document would be equal as they apply to the public generally.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	Benefits of the SCI document would be equal as they apply to the public generally.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral	Benefits of the SCI document would be equal as they apply to the public generally.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	Benefits of the SCI document would be equal as they apply to the public generally.
Carers	Neutral	Benefits of the SCI document would be equal as they apply to the public generally.

<p>Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past)</p> <p>*(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation)</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Overall, the aim of this is to advance equality of opportunity to respond to planning consultations.</p>
<p>General comments</p>	<p>The Statement of Community Involvement has been drafted with equalities considerations as a corporate priority. The information contained applies to the public generally and are not intended to focus on any specific group. For plan-making the Council has committed to maintaining a mix of online and offline consultation methods, and to make reasonable adjustments for equalities requests in line with the general equality duty. In all cases and considering that planning issues can vary significantly depending on individual proposals, the general equality duty applies irrespective of the Statement of Community Involvement.</p>	

3. What equality data/information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy/service/function/strategy? (Note any relevant consultation, who took part and key findings)

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) under paragraph 16 states that - Plans should:

“c) be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees”

It is a legislative requirement within section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for all councils to have an up-to-date Statement of Community Involvement in place which prescribes who should be consulted, when consultations should take place, and how.

The document is based on setting out consultation methods in accordance with Local Planning Regulations, Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure). These regulations provide the requirements for when it should happen and how it should take place.

The regulations also set out defined stages of plan production and lists individuals who need to be consulted known as ‘specific consultation bodies’. Furthermore, the Council has discretion to identify a number of other bodies representing certain interests known as ‘general consultation bodies’ and SKDC has therefore looked to broaden the scope as much as possible across the district.

While there is no specific requirement to consult on the SCI itself, a 6-week public consultation on the draft revised SCI will be carried out. The SCI consultation

document will be made available to view and access from the Council website. A general notification of the consultation will be sent out via email and letter to stakeholders. Should any negative impacts arise during the consultation, then these will be considered and addressed prior to the SCI being adopted with any mitigation measures being put in place to address the needs of the customer. Should there be any negative impacts identified, then a revised Equalities Impacts Assessment will be completed to address any changes required.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

The Council is also committed to involving a wide range of other individuals including members of the public, local community voluntary groups, and 'hard to reach groups'. SKDC are constantly monitoring their contact database and looking for ways in which to effectively improve consultations to have more effective communications with the Local Authority.

4. Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made): Please check one of the options.

a)	No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option a) you can now send this form to the Lead Officer and your Neutral Assessor for sign off</i>		
b)	Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions b.1 and b.2</i>		
c)	Adverse impact but continue	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option c) you will need to answer questions c.1</i>		
d)	Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful	<input type="checkbox"/>

b.1 In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?

- b.2 Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.**

If you have checked option b) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis

- c.1 Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy/function/service/strategy.**

If you have checked option c) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Signed (Lead Officer):
(Name and title)

Jessica Morris
Jessica Morris - Interim Planning Policy Manager

Date completed:

02/03/26

Signed (Neutral Assessor):
(Name and title)

Jhanvi Shukla
Jhanvi Shukla – Assistant Planning Policy Officer

Date signed off:

02/03/26

Appendix 2

<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s50125/Statement%20of%20Community%20Involvement%20SCI.pdf>

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Planning

South Kesteven Design Code Statutory Consultation

Report Author

Richard Shaw Principal Design Officer

 Richard.shaw@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Cabinet reviews the draft South Kesteven Design Code and agrees to carry out a public consultation.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. Approve the draft South Kesteven Design Code for the purpose of public consultation, available at Appendix 4.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning & Growth, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to make any minor changes to the appearance, format and text of the Design Code SPD, in the interests of clarify and accuracy prior to its publication for consultation.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

- 1.1 Taking into consideration implications relating to climate change, ecological impact, financial services, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity, inclusion and safeguarding, and community safety the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.2 The costs associated with Code have been covered by funding from MHCLG as part of the Design Code Pathfinder Fund, the Council has been awarded £80,000 to develop the Code.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 Local Planning Authorities are required to have a Design Code (or Codes) by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) (15F in Schedule 7) and they will carry full weight in making decisions on new development proposals. Design Codes should follow the principles set out in the National Design Guide and the guidance in the National Model Design Code (NMDC).

Completed by: *James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager*

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken (Appendix 2) and the outcomes found that no major change to the report was needed. The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken into consideration as

the Code seeks to ensure that all members of the community are able to engage with planning matters.

There are no safeguarding implications arising from the report

Completed by: the report author and shared with Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

Climate and ecological impact implications

- 1.5 The Design Code includes a vision focusing on Sustainable Development (renewable energy and climate resilience); Greener Communities (green and blue infrastructure); Transport and Accessibility (promoting walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport). Each of these themes will support high quality development which considers environment and sustainability aspects. The Design Code includes three levels of prescription: Must, Should and Can to enforce expectations for new developments in line with those themes.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The South Kesteven Design Code aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan objectives of Connecting Communities, Sustainable South Kesteven and Housing. The aim of the Code is to raise the design quality of new development in the District.
- 2.2 Local Planning Authorities are required to have a Design Code (or Codes) by the [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) (15F in Schedule 7) and they will carry full weight in making decisions on new development proposals. Design Codes should follow the principles set out in the [National Design Guide](#) and the guidance in the [National Model Design Code](#) (NMDC).
- 2.3 The Council has been fortunate in receiving funding to help produce the Design Code from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Design Code Pathfinder programme.
- 2.4 It is intended that the Code will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and it will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.
- 2.5 Design Codes are different to Design Guides and should be more precise and prescriptive and have stronger wording, such as 'must'. It is intended that the Design Code for South Kesteven and any future Design Codes produced will eventually supersede the Design Guidelines for Rutland and South Kesteven (Design Guide SPD) (2021), but at present the Code will sit alongside the Design Guide SPD, until a point in time when all its contents have been covered by codes (for example, we intend to code the Householder Extensions section).

- 2.6 As advised by the NMDC and the NPPF, extensive engagement has been undertaken in the production of the Code. Please see Appendix 1 for a summary of this engagement.
- 2.7 In response to the engagement in Appendix 3, a second draft code was produced. In November and December 2025, further engagement and testing was undertaken, involving Parish Councils, Members, Officers, developers and statutory consultees. The headline takeaways from the 20 written responses, 1 workshop and 2 meetings were that the code needed to be more concise and quicker to assess schemes with, have clear references to the Local Plan and there were many comments related to more detailed elements of the Code. This feedback was taken on board, and the Code was cut back and made more concise, with 'musts' reduced to ensure requirements are sought where appropriate, references to the Local Plan added and many elements were re-worded or changed to reflect the comments made.
- 2.8 Taking account of the Council's aspirations for quality of design, the Design Code sets out requirements for developers, applicants and Council officers to ensure that new development is of the highest possible design quality. It outlines the design process and principles which will be encouraged across sites of all scales, and which should underpin design at all stages, from site-wide masterplanning to the design of blocks, buildings and streets.
- 2.9 Good design matters as it frames the places in which we live, work, socialise and do business. From the orientation of a rear garden to the amount of sunlight reaching a public square to how welcoming streets are to pedestrians, research has consistently demonstrated the link between design and people's physical and mental wellbeing.
- 2.10 Places that are designed well, function well and meet the needs of a wide range of uses and activities and can last for generations. In recognition of the challenges we are facing by our changing climate, it will also be essential to ensure that new development seeks to reduce its carbon footprint, in terms of its design, construction and use.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The guidance should be used by applicants, designers and officers working in collaboration. The Design Code is intended to be used by:
- Applicants and their design teams preparing development proposals.
 - Planning officers, to negotiate with applicants/agents as proposals are developed, to offer pre-application advice at the outline and reserved matters stage, and to assess the quality of development proposals when determining planning applications.
 - Elected Councillors when assessing development proposals in advance of and at committee.
 - Statutory consultees providing commentary on applications.

- The South Kesteven Design PAD when reviewing development proposals at pre-application and application stage;
 - Local communities as they are consulted on applications.
- 3.2 The Design Code follows the themes set out in the National design Guide – having the chapters of Nature, Movement, Built Form, Public Spaces and Identity.
- 3.3 The Code follows the NMDC in using Area Types to provide some area specific guidance (Town Centres, Local Centres, Urban Neighbourhoods, Suburbs, Villages).
- 3.4 In addition to the Code, District Characterisation work has been undertaken to set out the vision for the Area Types, this is an Appendix to the Code. Characterisation sheets have used a set template, with a sheet for each Area Type (Town Centres, Local Centres, Urban Neighbourhoods, Suburbs, Villages). There is a sheet for each of the towns and also the larger villages to capture variation in character. This will be published as supporting evidence alongside the consultation of the Design Code.

Proposed amendments to the Design Code

- 3.5 The responses and feedback received from the previous engagement can be found in Appendix 3 to this report.
- 3.6 In response to the previous engagement, a second draft code was produced. In November and December 2025, further engagement and testing was undertaken, involving Parish Councils, Members, Officers, developers and statutory consultees. The headline takeaways from the 20 written responses, 1 workshop and 2 meetings were that the code needed to be more concise and quicker to assess schemes with, have clear references to the Local Plan and there were many comments related to more detailed elements of the Code.

Consultation

- 3.7 A formal public consultation is required where the Council is intending to adopt a document as a Supplementary Planning Document. This consultation must be carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012. The requirements are that the Council must carry out a public consultation for a minimum of four weeks although the method of that consultation is at the discretion of the Council.
- 3.8 The following consultation methods will be used:
- Publish the draft design code on the Council's website and consultation portal
 - Hard copies of the document along with consultation forms will be available at the Council offices

- The consultation will be promoted via the Council's social media channels
- Notification emails will be sent to all stakeholders (individuals, organisations or bodies) including Parish and Town Councils.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 To not produce a Code and continue to use the existing Guide. However, the existing Guide is not a Code and therefore does not reflect current requirements set out in legislation or regulations - [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) (LURA) (15F in Schedule 7).
- 4.2 No other alternative options have therefore been considered.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The Council is part of number of pilot Local Planning Authorities Design Code Pathfinder Fund. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet reviews the Design Code and agrees that it is consulted on to enable good quality designed development are permitted within the District.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The next steps are:
- To publish the Draft Code for a 4-week consultation.
 - Once consultation is complete, prepare a Consultation Statement detailing comments received and the Council's response, including how the consultation comments will be considered.
 - Publish a Consultation Statement on the Council's website.
 - In June 2026, seek the approval of Cabinet and Full Council to adopt the Code.
 - The Code would be placed on the South Kesteven website.

7. Background Papers

- Link to current adopted SKDC SCI- [Statement of Community Involvement | South Kesteven District Council](#)
- National Planning Policy Framework- <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>
- Corporate Plan 2024-2027- [South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan - 2024 to 2027.pdf](#)
- National design Guide: [National Design Guide](#)
- National Model Design Code: [National Model Design Code](#)
- [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) (LURA) (15F in Schedule 7)

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Stage 1 Equality Analysis

Appendix 2: Engagement summary report

Appendix 3: Screening Opinion

Appendix 4 - SCI link

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SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

SKDC – Design Code 2026

Service Area: Planning Policy Development and Growth	Lead officer: Richard Shaw	Date of Meeting 17/02/26
	Assessors: Jessica Morris	
	Neutral Assessor: Jhanvi Shukla	

Disability	Positive	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups. Improvements in the design of the local environment may be of benefit to those who are less able to travel further afield. The design code contains requirements relating to Accessible and Adaptable new homes. This requirement will mean at least 10% of new homes must be to meet these needs. The design code will supplement adopted planning policy which includes policies that consider all age groups within the district. It does encourage the provision of benches at regular intervals. Street design is required to be accessible to all and details of this are covered by the County Council as Highways Authority.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups. The design code does not contain specific requirements relating to transgender and gender reassignment.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Neutral	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups. The design code does not contain specific requirements relating to marriage and civil partnerships.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Neutral	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups. The design code does not contain specific requirements relating to Pregnancy and Maternity. It does encourage the provision of benches at regular intervals.
Race	Neutral	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups. The design code does not contain specific requirements relating to race.
Religion or Belief	Neutral	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups. The design code does not contain specific requirements relating to religion or belief (including lack of).
Gender/ sex	Neutral	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups. The design code does not contain specific requirements relating to gender and sex.

Sexual Orientation	Neutral	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups. The design code does not contain specific requirements relating to sexual orientation.
Other Groups (e.g. those from deprived (IMD*) communities; those from rural communities, those with an offending past) *(IMD = Indices of multiple deprivation)	Positive	Design Codes are inclusive of all protected groups with the vision ensuring a mix of affordable homes for all demographics.
General comments	The Design Code has been drafted with equalities considerations as a corporate priority. The information contained applies to the public generally and are not intended to focus on any specific group. For plan-making the Council has committed to maintaining a mix of online and offline consultation methods, and to make reasonable adjustments for equalities requests in line with the general equality duty. In all cases and considering that planning issues can vary significantly depending on individual proposals, the general equality duty applies irrespective of the Design Code.	

3. What equality data/information did you use to inform the outcomes of the proposed policy/service/function/strategy? (Note any relevant consultation, who took part and key findings)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that local planning authorities should ensure that visual tools such as design codes and guides are used to inform development proposals to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage and reflect local character and preferences. They should provide a framework for creating high-quality places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design to inform development proposals.

National Model Design Code

The document is based on the guidance provided by the National Model Design Code to provide detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. The Design Code reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

The Design Code underwent extensive consultation and engagement to inform its preparation. Meetings were held with the Community Engagement Manager in order to access hard to reach groups. A variety of engagement techniques were used, including hard copy posters in a local public park visitor centre window, face to face workshops, online workshops, setting up of hard copy information and personal presence at stalls at local markets along with online web-based interactive maps and social media promotion.

Meetings were held with the Community Engagement Manager and engagement material was distributed to local community groups. Hard to reach groups such as young people were accessed through two sessions at the SKDC Youth

Council. Appendix 3 of the Cabinet Report sets out engagement activity results and actions in response to the findings.

Engagement activities as outlined above were undertaken throughout 2024.

The Design Code consultation activities throughout 2024 were made available to view and access from the Council website. A general notification of the consultation was sent out via email to those on our consultation database, including town / parish councils, statutory bodies, and Ward Cllrs. The Design Code has been created and refined, taking into account the comments made during the consultation.

Further engagement on the Draft Design Code was undertaken in November and December 2025 and January 2026, including with Parish/Town Councils, Planning Officers, the development industry including housebuilders and Elected Members, with information being available on our website and invitations to comment being e-mailed to our contact database. Some face to face workshops and meetings were undertaken where required.

The above was a preliminary engagement period on the draft Code and the next forthcoming engagement in March and April 2026 will be the Statutory Consultation in conformity with our Statement of Community Involvement.

If there are any gaps in the consultation/monitoring data, how will this be addressed?

The Council is also committed to involving a wide range of other individuals including members of the public, local community voluntary groups, and 'hard to reach groups'. SKDC are constantly monitoring their contact database and looking for ways in which to effectively improve consultations to have more effective communications with the Local Authority.

4. Outcomes of analysis and recommendations (please note you will be required to provide evidence to support the recommendations made): Please check one of the options.

a)	No major change needed: equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or for negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option a) you can now send this form to the Lead Officer and your Neutral Assessor for sign off</i>		
b)	Adjust the proposal to remove barriers identified by equality analysis or to better promote equality.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option b) you will need to answer questions b.1 and b.2</i>		
c)	Adverse impact but continue	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>If you have checked option c) you will need to answer questions c.1</i>		

d	Stop and remove the policy/function/service/strategy as equality analysis has shown actual or potential unlawful	<input type="checkbox"/>
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b.1 In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your proposed policy/service/function/strategy to minimise or eliminate the negative equality impacts?

b.2 Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

If you have checked option b) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis

c.1 Please provide an explanation in the box below that clearly sets out your justification for continuing with the proposed policy/function/service/strategy.

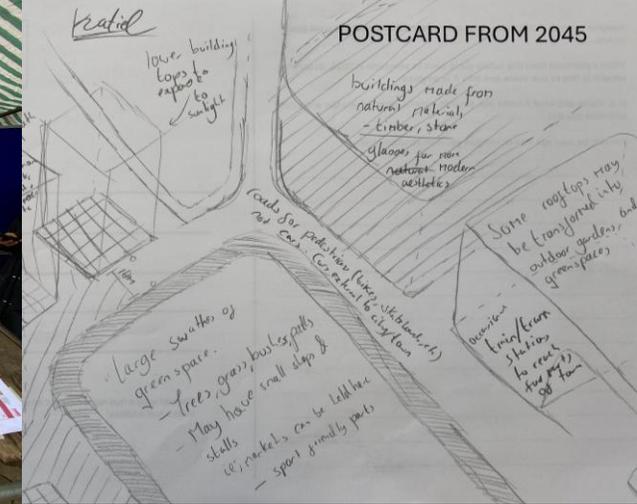
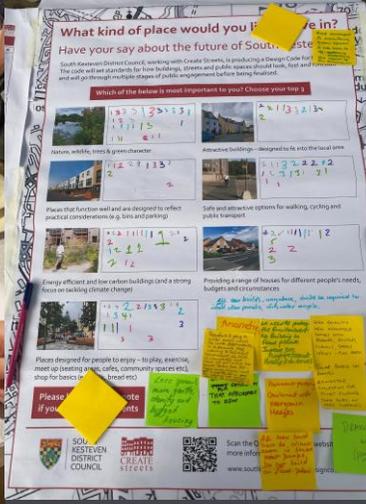
If you have checked option c) you will need to complete a Stage 2 equality analysis. You should consider in stage 2 whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact.

Signed (Lead Officer): **Richard Shaw**
(Name and title) *Principal Design Officer*

Date completed: **17/02/26**

Signed (Neutral Assessor): **Jhanvi Shukla**
(Name and title) *Planning Policy Officer*

Date signed off: **23/02/26**



South Kesteven Design Code

Information Sheet 1: Response to engagement

November 2025



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Timeline of engagement undertaken so far...

- 2021 **Survey** – for the Design Guidelines for Rutland and South Kesteven - results – [link here](#);
- 2024 **Survey** alongside Local Plan – broad ‘hopes’ and ‘fears’ for new development;
- Autumn 2024 **Workshop** - South Kesteven District Council officers and interviews;
- Autumn 2024 **Create Communities - Online interactive map** - open to all - click anywhere in District and make comments or comment on a pre-selected building or place;
- November 2024 **Workshops** - Parish / Town Council and Neighbourhood Plan Group;
- Winter 2024/2025 **Market Stalls** at Bourne, Stamford and Grantham markets;
- Winter 2024/2025 **Youth Council sessions** - South Kesteven District Council – aspirations for the future;
- December 2024 **Workshop** with development industry professionals;
- December 2024 **Workshop** with elected Members of South Kesteven District Council
- Nov 2025 – Jan 2026 **Draft Code testing** and informal consultation

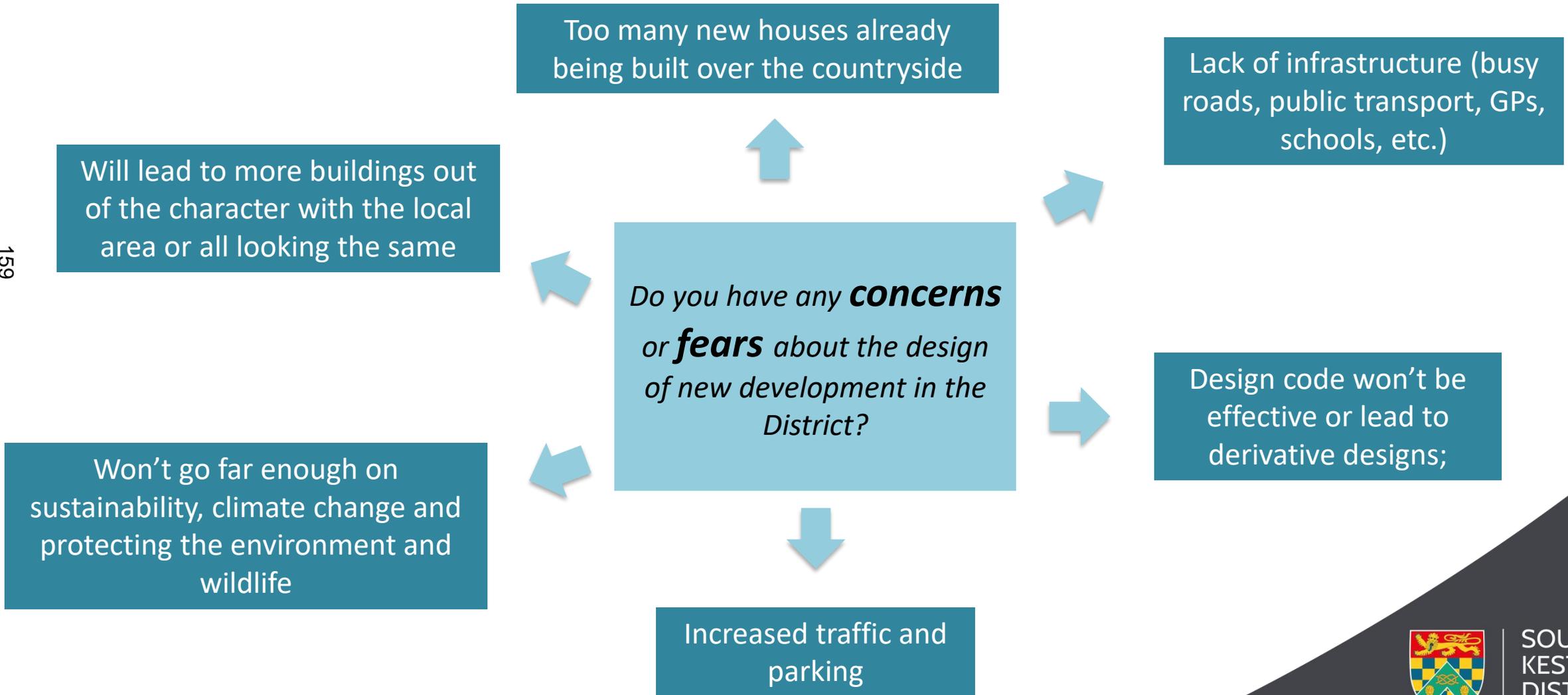
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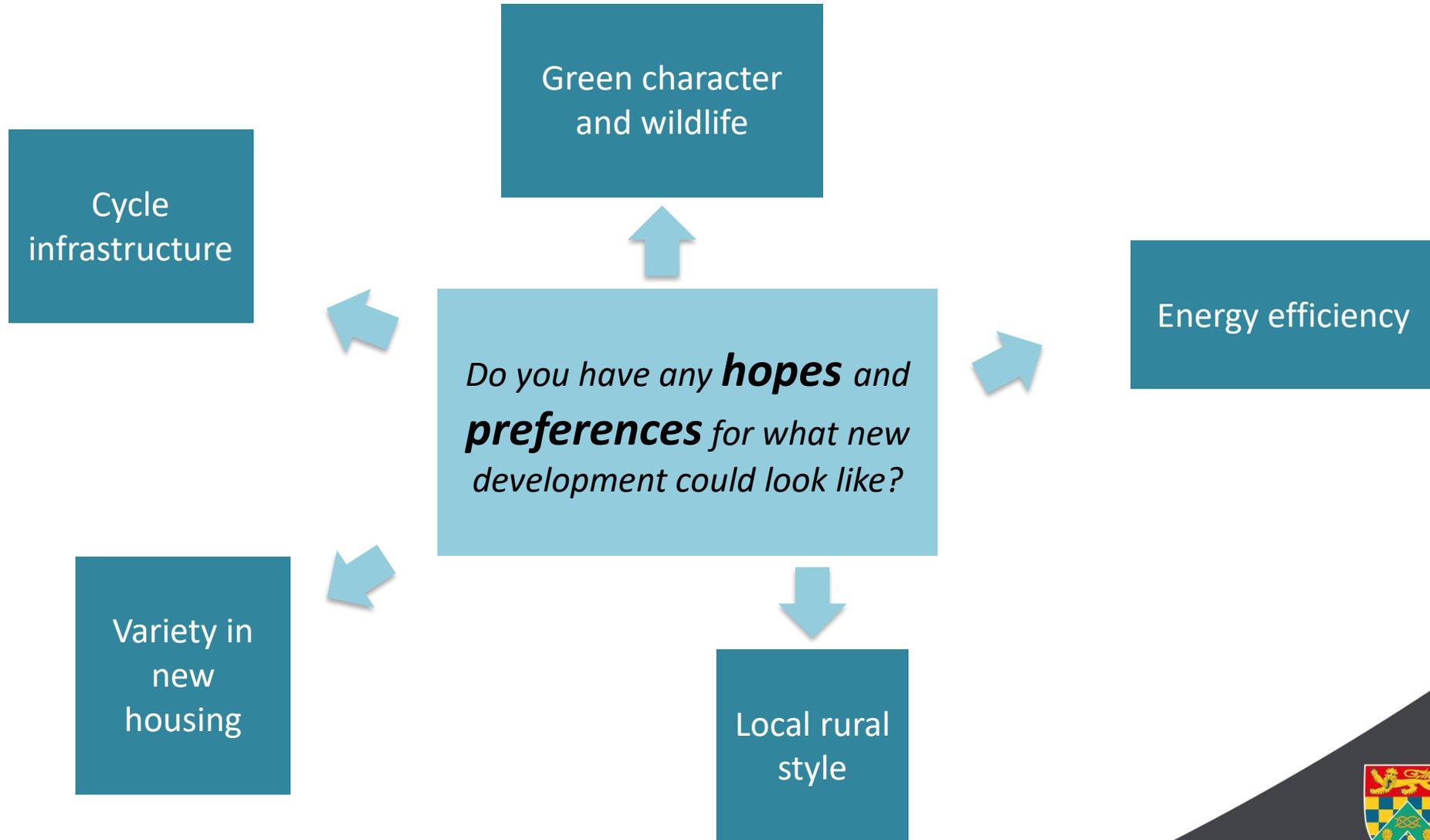
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2024 Survey Results* - online form on South Kesteven website

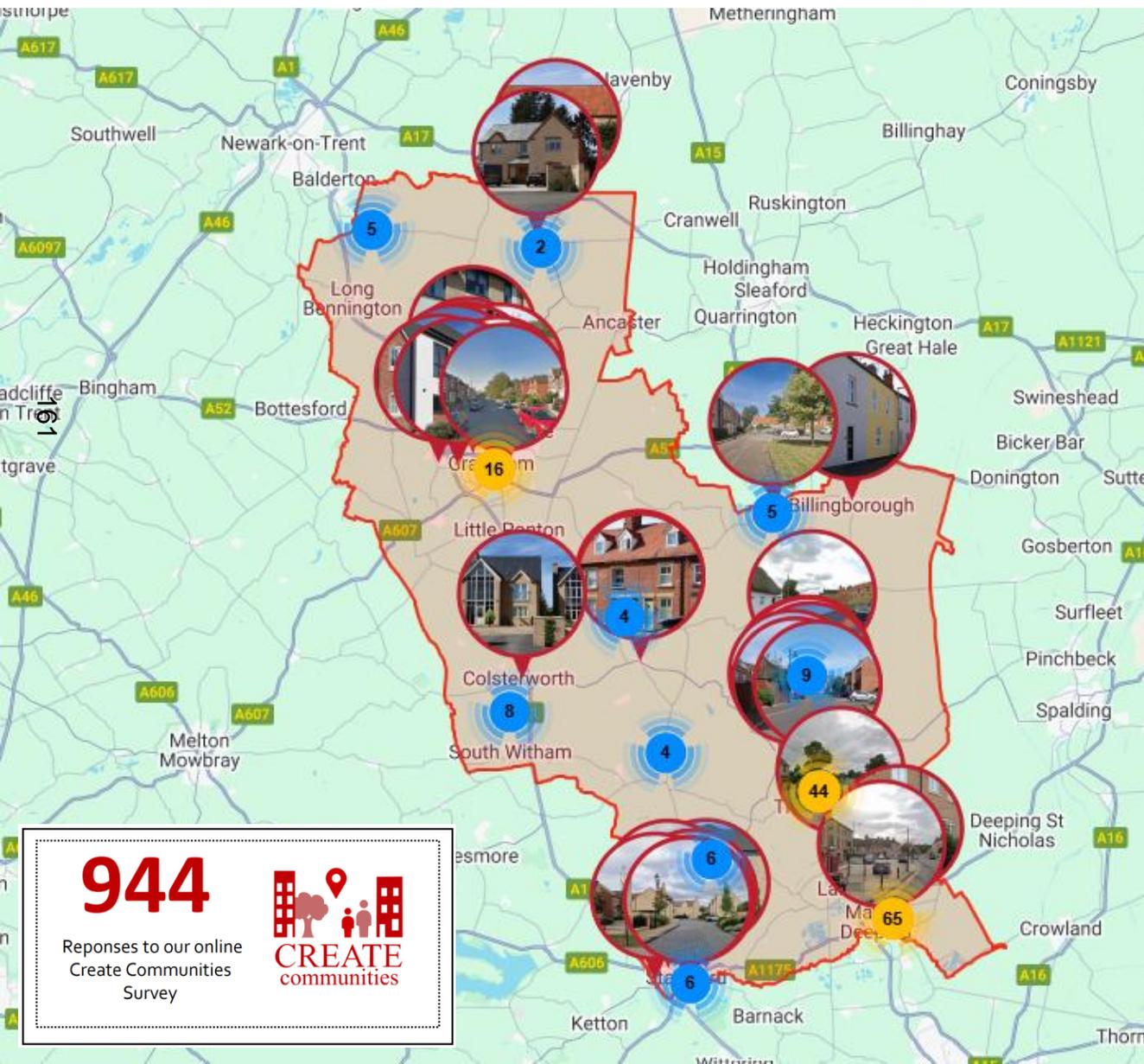
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2024 Survey Results* - online form on South Kesteven website



Create Communities Interactive Map – Autumn 2024



We asked respondents to pinpoint places they already knew within South Kesteven as well as comment on pre-selected ‘fixed points’. They were then asked to answer the following questions about their chosen place.

1. *How do you feel about this place, street or building?*
2. *What is this place called and what do you specifically like or dislike about it?*
3. *Do you think that this place, street or building is an appropriate model for future development in South Kesteven?*
4. *What particular features, if any, stand out for you?*



Create Communities Interactive Map

Across the 174 responses from the general questionnaire, five themes emerged highlighting key concerns and priorities:



- 1. Aesthetic and architectural design.** Mentioned in 21% of comments (36 responses). Buildings that harmonise with their surroundings are celebrated with references to appropriate materials, good scale and distinct character. Responses highlighted criticisms towards generic design and poorly integrated new developments.



- 2. Open spaces and greenery.** Mentioned in 19% of comments (33 responses). Access to green spaces for recreation and well-being are highly valued with green corridors deemed crucial. Some new developments are criticised for inadequate levels of planting and poorly maintained green spaces.



- 3. Connectivity and accessibility.** Mentioned in 17% of comments (30 responses). Many responses call for improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, including better crossings, sufficiently wide paths and better maintenance. Inappropriately parked cars are noted as disrupting footways. Overall, existing routes are appreciated but there is room for improvement regarding connectivity and maintenance, particularly in new developments.



- 4. Community infrastructure.** Mentioned in 17% of comments (29 responses). New housing developments are criticised for not including enough community facilities which puts strain on existing infrastructure. Some amenities such as Abbey Lawns are valued as important community assets with others requiring upgrades to maximise their value. Local businesses and community resources like libraries are highly valued and emphasised as key to fostering civic pride.



- 5. Historical and cultural significance.** Mentioned in 16% of comments (27 responses). South Kesteven has a rich and varied historical heritage with preserved and restored buildings holding cultural significance to respondents. There are concerns over the loss of character however due to the design of new developments and neglected historic buildings.

In total we received 944 responses, (174 responses to the general questionnaire and 770 responses across the 36 fixed points) to our online survey which was open for five weeks (1 st October to 6 th November 2024).



Create Communities Interactive Map - Fixed Points - Streets

Create Communities - Fixed Points

Which streets respondents found most appropriate for future development (top 5)



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Create Communities Interactive Map - Fixed Points - Buildings

Create Communities - Fixed Points

Which buildings respondents found most appropriate for future development (top 5)



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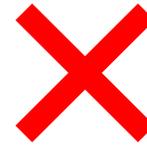
% of responses which found the selected building 'Appropriate' or 'Highly appropriate'



Create Communities Interactive Map – Fixed points questions conclusions



Q. What particular features, if any, stand out for you?



What specifically do people like?

The top three emerging reasons that respondents liked a place (out of 97 responses).

1. **Quality of architecture and character;**
2. **History and heritage;**
3. **Green spaces and wildlife.**

What specifically do people dislike?

The top three emerging reasons that respondents disliked a place (out of 65 responses).

1. **Poor layout and scale of buildings and streets;**
2. **Road safety and traffic issues;**
3. **Poor architectural style and lack of character.**

Stakeholder workshops – Autumn / Winter 2024

What we did

Workshops were conducted with Parishes, Neighbourhood Plan groups, SKDC Officers, Elected Members and the development industry. This included visual preference surveys for buildings, boundaries, parking, public spaces and streets along with more general discussions.

What did we ask

- What has worked and what hasn't with new developments?
- What are your favourite and least favourite buildings, streets and public spaces (including parks) in your communities and why?
- What do you think should be the focus of a design code for South Kesteven?
- What is your vision for South Kesteven?



Stakeholder workshops feedback



What has worked with new developments?

- Green spaces, wide green verges, and tree-lined entrances;
- Diverse house types in some developments and imaginative contemporary designs in smaller villages like Aslackby;
- Identifiable landmarks and town-specific features;
- Quality and appropriateness of smaller-scale developments;
- S106 contributions have occasionally benefited village schemes, and attractive frontages or gateways from the road have enhanced curb appeal.



Stakeholder workshops feedback

What hasn't worked with new developments?

- Narrow roads, dominance of street parking and insufficient garage sizes;
- Developments often lack connectivity with existing settlements;
- Insufficient amenities like shops, schools, and workplaces;
- Lack of adequate green spaces, poorly placed or minimal play areas, and insufficient green corridors;
- "Cookie -cutter" estates and developments that do not align with local character, eroding the unique identity of towns and villages;
- Poor planning for drainage and poorly placed services;
- Cramped layouts with houses too close to roads, and excessive density create a sense of overcrowding.



Summary of key issues from all workshops (in no particular order)

- **Strongly worded and clear Code:** The language of existing guidance is considered too loose. Use 'must' be followed to lift the quality of planning applications and make the approval process more efficient. Use checklists and be concise, clear and consistent;
- **Amenities** - Provide accessible and essential amenities and services like shops, doctors, pubs, education and green spaces;
- **Bus, walk, cycle** - Reliable public transport (including bus networks) and well-connected places with safe integrated cycle paths and footpaths for all people and avoiding the creation of car reliant places;
- **Mix of homes** - A mix of residential types to accommodate a wider array of residents, including starter homes, family homes, and accessible options for the elderly (e.g., bungalows);
- **Green** – Protect, enhance and create new green spaces, allotments and integrate wildlife into streets and public areas. Focus on play for all. Design for drainage (SuDS) from the start. Ensure spaces are well maintained;
- **Sustainable** - Make sustainability a central focus, ensuring solar panels, eco-friendly materials and planting which supports biodiversity along with homes that are built to last with quality materials;
- **Character** - Retain and be sympathetic to the unique character of South Kesteven's towns and villages and a Code with regional specificity and that covers rural development contexts, whilst ensuring there isn't a lack of variety;
- **Community** - Places for recreation and community hubs for all ages that can foster community interactions and promote a sense of place;
- **Parking** – Well designed parking in general and parking and garages that can accommodate modern vehicles. Enough parking in rural areas and avoid car-dominated streets;
- **Balance viability with quality**



Market Engagement



What we did...

In -person engagement at three market days:

- Dec 5th – Bourne
- Dec 6th – Stamford
- Feb 8th – Grantham

This engagement follows on from the Create Communities survey and the Stakeholder workshops.

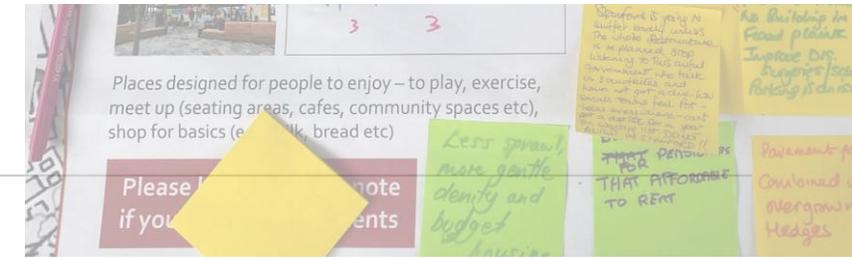
Respondents answered visual preference surveys for buildings, boundaries, parking, public spaces and streets as well as engaging in conversation.

Approximately 22 people were spoken to in Bourne, 51 in Stamford and 31 in Grantham.

Respondents were also asked which vision statement was most important to them.



Market Engagement – conversations and comments



Summary of comments:

- **Infrastructure** - Strong concerns about inadequate infrastructure (post offices, doctors, schools, shops) and amenities within walking distance;
- **Poor public transport** in new developments contribute to excessive car use, traffic congestion and parking shortages;
- **Climate-conscious building.** Desire for solar panels, better insulation, heat pumps, rainwater collection, greywater reuse;
- **Drainage concerns** with flooding issues and building on floodplains;
- **Affordable housing** is critical, especially for pensioners and multi-generational families. There is a desire for bungalows;
- **New homes are 'featureless'.** There is a preference for traditional styles and maintaining character;
- **Parking** is a major issue, especially in Elsea Park due to narrow roads and lack of space leading to pavement parking and lack of accommodation for larger modern vehicles;
- **Support for street trees and protecting green spaces.** Developers should not be allowed to sell off community spaces. Much more 'green' is needed everywhere. Parks should cater for all ages, including teenagers and older people (such as through places to sit);
- **Less urban sprawl** and 'concrete jungles' and more gentle density. E.g. make use of flats above shops;
- **Overly narrow pavements,** complete lack of pavements in places and poor crossing points makes walking difficult.

Youth Council - what kind of place would you like to live in?

What kind of place would you like to live in?

What is most important to you?



1 Nature, wildlife, trees and green character



7 Attractive buildings – designed to fit into the local area.



5 Safe and attractive options for walking, cycling and public transport.



2 Places designed for people to enjoy – to play, exercise, meet up (seating areas, cafes, community spaces etc), shop for basics (e.g. milk, bread etc)



4 Places that function well and are designed to reflect practical considerations (e.g. bins and parking).



6 Energy efficient and low carbon buildings (and a strong focus on tackling climate change).



3 Providing a range of houses for different people's needs, budgets and circumstances.

Variety w aesthetic.

Something else? (please add)

Rankings

1. **Nature**, wildlife, trees and green character;
2. **Places designed for people** to enjoy – to play, exercise, meet up (seating areas, cafes, community spaces etc), shop for basics (e.g. milk, bread etc);
3. **Walking, cycling and public transport** (Safe and attractive options)
4. **Energy efficient and low carbon buildings** (and a strong focus on tackling climate change);
4. **Providing a range of houses** for different people's needs, budgets and circumstances;
5. **Places that function well** and are designed to reflect practical considerations (e.g. bins and parking);
6. **Attractive buildings** – designed to fit into the local area.

Members of the Youth Council (aged 11-18 from various schools and colleges in South Kesteven) were asked:

What kind of place would you like to live in?

Ranked by which of the following statements were most important to them.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Youth Council – Postcard from the future

Imagine yourself in 2045 living in a new residential area that is a great place to live....

175 Write a postcard from this future place back to someone in 2025, describing what it is like to live there and why it is so good.

(e.g. sights and what it looks like, sounds, smells, what it feels like and what activities you do).

You can be your age now or imagine yourself 20 years older.

Dear - It is wonderful here, the fresh air feels great. The safe streets at night as the solar panel lights never turn off, there is no noise pollution as all cars are electric. I attend leisure walks in the nearby park which is also a sanctuary for ~~environment~~ in danger in endangered species.

Imagine yourself in 2045 living in a new residential area that is a great place to live....

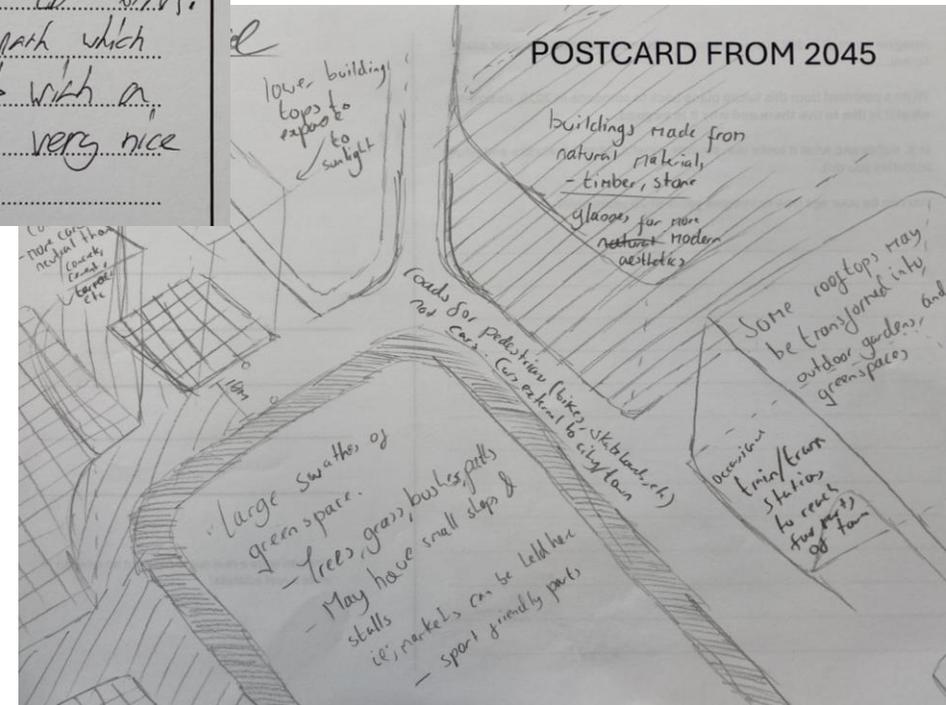
Write a postcard from this future place back to someone in 2025, describing what it is like to live there and why it is so good.

(e.g. sights and what it looks like, sounds, smells, what it feels like and what activities you do).

You can be your age now or imagine yourself 20 years older.

I am currently living in grandown and around the Barrowby gate area. It is a lovely establishment and very quiet. It has accessible areas of nature to enjoy and I adore the natural sounds of birds. There is a very convenient path which takes me down to town with a pleasant walk. The residents are very nice to talk to and night times.

POSTCARD FROM 2045



Response to summary of all engagement activities

Summary of most important issues

You said...

- Green character everywhere, wildlife, trees, tranquil walks;
- Play and leisure spaces for all – places for all people;
- Climate change;
- Drainage and flooding;



Response

We did...

- Moved Nature chapter to the start, expanded it and created Musts to ensure green streets and spaces, walks and wildlife whilst also adding 'green' elements to other chapters.
- Play added in to various chapters and ensured play for all included. Well designed local centre requirements and co-location of community facilities.
- No.1 issue in code vision and recurring theme throughout document. Sustainable buildings section created, sustainable drainage section, sustainable travel section, Nature chapter;
- See climate change above, also a recurring theme throughout, but also Blue Infrastructure Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) chapter.

Response to summary of all engagement activities

Summary of most important issues

You said...

- Pedestrian and cycle connectivity and public transport;
- Parking design (e.g. narrow streets, pavement parking, frontage parking)
- Amenities and infrastructure (health, education, road capacity, shops, green spaces etc), including mixed-use;



Response

We did...

- Specific walking, wheeling and cycling chapter, public transport chapter, connectivity covered in various sections;
- Parking covered extensively and in detail, forming one of the longest sections in the code, better parking design discourages pavement parking and car dominated streets;
- Amenities and infrastructure feature in third and fifth vision points, emphasis on well-designed, grouped and accessible amenities that encourage social interaction. Actual levels of provision are beyond the scope of this code and are decided by education, health, highways departments.

Response to summary of all engagement activities

Summary of most important issues

You said...

- Variety in house styles (not standardised cookie-cutter) and also mix of types (e.g. families, older people)
- Local character, history, heritage and rural village style;
- Easy to use document, concise, consistent, with checklist;
- Many changes after the permission stages – watering down design quality



Response

We did...

- Extensive Identity section, covering house types, materials, roofs, windows, doors, building details – specific must on adapting standard house types; *(diverse and affordable homes mentioned in vision but needs a specific code)*
- Clear explanation about what is meant by local character – see also the District Characterisation sheets and the use of Area Type specific codes;
- Code compliance checklist created, also clear Musts, Shoulds and Cans within document along with diagrams and images;
- This may be beyond the scope of the Code but we are exploring ways to address negative post permission amendments;

Draft Code testing and informal consultation – November 2025 – January 2026

With promotion through e-mail we placed on our website the below:

- Draft Code;
- Draft compliance checklist;
- Information sheets about engagement activities to date and the format of the code;
- A questionnaire to feedback

We received:

- 20 written responses
- A volume housebuilder undertook detailed testing on a live development site with follow up meeting to discuss findings;
- Elected Member briefing
- Development Management Officer workshop
- Internal testing of the checklist and code

Draft Code testing and informal consultation – November 2025 – January 2026

Key findings:

- Reduce the length it takes to assess schemes against the code – reduce the number of ‘must’ and ‘should’;
- Make it more user friendly;
- Relate the code to the Local Plan as it is proposed to be an SPD;
- Some musts overly prescriptive
- Some viability concerns in terms of delivering everything in the code
- Ensure diagrams are clear and realistic – and show more of the complete picture;
- Allow scope for innovative and contemporary architecture;
- Area Types created some issues – and clarity needed on where they apply;
- Development thresholds (small, medium, large etc) could be reviewed;
- Clarity on how the code covers heritage contexts
- Many comments on wording and phrasing
- The District Characterisation work will be important to see once ready.



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South Kesteven Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion
(incorporating Habitats Regulations considerations)

South Kesteven District Council

March 2026

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
R.P. Principal Environmental Planner	C.B. Associate Director	N.C.B. Technical Director	N.C.B. Technical Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
V1.0	25.02.26	Draft version for Council comment	26.02.26	R.S.	Principal Design Officer
V2.0	26.02.26	Consultation version	26.02.26	N.C.B.	Technical Director

Prepared for:

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Table of Contents

1. Purpose of this SEA Screening Opinion (incorporating HRA considerations)	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Who is responsible for screening?	1
1.3 Screening methodology	2
2. Context for the draft Design Code SPD	3
2.1 Key information relating to the draft SPD	3
2.2 Planning context for the draft SPD	4
3. Screening assessment	5
3.1 Relevant environmental issues	5
3.2 Regulatory checklist	6
3.3 Conclusion (Screening Opinion)	8
4. Next steps	10
4.1 Consultation on the draft SPD (and Screening Opinion)	10

1. Purpose of this SEA Screening Opinion (incorporating HRA considerations)

1.1 Background

1.1.1 South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) is producing a Design Code¹ Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the district. The SPD will set standards for how buildings, streets and public spaces should look, feel and function and will go through multiple stages of public engagement before being finalised.

1.1.2 Following their recent testing and engagement phase for the SPD which closed in January 2026, SKDC has asked AECOM to provide an SEA Screening Opinion (incorporating Habitats Regulations considerations) for their draft Design Code SPD. This report presents our Screening Opinion.

1.1.3 The aim of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (i.e., the “SEA Regulations”), which transpose the SEA Directive (2004/42/EC) in to UK law, is as follows (with added emphasis):

“to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”

1.1.4 Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the “Habitats Regulations”), an appropriate assessment is required, where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect upon an international site, either individually or in combination with other projects.

1.2 Who is responsible for screening?

1.2.1 In order to decide whether an SPD is likely to have significant environmental effects, and hence requires SEA / HRA, it should be ‘screened’ at an early stage, i.e. once the scope of the SPD has been established.

1.2.2 The Regulations state that a screening determination should be reached by ‘the responsible authority’, which, in this case, is SKDC.

1.2.3 The Council should reach a determination in-light of this screening opinion, and in consultation with the statutory consultation bodies designated under the Regulations:

- Natural England (SEA and HRA).
- The Environment Agency (SEA); and.
- Historic England (SEA).

¹ South Kesteven District Council (2026): [A Design Code for South Kesteven](#)

1.3 Screening methodology

- 1.3.1 Screening essentially involves giving consideration to the anticipated scope of the plan in question and the nature of environmental issues locally, before coming to a conclusion on the potential for a cause and effect relationship, i.e. the likelihood of the plan leading to 'significant effects on the environment'.
- 1.3.2 **Schedule 1** of the SEA Regulations² lists a series of criteria that should be taken into account when establishing the potential for the plan to result in significant effects. Furthermore, **Schedule 2** of the SEA Regulations³ lists a series of broad environmental issues that should be considered. The criteria/issues listed in the Regulations are helpful in that they provide a methodological basis for screening.
- 1.3.3 Finally, there is a need to note the following Planning Practice Guidance (with emphasis added)⁴:

*“Supplementary planning documents do not require a sustainability appraisal but may in **exceptional circumstances** require a strategic environmental assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies.”*

² The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004: [Schedule 1](#)

³ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004: [Schedule 2](#)

⁴ See Paragraph 8 at: [Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal](#)

2. Context for the draft Design Code SPD

2.1 Key information relating to the draft SPD

2.1.1 Key information relating to the SPD is presented in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1: Key information relating to the draft Design Code SPD

Name of qualifying body	South Kesteven District Council (SKDC)
Title of the SPD	South Kesteven Design Code Draft
Area covered by the SPD	South Kesteven District
Timescale	The SPD will be phased over a period of time (a transition period), which will commence at a time when the emerging Local Plan is adopted.
Purpose, aims, and objectives	<p>The purpose of the Design Code SPD is to improve the quality of new development in South Kesteven. SKDC has produced the Design Code SPD primarily to assist and inform both applicants and officers involved in the design and development process, with a particular focus on ensuring that applicants for planning permission (for more than 10 homes or non-residential proposals for over 1,000 sqm of floorspace) apply the necessary considerations to their proposals.</p> <p>The vision of the Design Code SPD reflects the responses received from extensive engagement with local residents and stakeholders to date, and is focused on ten key priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable development. 2. Greener communities. 3. Community-centred design. 4. Controlled and sustainable growth. 5. Supporting infrastructure. 6. Transport and accessibility. 7. Preserve local character. 8. Diverse and affordable housing. 9. Future-proof development; and 10. Distinctive public realm.
SPD contact	Richard.Shaw@southkesteven.gov.uk , Principal Design Officer, SKDC

2.2 Planning context for the draft SPD

2.2.1 The draft Design Code SPD has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework⁵ (NPPF, December 2024) and associated Planning Practice Guidance, and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. **Section 1.5** within the draft SPD states that the Design Code must also be read alongside relevant national and local documents, including (but not limited to) the National Design Guide (2021), National Model Design Code (2021), Manual for Streets (2019), Building for Healthy Life (2020) and the adopted South Kesteven Local Plan⁶ (2020).

2.2.2 **Section 1.5** of the draft SPD also states that the Design Code should take into consideration any subsequent planning and environmental legislation and guidance as it becomes available. This will likely include the Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance⁷ (2026 consultation) and the emerging South Kesteven Local Plan (to 2043). The Local Plan context is provided below.

2.2.3 The South Kesteven Local Plan (2011-2036) was adopted in January 2020. The HRA Screening for the adopted Local Plan concluded that there was no requirement to proceed with an appropriate assessment (AA)⁸. The Planning Inspector's final report on the adopted Local Plan confirmed that the Council should commit to undertaking an early review of the Local Plan from April 2020. SKDC have since progressed with a review of the adopted Local Plan, which has been accompanied by a full Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (incorporating SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) AA. Plan making has included:

- An initial 'issues and options' consultation in October 2020, presenting high-level approaches and alternatives for the emerging Local Plan.
- Regulation 18 consultation on an initial Draft Local Plan was undertaken between February and April 2024. The Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation document contained a series of planning policies to guide development in the district to 2043, and potential locations for housing and employment land.
- A focused Regulation 18 consultation in July and August 2025 on 'Proposed Housing and Mixed-Use Site Allocations', in response to the revised standard method⁹ for the district proposed in the December 2024 NPPF. The HRA AA concluded that the identified impact pathways to international sites from the Draft Local Plan could be 'screened out' of causing any likely significant effects to habitats or species for which the international sites are designated.

2.2.4 Further information is available on SKDC's website¹⁰.

⁵ MHCLG (last updated February 2025): [revised NPPF](#)

⁶ South Kesteven District Council (2020): [The adopted South Kesteven Local Plan \(to 2036\)](#)

⁷ MHCLG (2026): [Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance](#)

⁸ South Kesteven District Council (2018): [South Kesteven Local Plan \(2011-2036\) HRA](#)

⁹ The updated NPPF included revisions to the standard method for calculating housing need. The revisions have increased the need for South Kesteven District from 701 homes per annum to 886 homes per annum.

¹⁰ South Kesteven District Council (2026): [Local Plan Review](#)

3. Screening assessment

3.1 Relevant environmental issues

- 3.1.1 A key determinant of whether effects are likely to be significant is the sensitivity of the asset affected. In this context, the more environmentally sensitive a location, the more likely it is that potential environmental effects from a plan will be significant.
- 3.1.2 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹¹ provides guidance on this topic through providing a list of sites and areas which should be deemed as ‘sensitive areas’ for the purposes of environmental assessment¹². These comprise:
- International sites.
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
 - National Parks.
 - National Landscapes.
 - World Heritage Sites (WHS); and
 - Scheduled Monuments.
- 3.1.3 In the context of the PPG, there are 124 sensitive areas within South Kesteven, including:
- Two international sites: Baston Fen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Grimsthorpe SAC.
 - 29 SSSI; and
 - 93 Scheduled Monuments.
- 3.1.4 Other key environmental assets (i.e., those which are not defined as ‘sensitive areas’ by the PPG), within South Kesteven include:
- Listed Buildings: 108 Grade I; 197 Grade II*; and 1,848 Grade II.
 - 48 conservation areas.
 - Areas of priority habitats contributing to local ecological networks, including ancient woodland and deciduous woodland.
 - Local ecological and heritage designations: local wildlife sites; local geological sites; regionally important geological sites; and registered parks and gardens.
 - Main rivers and ordinary watercourses, including the River Witham, River Welland, River Glen (and their tributaries).
 - Mineral safeguarding areas; and
 - Air quality management areas.

¹¹ MHCLG (2024): [Planning practice guidance](#)

¹² i.e., [those sites and areas that should be considered 'sensitive'](#) for the purposes of screening projects for environmental assessments.

3.2 Regulatory checklist

3.2.1 As discussed above in **Section 1.3**, Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations lists a series of criteria that should be taken into account when establishing the potential for the plan to result in likely significant effects. The aim of **Table 3.1** below is to discuss matters under each criterion in turn.

Table 3.1: Checklist for establishing the potential for significant effects

Criteria	Significant effect?	Discussion
<i>1. The characteristics of the SPD, having particular regard to:</i>		
(a) the degree to which the SPD sets out a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	No	The SPD does aim to set a design framework for new development areas within the district, including a range of place-making principles under three prescriptions: 'must', 'should', and 'can'. Unlike development plan documents, the SPD will not set the direct framework for delivering new projects and activities in the district.
(b) the degree to which the SPD influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy.	No	The SPD is not likely to have a significant bearing on the preparation of other plans or programmes. The SPD is being prepared in the context of, and in alignment with, the provisions of several national and local planning documents. This includes the adopted (and emerging) South Kesteven Local Plan, which have been subject to SA (including SEA) and HRA. Further detail is provided in Section 2.2 of this Screening Opinion.
(c) the relevance of the SPD for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.	No	The SPD seeks to respond to a range of environmental constraints and problems, perhaps most notably in respect of biodiversity and green infrastructure, heritage, climate resilience, public realm and open spaces, movement and accessibility, density, and built form.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme.	No	Whilst these provisions have the potential to deliver positive effects within South Kesteven, impacts are not considered to be significant in the absence of any specific allocations within the draft SPD.

Criteria	Significant effect?	Discussion
(e) the relevance of the plan for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example plans and programmes related to waste management or water protection).	No	It is not anticipated that the SPD will have a notable bearing in this respect.
<i>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular,</i>		
(a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.	No	The effects of the SPD will be felt over the medium to long term, as planning applications come forward and the emerging Local Plan is adopted. As the SPD includes a design framework for delivering sustainable development throughout the district, the effects are likely to be permanent. However, this does not in itself lead to a conclusion that effects will be significant.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects.	No	The SPD will be implemented alongside the adopted (and emerging) Local Plan, and so there will be a cumulative effect. However, the SPD is unlikely to lead to significant effects that would be seen otherwise.
(c) the trans boundary nature of the effects.	No	Not relevant; no international effects anticipated as the SPD only concerns South Kesteven District.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accident).	No	Environmental quality and environmental health are matters relevant to the SPD; however, the SPD is not likely to lead to any risks.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).	No	The key point to note is in respect of the magnitude of growth likely to come forward across the district through the adopted (and emerging) Local Plan, with the design of new development areas linked to the provisions of the SPD. However, the SPD is unlikely to lead to significant effects that would be seen otherwise through the Local Plan.

Criteria	Significant effect?	Discussion
<p>(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage ▪ Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values ▪ Intensive land use 	No	<p>There are a number of constraints in the district (discussed in Section 3.1 within this Screening Opinion) which are sensitive to the design of new development areas, including ecological and heritage designations.</p> <p>As the SPD does not allocate land for housing or employment land, the proposals in the SPD are not likely to have significant effects to the integrity of sensitive areas within South Kesteven.</p>
<p>(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	No	<p>South Kesteven District is not constrained by any landscapes which have a recognised national, Community, or international protection status (e.g., National Parks, National Landscapes, or Green Belt land).</p>

3.3 Conclusion (Screening Opinion)

- 3.3.1 This screening opinion has considered whether the draft Design Code SPD is likely to lead to significant environmental effects in conjunction with the SEA and HRA Regulations. Whilst some limited environmental effects have the potential to take place as a result of the draft SPD, it is considered that these are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA and HRA Regulations and their requirements. This is considered below.
- 3.3.2 The European and national designations within South Kesteven (discussed in **Section 3.1** of this Screening Opinion) have a range of sensitivities that will need to be carefully considered through new development areas. In terms of key land use policies which should be considered for their potential for significant environmental effects, the draft SPD does not seek to allocate land for housing or employment uses. Therefore, the proposals in the draft SPD are not likely to have significant effects to the integrity of ‘sensitive areas’ within South Kesteven. As the draft SPD does not allocate land for housing or employment land, the impacts of new development areas (i.e., emerging Local Plan allocations or speculative applications during the plan period) would only arise through the development control process as applications come forward.
- 3.3.3 The draft SPD instead seeks to shape development which may come forward within South Kesteven District by supporting proposals which meets a series of criteria (see **Table 2.1** in Chapter 2 of this Screening Opinion). In this respect the SPD is strongly design led and will inform and influence planning applications which come forward through the adopted (and emerging) South Kesteven Local Plan, which have been subject to SA (incorporating SEA) and HRA. The likely significant effects are primarily

from the allocations taken forward through the Local Plan, and the SPD will help to limit these potential significant effects.

- 3.3.4 In the context of the above, the draft Design Code SPD has a key focus on bringing forward high-quality design that does not detract from South Kesteven's sensitive environment, which includes the various environmental designations and their settings. In this way, the draft SPD proposals work to shape potential development coming forward within South Kesteven without allocating sites. This includes establishing priorities and placemaking-principles for biodiversity and green infrastructure, heritage, climate resilience, public realm and open spaces, movement and accessibility, density, and built form. Whilst these provisions have the potential to deliver positive effects within South Kesteven, impacts are not considered to be significant in the absence of any specific allocations within the draft SPD.
- 3.3.5 In conclusion, it is not considered likely that the SPD will lead to significant effects on the environmental baseline situation. As such, **a full SEA process meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations is not deemed to be required to accompany the development of the Design Code SPD.**
- 3.3.6 In light of the conclusions within the HRA Screening for the adopted Local Plan and the AA for the emerging Local Plan (as discussed in **Section 2.2** of this Screening Opinion) **the SPD, which accords with Local Plan policies, would not significantly affect an international site under the Habitats Regulations and trigger the requirement for AA.**

4. Next steps

4.1 Consultation on the draft SPD (and Screening Opinion)

4.1.1 This SEA Screening Opinion (incorporating Habitats Regulations considerations) accompanies the draft Design Code SPD for community consultation for a period of six weeks, commencing on 16th March 2026.

4.1.2 Consultation documents are accessible via:

[A Design Code for South Kesteven | South Kesteven District Council](#)

4.1.3 SKDC, as the responsible authority, should give consideration to this screening opinion, consult with the Statutory Consultees (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) and then reach a screening determination.

4.1.4 If the SPD is ultimately screened out, then plan making may continue without having to give further consideration to SEA requirements; however, if it is ultimately determined that SEA is required, there will be a need to undertake SEA in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

4.1.5 Finally, it is important to note that our screening opinion is based on a series of assumptions, most notably in relation to the scope of the plan. If the scope of the plan changes, such that these assumptions no longer hold true, then 're-screening' could be necessary.

Prepared for: South Kesteven District Council

Appendix 4

<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s50126/Draft%20SKDC%20Design%20Code.pdf>

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

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

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Update Report: Quarter 3 (April to December) 2025

Report Author

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

✉ Richard.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of December 2025.
The report covers the following areas:

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to review and note the forecast 2025/26 outturn position for the HRA Revenue and Capital budgets as at the end of December 2025.

Decision Information

Is this a key decision?	No
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

1. Implications

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

Finance

- 1.1 The financial implications are included throughout the report. The HRA revenue expenditure continues to be under pressure to manage with the increased budget after the supplementary estimate approved by Council in November 2025. Mitigating actions have had to be put in place to reduce and control spending over the remainder of the 2025/26 financial year.
- 1.2 Members are reminded that the HRA is required to maintain a rolling 30-year HRA Financial Business Plan and the current spending levels are putting the Plan under financial strain and are not sustainable. As set out in the budget report for 2026/27 plans will need to be put in place over the next financial year as we approach the next budget setting cycle to bring the HRA back into balance over the long term.

Completed by: Richard Wyles Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 As part of good governance, it is important members are kept updated in respect of the financial position of Council expenditure during the year.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.4 A Risk Register is at Appendix B and shows that all known current financial risks are recognised and associated mitigating actions are in place.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance and Risk Officer

2 Background to the Report

- 2.1 Cabinet is provided with regular finance reports for the HRA. These reports monitor and forecast expenditure and income compared with the budgets approved by Council and provide explanations for any significant variances.

3 Revenue Budget 2025/26 – HRA

3.1 The HRA revenue budget set by Council on 27 February 2025 showed a budgeted surplus of £8.059m. The HRA is budgeted to make a surplus in order that the surplus can be transferred to reserves in order to provide funding for the capital programme. Budgets have since been updated to reflect approved budget carry forwards from 2024/25, in-year virements and the supplementary estimate approved by Council on 20 November 2025. These changes have resulted in a reduction in the forecast net surplus of £4.904m.

3.2 Table 1 shows the forecast outturn position as at 31 December 2025.

Table 1 – HRA Revenue Forecast Outturn Position

Directorate	Current Budget £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Actuals £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
EXPENDITURE							
Repairs and maintenance	13,600	11,360	11,942	582	13,691	91	0.67
Supervision and Management - General	2,514	2,284	2,260	(24)	2,495	(19)	(0.76)
Supervision and Management - Special	2,322	1,978	1,547	(431)	2,249	(73)	(3.14)
Depreciation and Impairment of Fixed Assets	4,181	0	0	0	4,181	0	0
Accounting Adjustments	3,184	0	0	0	3,184	0	0
Total Exp	25,801	15,622	15,749	127	25,800	(1)	0.00
INCOME							
Dwelling Rents	(29,856)	(22,392)	(21,614)	778	(29,787)	69	0.23
Non-Dwelling Rents	(322)	(268)	(255)	13	(271)	51	15.84
Charges for Services and Facilities	(916)	(764)	(868)	(104)	(950)	(34)	(3.71)
Other Income	(18)	(15)	(42)	(27)	(42)	(24)	(133.33)
Total Income	(31,112)	(23,439)	(22,779)	660	(31,050)	62	0.20
Net Cost	(5,311)	(7,817)	(7,030)	787	(5,250)	61	1.15
Interest Payable	2,043	1,703	1,703	0	2,043	0	0
Investment income	(1,798)	(1,498)	(1,498)	(0)	(1,697)	101	5.62
Net Operating Surplus	(5,066)	(7,613)	(6,826)	787	(4,904)	162	3.20

- 3.3 Overall there is a forecast overspend of £162k across the HRA revenue budgets. Commentary is provided below on the key variances to note.

Repairs and Maintenance

- 3.4 As highlighted in the report to Cabinet on 9 September 2025, there was a significant emerging pressure on the repairs and maintenance budget which required additional budget to be put in place as approved by Council at the meeting on 20 November 2026.
- 3.5 These pressures have continued within the repairs and maintenance budgets and have been closely monitored. As part of the Quarter 3 forecast review there were further concerns based on an initial forecast overspend of £1.4m after taking into consideration actual spend, commitments and projected spend up to 31 March 2026.
- 3.6 In response to this concern, the Technical Services team supported by Finance colleagues has undertaken a thorough review of committed spend and projected spend in order to avoid such a significant overspend. A wide range of actions are being implemented to ensure spend is within the approved budgets.
- 3.7 This review has taken a significant amount of officer time but several key actions have been identified and have been implemented. The following is a summary of the actions:
- Review of the expenditure to remove costs totalling £500k that had been incorrectly coded to revenue budgets that are eligible to be classified as capital expenditure.
 - Deferral of the accelerated programme of stock condition surveys until 2026/27 financial year. However, these were originally budgeted for 2026/27 so there will not be a budget issue arising from the deferral, reducing the forecast by £62k.
 - Allocation of £207k legacy Homelessness Prevention Grant to fund specific works for emergency accommodation.
 - Temporary pause of non-urgent structural works equating to £50k on properties except in cases where there is a health and safety risk.
 - Reviewing all commitments and adjusting to accurately reflect works to be completed by year end which reduced the forecast by £90k
 - Allocate where possible contractor repairs and void works on 90 day time frame to manage expenditure (unless repair presents a health and safety risk) has reduced the forecast by £430k.

Based on the latest financial modelling which is up to the end of January 2026 given the significance of the issue, it is anticipated that the temporary interventions outlined above will contain the projected overspend to £91k. To help ensure this, weekly finance reports are being provided supported by weekly meetings with the service area to help manage the situation up to 31st March 2026.

Members are reminded that a delegation was put in place by Council to allow a further £250k to be allocated in the event of further financial pressures. Further funding may be necessary if the mitigations outlined above do not achieve the objective of reducing further expenditure.

Supervision and Management -General

- 3.8 Sale of Council Houses – The number of RTB's has reduced since the change in legislation and discount rates. This has led to a reduction in legal and valuation costs resulting in £19k underspend.

Supervision and Management – Special

- 3.9 Lifeline – The forecast has been reduced in line with current expenditure within the Supervision and Management Special heading. During the past two years, units have been replaced which has led to less repair call-outs. Where repairs have been required, they have been covered under warranties issued with the new units. This has resulted in a forecast underspend of £78k.

Income

- 3.10 Overall income levels are being maintained at budgeted levels although rent collection continues to be a challenge as universal credit continues to be rolled out across the district. Universal Credit migration has reduced direct payments to the rent account. Previously, Housing Benefit would be paid direct to the rent account. However, for some of those tenants who have migrated to Universal Credit, housing costs are paid directly to them.
- 3.11 Homelessness Units – Recovery of costs has improved over the last year due to the appointment of a new Temporary Accommodation Officer. This has led to more efficient processes and a better recovery rate leading to increased income of £24k.
- 3.12 Investment Income – As a result of the increasing the budget in 2025/26 and the need to draw on reserves to finance this, there is a forecast reduction on investment income of £101k due to having lowers balances than expected.

4 Capital Budget 2025/26 – HRA

- 4.1 The budget set by Council on 27 February 2025 was £31.771m. Budgets have been amended in line with approved carry forwards which have increased the 2025/26 budget to £32.354m.
- 4.2 Table 2 shows the forecast outturn position as at 31 December 2025 which is forecasting a potential underspend of £10.416m and Table 3 shows the significant forecast variances with supporting commentary.

Table 2 – HRA Capital Forecast Outturn Position

Directorate	Current Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
Energy Efficiencies Initiatives	5,041	5,122	81	1.61
Replacement Vehicles	765	0	(765)	(100.00)
New Builds	15,134	6,583	(8,551)	(56.50)
Refurbishment and Improvement	11,414	10,233	(1,181)	(10.35)
Total	32,354	21,938	(10,416)	(32.19)

Table 3 – HRA Capital – Significant Variances

Explanation of Significant Variance	£'000
<p>New Builds Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swinegate development in Grantham completed in September 25 but was due to finish earlier in the year so the cashflow has been extended as a result of the delay. • A purchase order has been raised for Larch Close, Grantham, and construction commenced in September 25. The scheme is now due to complete in December 26 following a significant delay as a result of necessary amendments to the planning permission. • Wellington Way, Market Deeping, contract was awarded for 11 units at £1.926m. It was hoped works would start in November 2025 but this has slipped to the New Year due to some pre-commencement planning conditions. Since the forecast position was declared, a further £190k has been approved for this scheme for additional ground surveys. <p>The cashflows for each scheme are shared with finance colleagues and discussed regularly but, due to delays, this has impacted the budget position.</p>	(8,551)

<p>Replacement Vehicles Vehicles have been ordered but delivery is not expected until next Financial Year. A carry forward has been submitted for the underspend.</p>	(765)
<p>Refurbishment and Improvement There are a number of capital schemes within this area which supporting investment in the housing stock to meet decent homes standards. During the year there has been some fluctuation regarding the prioritisation of works in order to meet emerging pressures. This is resulting in a number of under and overspends across the individual schemes which can be seen at Appendix A.</p> <p>There are two specific schemes – Alarms (£500k) and Fire Protection works (£600k) which are likely to be carried forward into 2026/27.</p>	(1,181)
Total	(10,028)

In respect of the refurbishment and improvement programme, there are a number of significant variances as priorities for expenditure have changed during the year. Budgets were set against existing stock condition survey information but works are checked through pre-inspections to ensure they are still required. This has resulted in movements between schemes where works have been reprioritised. Overall, there is a projected underspend of £1.181m and a carry forward budget request of £1.1m.

5 Other Options Considered

- 5.1 Cabinet should have oversight of Council budgets, therefore, the option of not producing a monitoring report was discounted.

6 Reasons for the Recommendations

- 6.1 Members should be kept up to date regarding the financial position of the Authority. Effective budget management is critical to ensuring financial resources are targeted towards the Council's priorities. Monitoring enables early identification of variations against the plan and timely corrective action.

7 Consultation

- 7.1 Budget Monitoring reports are presented throughout the Financial Year to the Cabinet and Finance, Economic Overview Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) to keep Members up to date regarding the projected financial outturn position. This report was presented to FEOSC at their meeting on 24 February 2026.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – 2025/26 HRA Capital Monitoring
- 8.2 Appendix B – 2025/26 HRA Finance Risk Register

2025/26 HRA Capital Programme - Monitoring Statement to 31st December 2025

	Scheme Description	Latest Budget Annual £	Forecast Outturn £	Forecast Variance £	Carry Forward Request £
1	Central Heating, Ventilation and boiler replacements	1,300,000	1,360,000	60,000	0
2	Social Housing Decarb. Fund - Wave 3	3,740,700	3,761,950	21,250	0
	ENERGY EFFICIENCY	5,040,700	5,121,950	81,250	0
3	Repairs Vehicles	765,000	0	(765,000)	765,000
	PURCHASE OF VEHICLES	765,000	0	(765,000)	765,000
4	Housing Development Investment	15,134,000	6,583,000	(8,551,000)	8,551,000
	NEW BUILD PROGRAMME	15,134,000	6,583,000	(8,551,000)	8,551,000
5	Re-wiring	500,000	500,000	0	0
6	Passenger Lifts, Supported Housing Scheme	100,000	10,000	(90,000)	0
7	Alarms	692,000	135,000	(557,000)	500,000
8	Fire Protection	2,000,000	300,000	(1,700,000)	600,000
9	Compliance Works	500,000	30,000	(470,000)	0
10	Tunstall	298,000	298,000	0	0
11	Physical Disabled Adaptations	200,000	400,000	200,000	0
12	Re-roofing	1,250,000	990,000	(260,000)	0
13	Fencing	100,000	200,000	100,000	0
14	Kitchen Refurbishments	1,600,000	2,750,000	1,150,000	0
15	Bathrooms Refurbishments	1,100,000	1,700,000	600,000	0
16	External Wall Finishes	250,000	250,000	0	0
17	Doors & Windows	1,500,000	1,500,000	0	0
18	Communal Rooms	213,000	120,000	(93,000)	0
19	Door Entry System	80,000	80,000	0	0
20	Exterior Refurbishment	400,000	270,000	(130,000)	0
21	Major Void Works	431,000	500,000	69,000	0
22	Structural Refurbishment	200,000	200,000	0	0
	REFURBISHMENT AND IMPROVEMENT	11,414,000	10,233,000	(1,181,000)	1,100,000
	Grand Total	32,353,700	21,937,950	(10,415,750)	10,416,000

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Appendix B – Housing Revenue Account Finance Risk Register

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk Score	Mitigating Action
1. Unbalanced HRA Business Plan	3	4	14 High	Continue to undertake financial modelling of the HRA Business Plan to ensure ongoing affordability and financial sustainability. The balance between increased revenue spend dealing with repairs and maintenance, regulatory compliance and ensuing decent homes against the delivery of with capital programme will be key. Review of the Government proposals around rent convergence has been concluded and Council will have the opportunity to consider this during 2026/27. The Councils treasury advisors have been commissioned to review the current debt structure to assess if there could be any financial benefit to refinancing the existing HRA debt.
2. Insufficient levels of reserves	3	4	14 High	Over the next 3-year period as a consequence of future spending levels there is a significant reduction in reserve balances due to the financing of the capital program which is unsustainable. Therefore, a fundamental review using stock condition data is necessary to plan in the medium-term stock investment levels.
3. Increased maintenance costs of HRA Stock – both revenue and capital	4	3	14 High	During the current year additional budget has been put allocated to deal with repair and maintenance costs. As quarter 3 budget monitoring shows this budget continues to be under pressure. Effective budget monitoring is in place to analyse financial spend to identify any pressures at an early stage and ensure corrective action is undertaken where significant overspends could occur.
4. Increase in bad debts as a result of economic circumstances	3	2	8 High	Rent collection is the key income source for the HRA. The council has in place pro-active debt management procedures in place. Collection of former tenant arrears continues to be a challenge and alternative collection methods including outsourcing is being explored.
5. Fuel price volatility	1	3	6 Medium	Weekly monitoring of fuel charge and proactive interventions to ensure optimisation of fuel consumption.
6. Inflation increases beyond budgeted levels	2	2	5 Medium	Budget assumptions kept up to date with most recent projections and monthly sensitivity analysis is produced to monitor the impact of inflationary increases.

Impact	Critical None or very low tolerance to the risk	4	10 Medium	13 High	15 Very High	16 Very High
	Major Some tolerance to the risk	3	6 Medium	9 High	12 High	14 Very High
	Moderate Risk can be tolerated in most cases	2	3 Low	5 Medium	8 High	11 High
	Minor Risk can be tolerated	1	1 Low	2 Low	4 Medium	7 Medium
			1	2	3	4
		Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Certain	
		Low but not impossible <20%	Fairly likely to occur 21% - 50%	More likely to occur than not 51% - 80%	Expected to occur in most circumstances >80%	
		Likelihood				



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

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

General Fund Finance Update Report: Quarter 3 (April to December) 2025

Report Author

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

 Richard.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

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

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to review and note the forecast 2025/26 outturn position for the General Fund Revenue and Capital budgets as at the end of December 2025.

Decision Information

Is this a key decision?	No
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

1. Implications

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

Finance

1.1 The financial implications are included throughout the report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 As part of good governance, it is important members are kept updated in respect of the financial position of Council expenditure during the year.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Risk and Mitigation

1.3 A Risk Register is at Appendix B and shows that all known current financial risks are recognised and associated mitigating actions are in place.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance and Risk Officer

2 Background to the Report

2.1 During the financial year, Cabinet is provided with regular finance reports. These monitor and forecast (expenditure and income compared with the budgets approved by Council and provide explanations for any significant variances.

3 Revenue Budget 2025/26 – General fund

3.1 The net cost of service budget set by Council on 27 February 2025 was £26.968m (excluding HRA recharge). In order to show variances against all controllable budgets, investment income received from treasury management activity has also been included in the report.

3.2 Budgets have been updated to reflect approved budget carry forwards and in-year virements; these increase the controllable budget to £28.631m.

3.3 Table 1 shows the forecast outturn position as at 31 December 2025 and Table 2 shows the significant forecast variances.

Table 1 – General Fund Revenue Forecast Outturn Position

Directorate	Current Budget 2025/26 £'000	Forecast Outturn 2025/26 £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
Corporate Governance & Public Protection	4,443	4,599	156	3.5%
Finance Property & Waste Services	13,142	13,243	101	0.8%
Growth & Culture	9,794	9,343	(451)	(4.6%)
Housing & Projects	2,033	1,988	(45)	(2.2%)
Net Cost of Service	29,412	29,173	(239)	(0.8%)
Investment Income	(781)	(903)	(122)	(15.6%)
(Surplus) / Deficit	28,631	28,270	(361)	(1.3%)

Table 2 – General Fund Revenue – Significant Variances

CROSS DIRECTORATE	£'000
<p>Fuel</p> <p>A reduction in inflationary price increases has resulted in a forecast underspend of (£266k). The underspend has increased from Q2 as the anticipated increases haven't been as high. The current projection models a 0.3% increase per week for the remainder of 2025/26. The budget was set using a price of 141p but actual prices have been as much as 28% below this remaining relatively stable with previously predicted increases not arising.</p>	(266)
<p>Utilities</p> <p>The council continues to financially benefit from energy prices secured via the ESPO utility procurement framework which are currently being purchased at a unit rate lower than the budgeted rate.</p>	(250)
<p>Salaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pay award in line with the national award for 2025/26 of 3.2% was endorsed by the Employment Committee and Council. This award is in excess of the 2% budgeted and the resulting overspend of up to £244k can be funded from the Local Priorities Reserve. However, as the General Fund is currently showing an overall underspend, it may not be necessary to utilise the Reserve. Salary budgets are prepared with a 3% vacancy factor (£572k) to reflect staff turnover. Including within the projected overspend are additional resource costs with the finance service relating to project support and backfill arrangement to support the migration to the new finance system. There has also been a number of vacancies in year requiring agency cover whilst recruitment took place. Within the corporate governance directorate additional costs have been incurred to provide temporary monitoring officer cover during the year but these have been met by savings from the vacant 	317

director role and the previous Director of Growth post which was removed from the establishment.	
Investment Income Higher average interest has been achieved on investments which are currently averaging 4.27% return compared to 3.25% budget as well as higher than anticipated investment balances. This is marginally reduced from Q2 as a result of reduced level of investment balances.	(122)

FINANCE, PROPERTY & WASTE SERVICES	£'000
Car Park Income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recent extension to the Cattlemarket Car Park in Stamford has increased capacity by 146 spaces (a 53 % increase). Based on projected growth in ticket sales, this is expected to generate an additional £80k income in-year. This is a pro rata figure based on charges coming into effect from 29th August 2025. 	(80)
Green Waste Income Additional income of £130k has been received due to higher than budgeted take-up of the scheme. Over 31,000 households joined the green waste service for 2025/26.	(130)
Council Tax Administration Subsidy Grant The Local Council Tax Support Administration Subsidy Grant is no longer received separately as part of the net cost of service. This has now been rolled into Revenue Support Grant.	195
IT Licences There have been some budgetary pressures incurred during 2025/26 as a result of: higher than anticipated increases in annual licences; overlap in software support for the finance system; alongside an additional system implementation for Fix My Street at a cost of £10k.	91
Bulky Waste Income The additional vehicle intended to increase the bulky waste service capacity has not yet been delivered and a vehicle is currently being hired as a temporary solution. The income reduction is offset by vacancy savings as the required driver and loader are not yet recruited.	78
Trade Waste Income Whilst retention rates are at 95% there has been some turnover in the customer base including two major customers with contracts worth a total of £20k cancelling the service during the current financial year. Marketing is underway to secure alternative contracts.	30

GROWTH AND CULTURE	£'000
<p>Planning Fee Income Planning Fee Income has risen above estimated levels during Quarters 1 to 3. This is partially due to the Council receiving an application for a solar farm with combined application fees of £162k. In addition, the Government increased planning application fees in April 2025 for some applications, e.g. the fee for householder applications has doubled. This increase was not known at budget setting. An increase in the number of applications received in the Quarter has also contributed to the additional income.</p>	(250)
<p>LeisureSK (LSK) Ltd Under the new agency model LSK Ltd is projecting a surplus during the current financial year which will be passed back to the Council (under the operating model) and will be used to contribute towards the £150k cashflow support provided at the beginning of the financial year.</p>	(127)

4 Capital Budget 2025/26 – General Fund

- 4.1 The budget set by Council on 27 February 2025 was £15.179m. Budgets have been amended in line with the approved budget carry forwards and further budget approvals, increasing the 2025/26 budget to £18.444m.
- 4.2 Table 3 shows the forecast outturn position as at 31 December 2025 and Table 4 shows the significant forecast variances with further detail provided in Appendix A.

Table 3 – General Fund Capital Forecast Outturn Position

Directorate	Current Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
Corporate Governance & Public Protection	1,370	1,380	10	0.73
Finance, Property and Waste Services	12,218	10,980	(1,238)	(10.13)
Growth and Culture	2,032	1,939	(93)	(4.58)
Housing and Property	2,824	2,884	60	2.12
Total	18,444	17,183	(1,261)	(6.84)

Table 4 – General Fund – Significant Variances

Explanation of Significant Variance	£'000
Street Scene Vehicle Procurement Following approval of the contract in October 2025 to procure 54 vehicles, the relevant orders have been raised but due to the large number of vehicles, delivery is now expected in April 2026. Therefore, a budget carry forward request has been made.	(1,326)
Vehicle Replacement Programme Overspend anticipated due to savings of £45k available on early purchase of freighter as opposed to delaying into 2026/27.	200
Depot The depot is now live and operational. Project closure reports are being prepared with an overall saving across the whole project of £126k.	(99)
Financial System Upgrade There were some additional project support costs required to ensure the finance system Go Live date was achieved in August 2025. This project is now completed and no further spend is required.	54
Decarbonisation Scheme Project commenced on site in July 2025 and due to complete by March 2026. Removal of Combined Heat and Power units and provision of temporary generators together with increased contract cost of £24k has resulted in an overspend of £60k. This is to be financed from Property Maintenance Reserve.	60
Council Chamber Audio Equipment This project has been carried forward into the next financial year with the overall budget increasing by £20k to £88k and included in the 2026/27 capital programme.	(68)

4.3 As part of the 2026/27 Budget report being presented to Council on 26 February 2026 a total of **£1.389m** is being requested as Carry Forwards from the current year's programme into 2026/27:

- **£1.326m** Street Scene Vehicle Procurement
- **£0.040m** Cycle Shelter
- **£0.023m** Coronation Orchards

5 Performance Update - Council Tax and Business Rates

5.1 Table 5 details the current collection rates against target for 2025/26.

Table 5 – Collection Rates

Target Rates	Council Tax	Business Rates
Target annual collection rate	98.33%	98.68%
Target collection rate to end of December 2025	82.61%	81.32%
Actual collection rate to end of December 2025	82.49%	80.81%
Variance compared to Target	(0.12%)	(0.51%)

5.2 Council Tax:

- Collection of **£91.430m** as of 31 December 2025 against an annual debt of **£110.838m**. As shown in the table above, the collection rate is below target (2024/25 collection) by **0.12%** or **£133,006** (SKDC share being **£11,971**). However, this is within 2025/26 tolerance target of +/- 1%.
- All 7 Districts in Lincolnshire share their collection rates each month. 6 of the Districts are also below their collection targets of which we are the closest to meeting the target.
- South Kesteven also have the highest net collectable debt in the county (**£110.838m**). The next highest debt is **£109.446m**.

5.3 Business Rates:

- Collection of **£37.458m** as of 31 December 2025 against an annual debt of **£46.352m**. As shown in the table above, the collection rate was **0.51%** or **£236,396** below target (2024/25 collection). However, this is within 2025/26 tolerance target of +/- 1%.
- All 7 District Councils in Lincolnshire share their collection rates each month. Only 2 Districts are above their collection target.
- South Kesteven has the second highest net collectable debt in the county (£46.352m), The highest Council's debt is £47.265m.

6 Other Options Considered

6.1 Cabinet should have oversight of Council budgets, therefore, the option of not producing a monitoring report was discounted.

7 Reasons for the Recommendations

- 7.1 Members should be kept updated on the financial position of the Authority, because effective budget management is critical to ensuring financial resources are targeted towards the Council's priorities. Monitoring enables early identification of variations against the plan and timely corrective action.

8 Consultation

- 8.1 Budget Monitoring reports are presented throughout the Financial Year to the Cabinet and Finance, Economic Overview Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) to keep Members up to date regarding the projected financial outturn position. This report was presented to FEOSC at their meeting on 24 February 2026.

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A – 2025/26 General Fund Capital Monitoring
- 9.2 Appendix B – 2025/26 Finance Risk Register

	Scheme Description	Latest Budget Annual £	Forecast Outturn £	Forecast Variance £	Carry Forward Request £	Comments
1	Disabled Facilities Grant	1,219,000	1,219,000	0		Works are progressing as expected. To date 131 applications have been approved and 111 have been completed. There is a potential for some works to slip into 2026/27 depending timings of works which may result in a carry forward being requested as part of the outturn review.
2	CCTV	151,000	161,000	10,000		Works continue to progress, an expected overspend of £10k on the camera installations and fibre circuits which are the projects carried over from 2024/25. The new £56k budget relates to University Square and works are progressing.
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & PUBLIC PROTECTION		1,370,000	1,380,000	10,000	0	
3	Street Scene Vehicle Procurement	1,326,000	0	(1,326,000)	1,326,000	Procurement complete and final orders being confirmed. Due to the large number of vehicles being purchased delivery is now expected in April 2026. Therefore a budget carry forward request has been made.
4	Wheelie Bin Replacements	145,000	145,000	0		Bins are ordered when required, it is anticipated that all the budget will be utilised.
5	Food Waste	1,543,000	1,543,000	0		All vehicles and caddies required for the roll out of the new service have been delivered.
6	Bulky Waste Collection Vehicle	48,000	48,066	66		Procurement complete.
7	Waste Service In-Cab System	43,000	43,000	0		New In-cab system procured and initiation started. Final integration works to be completed by the end of the financial year.
8	Vehicle Replacement Programme	1,139,000	1,339,000	200,000		Overspend anticipated due to the earlier purchase of a freighter in order to achieve savings of £45K. Budget for 2026/27 has been adjusted accordingly. Procurements are staggered to ensure maintenance schedules are staggered.
9	Cattle Market Stamford	300,000	273,181	(26,819)		Works to main contract are now complete with surfacing works finished and car park live. Retention £26K is being held on the contract for 12 months. Chargers have also now been activated. Additional works came in under budget.
10	Mechanical & Electrical Replacement	220,000	220,000	0		All works are due to be completed by the end of the financial year
11	Depot	6,188,000	6,089,000	(99,000)		Depot is now live and operational (the budget shown is the carry forward from 2024/25). Project closure reports are being prepared with an overall saving across the whole project of £126k
12	Guildhall Arts Centre Roof	286,000	285,929	(71)		Roofing works and re-activation of the clock tower bell chime have now completed. Turret has been removed from site and refurbishment works ongoing with the view to re-instate the turret and undertake stonework repairs by the end of the financial year.
13	Cycle Shelter & Changing	40,000	0	(40,000)	40,000	Project under review and proposed for carry forward into 2026/27
14	Financial System Upgrade	200,000	254,217	54,217		New Unit 4 system went Live in August 2025. Overspend relates to additional consultancy support required from Unit 4 for Go Live preparation.
15	Deepings Community Centre Roof	150,000	150,000	0		Roofing works now completed. The balance of the works was funded from UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
16	Wharf Road Grantham Car Park	350,000	350,000	0		Main works have now completed on site. Some outstanding snagging works being undertaken prior to signoff. Retention to be held on this project.
17	Leisure SK Equipment Loan	240,000	240,000	0		Gym refurbishment project completed
FINANCE, PROPERTY & WASTE SERVICES		12,218,000	10,980,393	(1,237,607)	1,366,000	

	Scheme Description	Latest Budget Annual £	Forecast Outturn £	Forecast Variance £	Carry Forward Request £	Comments
18	Play Parks	231,100	229,603	(1,497)		A number of play parks across the district have been improved during the year including larger schemes hat Bourne Wellhead and Harrowby Lane (funded through s106).
19	Skate Park, Wyndham Park	125,000	125,000	0		Project complete - Skate Park formally opened in February 2026
20	Multi Use Games Area - Dysart Park	35,500	35,411	(89)		MUGA court funded by UKSPF and SEA reserve, due to be completed by end of financial year
21	Coronation Living Heritage Fund Orchards	33,000	10,000	(23,000)	23,000	Only £10k of Grant claims expected to paid out in the current financial year with the remainder being carried forward into 2026/27
22	Future High Street Fund	1,539,000	1,539,000	0		On track to fully spend by March 2026. Contracts are now all in place with works to be completed by the end of the financial year.
23	Council Chamber Audio Equipment	68,000	0	(68,000)		This project has been put on hold pending the outcome of LGR decision. Budget has been increased to £88k and included in the 2026/27 capital programme.
GROWTH & CULTURE		2,031,600	1,939,014	(92,586)	23,000	
24	Decarbonisation Scheme	2,824,000	2,884,000	60,000		Project commenced on site in July 2025 and due to complete by March 2026. Removal of Combined Heat and Pump units and provision of temporary generators together with increased contract cost of £24K has resulted in an overspend of £60K which will be funded from reserves.
HOUSING & PROJECTS		2,824,000	2,884,000	60,000	0	
Grand Total		18,443,600	17,183,407	(1,260,193)	1,389,000	

Appendix B – General Fund Finance Risk Register

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk Score	Mitigating Action
1. Reduced funding levels from 2026/27 and beyond	4	3	14 Very High	The Government has recently concluded their funding review consultation and confirmed as part of the provisional budget announcements a multi-year settlement effective from 2026/27. The final settlement had a significant change with the announcement of reduced funding. Whilst a one-off off grant has been provided to mitigate the loss in 2026/27, there is no guarantee of additional funding in future years. Overall funding amounts will reduce over the three-year period and despite the transitional funding arrangements deficits are forecast from 2027/28. The Council will need to manage the funding reductions over the settlement period to ensure a balanced budget is achieved from 2027/28 onwards.
2. Capital programmes requiring borrowing in the medium term	3	3	12 High	Continue to undertake financial modelling to identify consequences of undertaking borrowing and align this with savings that will need to be approved before borrowing is undertaken in order to ensure ongoing affordability and financial sustainability. The capital programme can currently be financed without borrowing although this is kept under review.
3. Increase in bad debts as a result of economic circumstances	3	2	8 High	The Council has pro-active debt management procedures in place. Additional resources are being included within the 2026/27 budget proposals to support effective debt recovery.
4. Increased maintenance costs of council assets	3	2	8 High	The budget proposals for 2026/27 include further funding to help address backlog asset maintenance issues and capacity is under review to support the delivery of several large scale General Fund property projects. The medium-term outlook is a continuation of high levels of maintenance that will require financing.
5. Inflation increases beyond budgeted levels	2	2	5 Medium	Budget assumptions kept up to date with most recent projections and monthly sensitivity analysis is produced to monitor the impact of inflationary increases.
6. Fee Income volatility	2	2	5 Medium	Early monitoring of deviations and regular reporting to both budget holders and members.
7. Fuel price volatility	1	3	6 Medium	Weekly monitoring of fuel charge and proactive interventions to ensure optimisation of fuel consumption.

Impact	Critical None or very low tolerance to the risk	4	10 Medium	13 High	15 Very High	16 Very High
	Major Some tolerance to the risk	3	6 Medium	9 High	12 High	14 Very High
	Moderate Risk can be tolerated in most cases	2	3 Low	5 Medium	8 High	11 High
	Minor Risk can be tolerated	1	1 Low	2 Low	4 Medium	7 Medium
			1	2	3	4
		Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Certain	
		Low but not impossible <20%	Fairly likely to occur 21% - 50%	More likely to occur than not 51% - 80%	Expected to occur in most circumstances >80%	
		Likelihood				



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

Report of Councillor Paul Stokes
Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet
Member for Leisure and Culture

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026 - 2031

Report Author

Bethany Goodman, Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead

✉ bethany.goodman@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To seek approval to adopt the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026 - 2031.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Approve and adopt the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026 – 2031**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting Communities
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 Any actions required to deliver the strategy will be managed through existing budgets where possible. If additional funding is required, this will be requested and approved through the appropriate route.
- 1.2 Alongside the existing budgets in place the Council has approved as part of the 2026/27 budget process a further £500k to investment in leisure centres which will support the delivery of the action plan.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 There are no governance implications associated with this report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan (2024-27) identifies Connecting Communities as a key priority. To underpin this priority, the Council is currently delivering the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2021/26 which was adopted in 2021 and later refreshed in 2024. Progress has been made over the last five years by the Council's Leisure Team in implementing the actions identified in the current Strategy, targeting key areas, and working with partners to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to live healthy, active lifestyles.
- 2.2. Despite the current Strategy being refreshed in 2024 to ensure that it continued to align with updates made to national strategies by Central Government, it is due to expire in 2026 and therefore requires a full review.
- 2.3. As part of this review several supporting documents at a local, national and international level have been reviewed and where relevant, actions have been incorporated in the draft South Kesteven Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026 – 2031 which is attached at **Appendix One**. A list of the documents which have been considered can be found in **Background Papers**.

- 2.4. The refreshed Strategy continues to align to the Council's Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 and will enhance the strength, wellbeing, security and capacity of all our communities to enable a thriving and cohesive society that all our residents are proud to belong to.
- 2.5. The Strategy is structured around four key pillars which are identified below but also identifies key priorities for the Council. An action plan has been developed to accompany the Strategy which will help to shape the direction of the work Officers undertake over the next five years. The four pillars are:
- Active Society
 - Active Place
 - Active People
 - Active System
- 2.6 The Strategy was considered by the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 03 February 2026. Feedback received has been considered and included in the draft Strategy accompanying this report. **Table One** details the changes that have been made to the Strategy since its review by the Scrutiny Committee:

Table One: Changes made to the Strategy following review by Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
	Source of Changes	Changes Made
1	Culture and Leisure OSC Feedback	<u>Page 10: Active Place, Action</u> Feedback: The below action was listed as a Key Performance Indicator but is not a quantitative indicator so is now listed as an 'Action'. <i>Addition of the Action 'Annual promotion and engagement with Sport and Physical Activity events such as Health and Wellness Days, Great Big Green Week, National Fitness Day.'</i>
2	Culture and Leisure OSC Feedback	<u>Page 13: Reporting</u> Feedback: This section was previously called 'Key Performance Indicators' but many of the KPI's were achieved in partnership with providers and therefore not the sole responsibility of South Kesteven District Council. <i>Changes made from 'Key Performance Indicators' to 'Reporting'.</i>
3	Culture and Leisure OSC Feedback	<u>Page 13: Reporting</u> Feedback: All Key Performance Indicators should be reviewed to ensure they will remain relevant in years to come. <i>Changes included removing all Key Performance Indicators and insertion of data sources that can be</i>

		<i>measured from Fingertips for South Kesteven residents.</i>
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3. Key Considerations

3.1. The refresh of the Council’s Sport and Physical Activity Strategy has been essential to ensure that the goals and objectives remain relevant and aligned, not only to the national context around Sport and Physical Activity, but also meet the needs of our community in South Kesteven. The refreshed Strategy demonstrates the Council’s commitment to improving public health, reducing inequalities in participation, and ensuring the mission remains ‘to provide opportunities for people to be more active, more often’.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The Strategy plays a pivotal role in working towards the ambitions set out in the Council’s Corporate Plan (2024-27). Therefore, the option to ‘do nothing’ has been discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 The current Strategy has been in place since 2021 and is due to expire in 2026.

5.2 The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will provide a basis for the Council to deliver on its ambition to increase health and wellbeing outcomes across South Kesteven.

6. Consultation

6.1 The Strategy has been considered by the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 03 February 2026. Feedback given has been considered and included in the draft Strategy.

7 Background Papers

- 7.1 [South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan - 2024 to 2027](#)
- 7.2 [Sport England - Uniting the Movement 2021 - 2031](#)
- 7.3 [Active Lives data](#)
- 7.4 [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)
- 7.5 [Local authority health profile - Fingertips](#)

- 7.6 [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) - Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub](#)
- 7.7 [Get Active: A Strategy for the future of sport and physical activity](#)
- 7.8 [NHS England - Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England](#)
- 7.9 [Millions more moving - The Richmond Group of Charities](#)
- 7.10 [Horizon Scanning: Future Trends in Sport and Physical Activity - May 2025](#)
- 7.11 [NHS England - Harnessing the benefits of physical activity](#)
- 7.12 [DCMS Youth Strategy](#)
- 7.13 [Let's Move Lincolnshire Strategy - Active Lincolnshire](#)

8 Appendices

- 8.1 **Appendix One** – Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026 – 2031

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Sport & Physical Activity Strategy

2026-2031



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COUNCIL



Contents

Our Vision for South Kesteven	3
The Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity	4
Guidance, Evidence and Partnership Working	6
District Health Profile and Physical Activity Levels	7
Delivering a Healthier South Kesteven: Action Plan	9
Reporting	13
Local Facilities and Resources	14
Links to Key Documents - References	15
Contact Details	16

Our vision for South Kesteven

Vision:

Inspiring everyone to live a more active life

Mission:

Providing opportunities for people to be more active, more often



Our Corporate Plan clearly sets out South Kesteven District Council's ambition to be a 'thriving district to live in, work, and visit'.

Central to this is our responsibility to enhance the strength, wellbeing, security and capacity of our communities for a thriving and cohesive society that all our residents are proud to belong to.

We want to tackle the inequalities in participation in sport and physical activity, remove barriers and create inclusive opportunities for all. We want sport and physical activity to be integrated into our lifestyles and to ensure opportunities are available for all ages and abilities. By tackling the inequalities and removing barriers seen in sport and physical activity and health, this will allow the residents of South Kesteven to 'be more active, more often'.

As a council, we have demonstrated our commitment to ensuring there are opportunities for people to be active in South Kesteven and we will continue to work with other partners and stakeholders at a district, county and national level to reduce inactivity.

We have also shown our commitment to ensuring there are opportunities for people to be active in South Kesteven, including the establishment of LeisureSK Ltd who took over the management of the council's leisure centres in January 2021. We will work together to provide high quality facilities, that are customer focused and meet the needs of residents in South Kesteven. We also have a shared ambition to provide outreach activities in our communities, providing opportunities for all to be active across the whole district.

This strategy is a vision for the next five years and sets out the mission to provide opportunities that our residents need now and, in the future, to support healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities.



Cllr Ashley Baxter

Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development
South Kesteven District Council



Cllr Paul Stokes

Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

The Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity

There is a need for sport, physical activity and wellbeing opportunities which play a major role in shaping the health of the nation. Being active means different things to different people and it's about finding what works for the individual.

Active people live healthier, longer and happier lives, with physical activity reducing the risk of diseases,

helping to support individuals to maintain a healthier weight. Active lifestyles prevent 900,000 cases of diabetes, 93,000 cases of dementia delivering a combined saving of £7.1 billion to the UK economy.

There is strong evidence recognising the extensive health benefits for people of all ages, including:

Children	Adults	Older Adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bone health Cognitive function Cardiovascular fitness Muscle fitness Weight status Depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-cause mortality Stroke and heart disease Hypertension Type 2 diabetes 8 cancers Depression Cognitive function Dementia Quality of life Sleep Anxiety/depression Weight status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls Frailty Physical Function 



Dementia
by up to
30%

Cardiovascular Disease by up to
35%




Colon Cancer by
30%



Depression
by up to
30%

Regular physical activity reduces your risk of:

Hip fractures by up to
68%



Breast Cancer by **20%**



Type 2 diabetes by up to
40%



All-cause mortality by **30%**



Further benefits include improved sleep, helping to manage a healthy weight, building muscle strength and improving overall cardiovascular health.

Sport and Physical Activity also deliver a further two direct benefits through social value. The primary value is the direct benefit and value to individuals with improved wellbeing, measured at £96.7 billion.

The secondary value is the wider value to society, including the state and is measured at £10.5 billion – Sport England.



“Every £1 spent on Sport and Physical Activity generates almost £4 in return across health and wellbeing, strengthening communities and the national economy”

SPORT ENGLAND



Guidance, Evidence and Partnership Working

The South Kesteven Sport and Physical Activity Strategy considers guidance from a wide range of strategies, both locally and nationally, as well as the World Health Organization's guidelines.

The Council alone cannot achieve its corporate ambition of **Connecting Communities**, so therefore we recognise that a 'Whole System Change' approach is required.

A wide collaboration with several partners from Active Lincolnshire, LeisureSK Ltd, Health and Social Care, the Voluntary Sector, Lincolnshire County Council and many more, allows us to co-create and deliver initiatives that support the outcomes of this strategy.

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines

Below you can find the recommended guidelines for four age groups based on the UK Chief Medical Officer's Guidelines. More information can be found at www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-health-benefits

Adults (19 TO 64 YEARS)

- Do strengthening activities that work all the major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms) on at least 2 days a week
- Do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity a week

Older Adults (65+ YEARS)

- Be physically active every day, even if it's just light activity
- Do activities that improve strength, balance and flexibility on at least 2 days per week
- Do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity if you are already active, or a combination of both

Children and young people (5 TO 18 YEARS)

- Aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous intensity physical activity a day across the week
- Take part in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscles and bones

Disabled adults

- Aim for at least 150 minutes each week of moderate intensity activity
- Do strength and balance activities on at least two days per week

District Health Profile and Physical Activity Levels

This section provides an overview of population health profiles and physical activity (PA) levels to inform strategic priorities and targeted interventions within the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. Understanding who is least active, the health conditions which are most prevalent, and the barriers faced, enables a place-based, preventative, and inclusive approach.

South Kesteven covers a vast area of 365sq miles and is made up of four market towns and many rural areas. The district has a wealth of community assets, leisure facilities, parks and open spaces that provide opportunities to be active in our communities. We appreciate that not everyone will be able to travel to their local leisure facility which therefore requires more opportunities, in more areas.

With a current population of 147,074 and a forecast to grow to 159,795 within twenty years, it is essential that there are spaces and places to be active within our communities. South Kesteven is an ageing district and projects that by 2046, 30% of the district will be aged 65 or over.

- Life expectancy for both men and women: 79.94 years - males, 83.71 years - females
- Percentage of adults who are physically active: 22.2%
- Percentage of children who are physically active: 50.5% (2022/2023 data)
- Percentage of adults who are considered overweight or obese: 59.63% (2022/2023 data)
- Percentage of children who are considered overweight or obese:
 - Reception – 20.62% (2022/2023)
 - Year 6 - 35.92% (2022/2023)

■ Percentage of diabetes prevalence (17 years+):

- 7.40% (Stamford)
- 10.11% (Bourne/Deepings).
- 8.20% (Grantham)
- 7.89% (UK average)

■ Percentage of population that is made up of older adults (65+): 23.82%

■ Percentage of adults who have reported a limited long term illness or disability: 17.87% (Census 2021)

■ People who suffer with mental health issues in any given year: 1 in 4 people

In the UK:

■ Physical inactivity is estimated to contribute to almost 1 in 10 premature deaths from coronary heart disease (CHD) and 1 in 6 deaths in the UK from any cause.

■ Physical inactivity is increasingly recognised as a global health priority that should be the concern of all healthcare systems (WHO, 2024) people with a long-term health condition or disability are twice as likely to be inactive as those without.

■ Physical activity is essential for people to live better with long-term conditions.

■ The greatest health and economic gains can be made by supporting those who are physically inactive to participate in some physical activity. physical activity helps to delay the onset and progression of diseases for as long as possible, it also helps people to recover from surgery more quickly and it is beneficial for mental health.

These health challenges place increasing demand on healthcare services and highlight the need for preventative, physical activity led solutions.

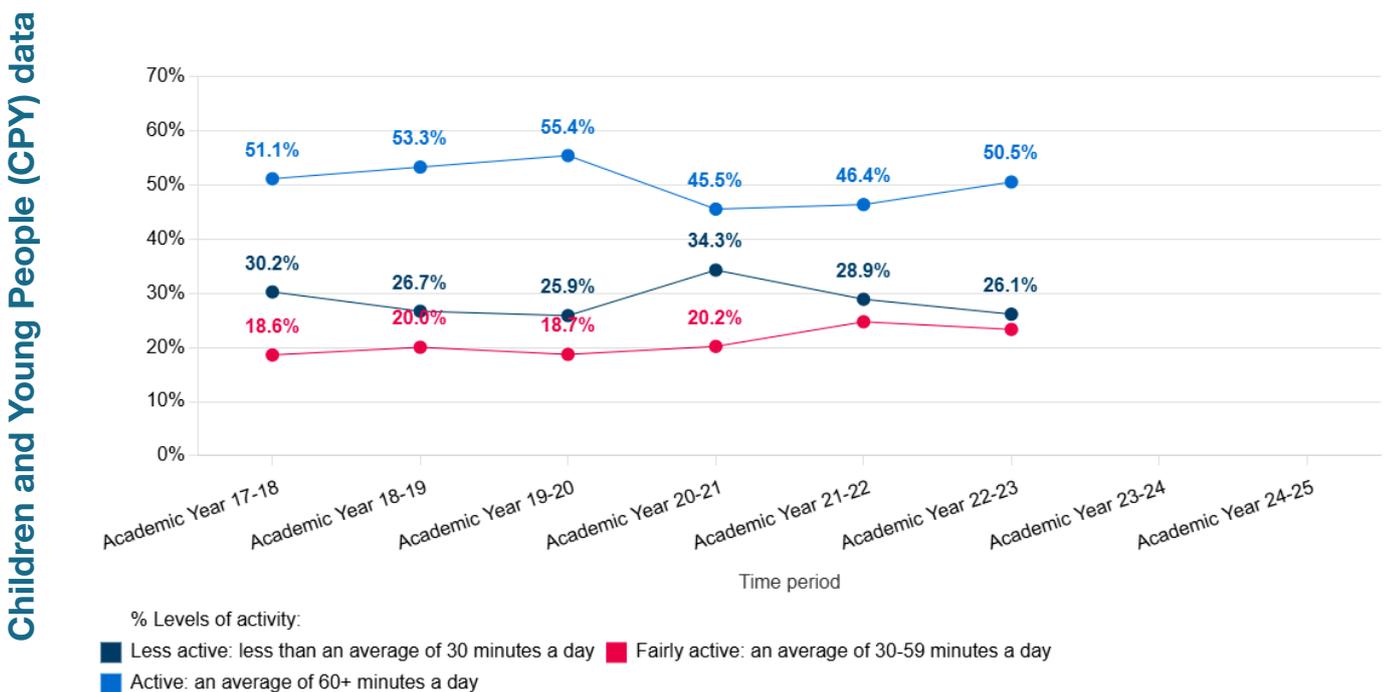
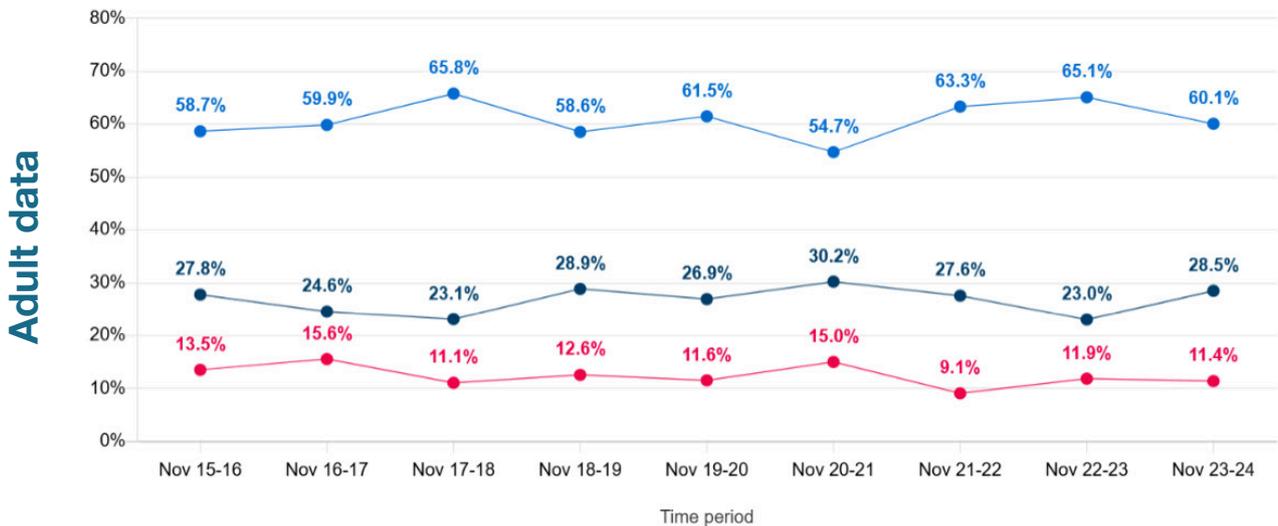
Physical Activity Levels

The below data set is sourced from The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, and includes gardening activity, in accordance with CMO recommendations. This data is based on those aged 19 and over.

- Percentage of physically active children and young people – 50.5% in 2022/2023
- Percentage of physically active adults – 68.2%
- Percentage of physically inactive adults – 22.2%

Sport England publishes a similar Physical Activity indicator using Active Lives Adult Survey data, however, excludes gardening activity. This data classifies adults as 16 and over. This data can be found in the graphs below.

To support local monitoring of performance against the CMO guidance for the appropriate ages, it is necessary to provide estimates with a different definition to those figures produced by Sport England.



Please note, some data is unavailable for children and young people due to a small sample size.

Delivering a Healthier South Kesteven: Action Plan

South Kesteven’s ambition is to deliver a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy that brings partners together with shared objectives, to grow and promote opportunities for sport and physical activity, helping to build a healthier district.

The four pillars, priority outcomes and actions can be found below to underpin the initiatives that we aspire to deliver, that support the outcomes of this strategy.

Pillar	Priority outcomes	Action	Why is this important
<p>Active Society</p> <p>Creating a social movement to reduce inactivity, drive participation and understand the benefits of physical activity for all ages and abilities</p>	<p>Improve the health of residents and visitors by encouraging and providing opportunities to be active following the UK Chief Medical Officer’s physical activity guidelines, as found in section 3</p> <p>Improve the understanding of the benefits of physical activity and deliver a positive customer experience for everyone who uses the Council’s leisure facilities and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure participation is affordable and accessible to the whole community ■ Encourage physical activity as a holistic approach to wellbeing, including a focus on mental health ■ Provide enhanced information around physical activity, diet and lifestyle as part of our core services using communications and social media channels ■ Showcase ways of integrating physical activity and movement into the lifestyles of residents and part of everyday life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Obesity and illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease are prevalent in our society but often preventable which incurs a significant cost to the NHS ■ Regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle is proven to reduce the risk of certain illnesses ■ Educating people on the benefits of physical activity is more likely to result in behaviour change ■ Delivering a positive customer experience will result in repeat visits and increased participation

237

Active Place

Creating safe, accessible environments for people, of all ages, to take part in regular physical activity

Deliver and facilitate high quality leisure facilities and community spaces to deliver positive and affordable opportunities for people to improve their health

Recognise that our leisure services serve as a community health hub and are a core part of Neighbourhood Health

Physical activity refers to all movement including during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person's work or domestic activities

- Invest in the Council's leisure facilities to ensure that they are high quality and meet the needs of customers

- Use local leisure in a holistic and innovative manner

- Lead with a place-based approach using local data

- Continue to invest in the Council's leisure facilities to contribute towards the Council's carbon reduction goals

- Explore opportunities to use parks and open spaces within the district to encourage the use for physical activity, informal play and structured sport

- Support the active travel agenda working with partners to encourage walking, wheeling or cycling

- Invest in the Council's play areas, parks and open spaces to provide high quality facilities meeting the needs of our residents

- Annual promotion and engagement with Sport and Physical Activity events such as Health & Wellness Days, Great Big Green Week, National Fitness Day

- Providing safe places for people to be active encourages participation

- Positive and affordable opportunities ensure our services are available to all and encourage return

- Active travel offers extensive personal, environmental, community and economic benefits to the district

- Green spaces provide opportunities to exercise and spending time in nature can improve our quality of life mentally, physically and socially

Active People

Creating opportunities across all settings to help all people and communities to take part in regular physical activity

Tackle inactivity in priority groups and areas whilst increasing the numbers of people taking part in physical activity across the district, including:

- Rural and deprived areas
- Young people
- Older adults
- Women and girls
- Men's health
- People with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions

Understand the types of activities that residents would like to see more of in their communities

■ Support and offer a broad range of sport and physical activity opportunities that reflect the interests and needs of the community and visitors to the district

■ Work with the Council's leisure provider and partners to run health intervention programmes that result in improving health and wellbeing residents

■ Deliver outreach activities in communities for those in rural areas, with disabilities and/or living with long term health conditions

■ Consult with residents about the types of activities they would like to see in their communities for all ages, abilities and families

■ Work with partners to develop maps that can be used to promote and enable physical activity

■ Focus on positive experiences as the foundations for a long and healthy life

■ South Kesteven has many rural communities that may not have access to traditional leisure facilities

■ South Kesteven is an ageing population and physical activity is increasingly recognised as a cost-effective preventative approach to reducing chronic conditions

■ The rate of obesity and diabetes is increasing in young people.

■ Physical activity has a major role to play in the prevention, management, treatment and rehabilitation of many long-term conditions.

■ Participation in physical activity is lower for people with a disability and/or a long-term health condition

■ The Council needs to understand the needs and demands of residents and users of leisure facilities

Active System

Coordinated leadership, partnerships and workforce capability to reduce sedentary behaviour

Foster strong, meaningful cross-sector partnerships to expand activity opportunities, strengthen collaborative working, and enhance community cohesion

Embed movement into healthcare and signpost to available NHS and partner tools

- Recognise that physical activity is much more than participation in sport and includes activities such as walking, gardening and dancing

- Facilitate partnerships and collaboration between authorities, organisations, communities and groups to empower those who can make change

- Work with partners from all sectors to tackle health and other inequalities in areas of highest need

- Ensure opportunities attract funding and collaboration on innovative projects

- Work with businesses and organisations to ensure workplace wellbeing initiatives, including physical activity, are considered

- Working in collaboration with other partners, we can pool our resources, utilise our communication channels and achieve so much more

- Sport and physical activity provides opportunities for socialising and brings communities together

- Community cohesion and anti-social behaviour can be reduced by providing opportunities to be active, particularly for young people

- 72% of people say the NHS is the most trusted source of advice on physical activity

Reporting

Data that can be measured using the Fingertips* platform for South Kesteven consists of –

Adults	Children
◆ Percentage of physically active adults (19+)	◆ Reception prevalence of children overweight (including obesity) (4-5 years)
◆ Percentage of physically inactive adults (19+)	◆ Year 6 prevalence of children overweight (including obesity) (10-11 years)
◆ Percentage of adults meeting the ‘5-a-day’ fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations	◆ Percentage of physically active children and young people (5-16 years) – currently no data available since 2022/2023 due to small sample size
◆ Overweight (including obesity) prevalence in adults (18+)	◆ Percentage of less active children and young people (5-16 years) – currently no data available since 2022/2023 due to small sample size

Measuring the above data sets provide crucial insight into the health status of South Kesteven. Together, they help to –

- Identify health risks early
- Guide policy, prevention and intervention strategies
- Inform service planning

Therefore, the above data sets will be reported on every six months to demonstrate South Kesteven’s position.

**Fingertips is a large public health data collection platform.*



Our Facilities

www.southkesteven.gov.uk/arts-leisure-and-culture/sports-and-leisure

Grantham Meres Leisure Centre
Bourne Leisure Centre
Stamford Leisure Pool

Links to Key Documents - References

[South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan - 2024 to 2027](#)

[Sport England - Uniting the Movement 2021 - 2031](#)

[UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)

[Active Lives data](#)

[Local authority health profile - Fingertips](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) - Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub](#)

[Get Active: A Strategy for the future of sport and physical activity](#)

[DCMS Youth Strategy](#)

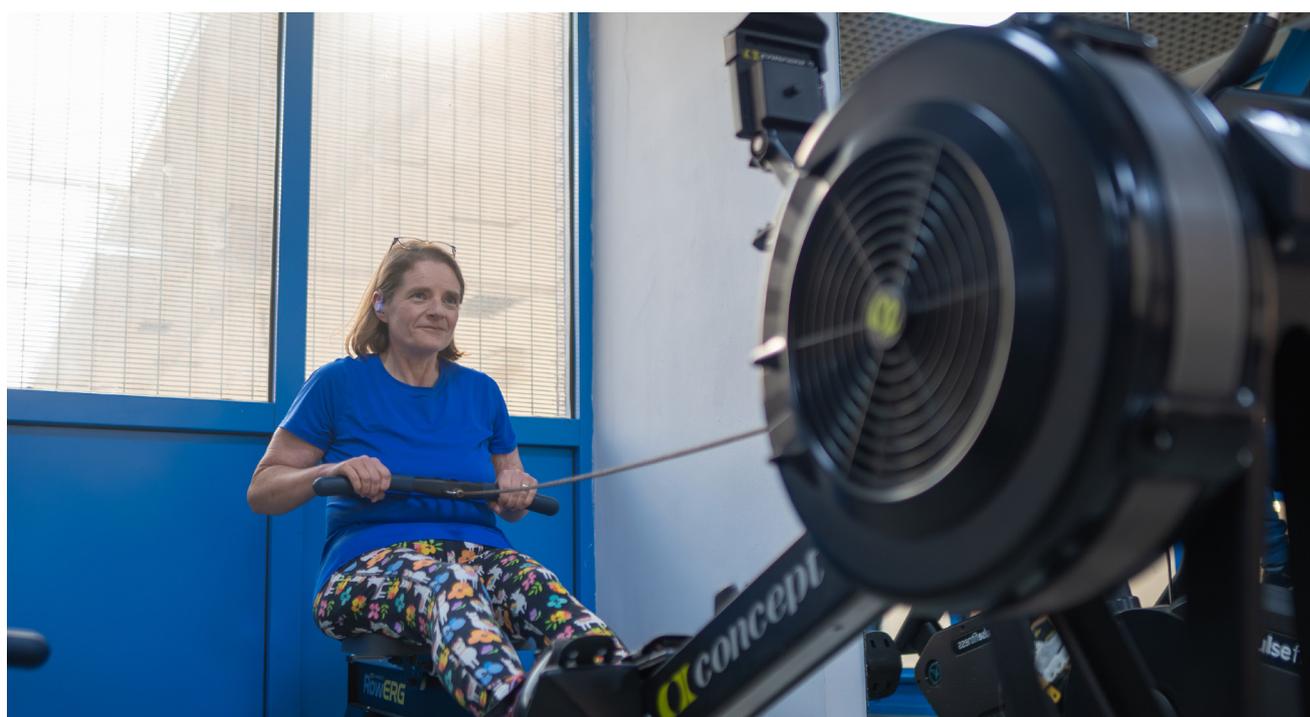
[NHS England - Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England](#)

[Millions more moving - The Richmond Group of Charities](#)

[Horizon Scanning: Future Trends in Sport and Physical Activity - May 2025](#)

[NHS England - Harnessing the benefits of physical activity](#)

[Let's Move Lincolnshire Strategy - Active Lincolnshire](#)



Contact Details

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

South Kesteven District Council
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 www.southkesteven.gov.uk

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

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

Body Worn Video Policy

Report Author

Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection

✉ ayeisha.kirkham@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the Body Worn Video Policy to Cabinet for adoption.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to approve and adopt the Body Worn Video Policy

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	No
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 A one-off growth bid of £10,000 has been included in the recently approved 2026/27 budget which will provide funding to support the rollout of this Policy.

Completed by: *David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer*

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 It is good governance for the Policy to be scrutinised by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a view to it being considered for adoption by Cabinet. Lincolnshire Legal Services have considered the draft Policy and have provided feedback. This feedback has been incorporated within this proposed Policy.

Completed by: *James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager*

Health and Safety

- 1.3 Body worn cameras, when used in conjunction with existing safety mitigations and training are a useful tool. They primarily offer a deterrence and de-escalation of aggressive behaviours during interactions, especially for lone working incidents.
- 1.4 Body worn cameras also provide the opportunity for identified learnings to be included in future training.

Completed by: *Philip Swinton Head of Health, Safety, Compliance and Emergency Planning.*

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken for the proposed Policy and there are no significant impacts, see Appendix 2.

Completed by: *Andrew Beaver, Community Safety Manager*

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council does not currently have a Body Worn Video (BWV) Policy. At the present time BWV is only used by SKDC civil enforcement officers when this is necessary. This includes issuing parking tickets and fixed penalty notices for littering and dog fouling offences.
- 2.2 It has been identified by officers and senior managers that Body Worn Video would be a useful tool to support officers' personal safety, reduce incidents of abuse or aggression, provide an accurate record of events, increase transparency and accountability, and where necessary to capture the best evidence. The BWV Policy attached in Appendix 2 will support the use of BWV in line with the various necessary legal considerations and requirements.
- 2.3 The use of BWV may derive a range of supplementary benefits including but not being limited to:
- Reducing protracted complaint investigations by providing impartial, accurate evidence.
 - Give greater insight into service delivery and assist in identifying good practice.
 - Reduce the number of incidents of aggressive behaviour and abuse aimed at officers exercising their duties.
 - Evidence the good service of enforcement and advisory letters.
 - Prevention and detection of crime and the deterrence of Anti-Social Behaviour.
- 2.4 This BWV Policy supports compliance with legal standards, including the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- 2.5 This use of this Policy applies to functions carried out within the following regulatory services:
- Public Protection (this includes Environmental Health, Environmental Protection, Private Sector Housing, Community Safety (Neighbourhoods) and Licensing)
 - Development Management
 - Building Control
 - Finance
 - Tenancy Services

Each Manager of a relevant service as referenced above and covered by the Policy, will be responsible for its effective implementation. Procedures will be developed to ensure the effective operational use of BWV, in line with this overarching Policy.

- 2.6. This Policy applies to all officers and relevant staff authorised to use BWV while carrying out duties on behalf of South Kesteven District Council, whether on patrols, during home visits, enforcement duties or in any engagement with tenants and members of the public.
- 2.7. BWV equipment is an overt mechanism for officers to obtain and secure evidence on the scene of an investigation or incident. Data will be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in line with data protection requirements. Officers will only gather evidence that is required for specific purposes and will hold this information securely and only for as long as is necessary.
- 2.8. All officers authorised for the use of BWV will receive training in relation to the lawful and appropriate use of BWV, RIPA compliance and implications of unlawful surveillance, data protection responsibilities, de-escalation techniques and best practices in relation to personal safety.
- 2.9. A list of officers that are authorised to use South Kesteven BWV (Authorised officers) and are suitably trained in accordance with the above, shall be recorded and maintained by the relevant Head of Service or senior manager for that Service area. A coordinated list will be kept by the Data or Deputy Data Protection Officer.
- 2.10. BWV will be used in an overt manner and emphasised by any officer wearing clear identification that it is a CCTV device. Prior to commencement of any recording, where possible, officers will give a clear verbal instruction that recording is taking place.
- 2.11. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is under development regarding the use of BWV and if the Policy is adopted this will be in place before the BWV is used.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Introducing a Policy for use of Body Worn Video provides several benefits as outlined within this report.
- 3.2. The National Police Chiefs Council have identified 8 key principles when using body worn video. These principles are considered best practice for all public sector bodies using such equipment. Principle 2 states that the use of a surveillance camera system must take into account its effect on individuals and their privacy, with regular reviews to ensure its use remains justified. Therefore, any use of Body Worn Video should only be operated in the event where officers find themselves in a confrontational situation where they are subject to, or feel that they are likely to be subject to, verbal or physical abuse, or for the purpose of evidential capture (as part of an investigation for example when investigating legislative breaches). Use of BWV will not be used to record conversations unless it can be justified with robust supporting evidence e.g. a matter of personal safety.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to adopt a Policy and continue the current use of BWV, via enforcement officers, mainly for car parking enforcement work only.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 This Policy has been developed to ensure the appropriate use of BWV by Officers within South Kesteven District Council. The use of BWV aims to enhance personal safety, reduce incidents of abuse or aggression, provide an accurate record of events, and increase transparency and accountability.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Lincolnshire Legal Services have been consulted and are satisfied with the content of the Policy, the Policy appended to this report incorporates the advice received.
- 6.2 Senior Managers and the Corporate Management Team have also been consulted, and feedback has been incorporated into the Policy.
- 6.3 The proposed Policy has also been considered at the Joint Meeting of the Environment and Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees held on 24 February 2026. The Joint Committee recommended that the Policy be adopted by Cabinet.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 CCTV Code of Practice: [CCTV Code of Practice December 2024.pdf](#)
- 7.2 [Agenda for Joint Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24th February, 2026](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1. Appendix 1- Equality Impact Assessment.
- 8.2. Appendix 2- Body Worn Video Policy

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Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Body Worn Video Policy
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The Body Worn Video policy is to ensure consistent and standardised usage of Body Worn Video (BWV) by all SKDC officers in accordance with relevant legislations.
3. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	This use of this policy applies to functions carried out within regulatory services and some non-regulatory with public facing services. The policy sets out clear processes for officers to follow and identifies what members of the public can expect from the Council in terms of the use of body worn video.
4. Has there been any consultation with, or input from, customers/service users or other stakeholders? If so, with whom, how were they consulted and what did they say? If you haven't consulted yet and are intending to do so, please complete the consultation table below.	Lincolnshire Legal Services have been consulted. Directors, Heads of Service and Managers at SKDC of services areas likely to use BWV, have also been consulted. All feedback has been incorporated within the policy.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	The policy will be reviewed every three years. If there are any guidance or legislative changes between scheduled reviews, the policy will be reviewed.

Protected Characteristic	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact e.g. adjustment to the policy <i>(The Action Log below should be completed to provide further detail)</i>
Age	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.
Disability	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.
Gender Reassignment	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.



Pregnancy and Maternity	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.
Race	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.
Religion or Belief	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.
Sex	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.
Other Factors requiring consideration			
Socio-Economic Impacts	No impact	This policy relates to officers wearing BWV will not have a socio-economic impact.	Neither the policy nor the requirements within it will have a socio-economic impact.
Carers (those who provide unpaid care to a family member, friend or partner)	No impact	This protected characteristic is not affected by the policy.	Neither the policy nor requirements within it are determined by this protected characteristic.

Consultation

Group/Organisation	Date	Response

Proposed Mitigation: Action Log

To be completed when barriers, negative impact or discrimination are found as part of this process – to show actions taken to remove or mitigate. Any mitigations identified throughout the EIA process should be meaningful and timely. Add more rows as required.



Negative Impact	Action	Timeline	Outcome	Status

Evaluation Decision

Once consultation and practicable and proportionate mitigation has been put in place, the responsible officer should evaluate whether any negative impact remains and, if so, provide justification for any decision to proceed.		
Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	None identified	
Final Decision	Tick	Include any explanation/justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed	x	The policy does not discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people but is targeted only at cases where action is needed and is based on the guiding principles of consistency, transparency, proportionality, and accountability.
2. Stop the policy or practice because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. Adapt or change the policy in a way that will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified , however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision		

Did you consult with an Equality Ally prior to carrying out this assessment? Yes

Sign off

Name and job title of person completing this EIA	Andrew Beaver Community Safety Manager
Officer Responsible for implementing the policy/function etc	Officer responsible for the Policy: Ayeisha Kirkham Head of Service- Public Protection



Date Completed	23/1/2026
Line Manager	Ayeisha Kirkham
Date Agreed <i>(by line manager)</i>	23/1/2026
Date of Review <i>(if required)</i>	n/a

Completed EIAs should be included as an appendix to the relevant report going to a Cabinet, Committee or Council meeting and a copy sent to equalities@southkesteven.gov.uk.

Completed EIAs will be published along with the relevant report through Modern.Gov before any decision is made and also on the Council's website.



SOUTH
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Policy for Officers of SKDC on Body Worn Video

Contents

1.0	Purpose.....	2
2.0	Supplementary benefits.....	2
3.0	Scope.....	2
4.0	Legal Framework.....	2
5.0	Principles of Use	3
6.0	Equipment Use.....	3
7.0	Data Storage and Access	4
8.0	Production of Exhibits.....	4
9.0	Training, Compliance and Authorisation.....	5
10.0	Misuse and Disciplinary Action	5
11.0	Review and Governance	5
	Appendix 1 – Equipment Use.....	6
	Appendix 2 – List of Equipment	8

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy has been developed and adopted to ensure the appropriate use of Body Worn Video (BWV) by Officers within South Kesteven District Council. The use of BWV aims to enhance Officers' personal safety, reduce incidents of abuse or aggression, provide an accurate record of events, and increase transparency and accountability and where necessary to capture best evidence. This policy ensures compliance with legal standards, including the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

2.0 Supplementary benefits

- 2.1 The use of BWV may derive a range of supplementary benefits including but not being limited to:

- Reducing protracted complaint investigations by providing impartial, accurate evidence.
- Give greater insight into service delivery and assist in identifying good practice.
- Reduce the number of incidents of aggressive behaviour and abuse aimed at officers exercising their duties.
- Evidence the good service of enforcement and advisory letters.
- Prevention and detection of crime and the deterrence of Anti-Social Behaviour.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all Officers and relevant staff authorised to use BWV while carrying out duties on behalf of South Kesteven District Council, whether on patrols, during home visits, enforcement duties or in any engagement with tenants and members of the public.

4.0 Legal Framework

- 4.1 Legal Framework includes:

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Home Office Surveillance Camera Code of Practice & Information Commissioners Code of Practice
- Housing Act 2004, Section 239

5.0 Principles of Use

- 5.1 BWV equipment is an overt mechanism for officers to obtain and secure evidence on the scene of an investigation or incident. Data will be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in line with our data protection requirements. We will only gather evidence that is required for specific purposes. We will hold this information securely and only for as long as is necessary.
- 5.2 The use of BWV shall be for overt recording only, unless a RIPA application has been duly approved by a Court. Officers must inform individuals they are being recorded before activation, unless doing so would risk immediate harm.
- 5.3 The use of BWV will be proportionate, and BWV will only be activated where necessary to record interactions involving potential risk, conflict, anti-social behaviour, or for evidential purposes.

6.0 Equipment Use

- 6.1 A BWV device is an overt camera that can capture video and audio information, used to record events that the individual wearing the device, is involved in. Typically, it is worn on the torso of the member of staff and is not hidden. This device can therefore capture incidents as they occur.
- 6.2 The BWV devices used at South Kesteven District Council shall be overtly body mountable with built in microphones.
- 6.3 All South Kesteven BWV devices shall be stored securely in the Council office and a central register (which shall include the make, model and serial number) of BWV devices will be maintained.
- 6.4 Authorised Officers will sign all BWV devices in and out and shall: test that the device they are seeking to use is working correctly; that the battery is fully charged and that the date and time stamp on the device is accurate
- 6.5 Any malfunction of a South Kesteven BWV device must be notified immediately to a Supervisory Officer.
- 6.6 Any loss or theft of a South Kesteven BWV device containing NO recorded material must be notified immediately to the Head of Service of the relevant department.
- 6.7 Any loss or theft of a South Kesteven BWV device CONTAINING recorded material must be notified immediately to the Director or Assistant Director for the service area and the Data or Deputy Data Protection Officer.
- 6.8 If the South Kesteven BWV product is considered to have evidential or other lawful value it will be stored, processed and disposed of according to its relevant use, as soon as possible. An example of this would be if the evidence were to be used for certain enforcement cases, it would be kept in line with the relevant retention schedule. Each primary file will be allocated a unique identifier with the time and date stamp.

- 6.9 To support the system, a designated computer and appropriate encrypted software will be utilised for the downloading and storage of digital video files. These will need to provide a full audit trail and ensure evidential continuity is maintained. The storage and control of all South Kesteven BWV and the necessary computer systems required for the storage and download of images and digital video files will be based within South Kesteven District Council Offices.

Appendix 1 to this policy provides information for Authorised Officers on how the equipment must be used.

7.0 Data Storage and Access

- 7.1 All footage is encrypted and uploaded to a secure server at the end of the shift, and access is restricted to authorised personnel only.
- 7.2 At South Kesteven the retention period for the recordings is 30 days unless required for investigation or legal proceedings (as per section 6 of this policy).
- 7.3 It is important to note that Article 15 of the UK General Data Protection Regulations 2018 grants a general right of access to personal data held by public authorities, which may include digital images recorded by BWV. In cases where recordings of individuals have taken place either coincidentally or by intended conversations from either party, this evidence / recording is only to be seen by person(s) recorded. SKDC Council must satisfy themselves that the person wishing to see the recording is the same person recorded. This should be done by viewing the recording and familiarising themselves with the person recorded. This process is covered in the SKDC CCTV Code of Practice.

7.4 Evidential footage

Evidential footage will be considered as any data that is:

- Evidence of an offence or supporting evidence for any process.
- Footage that is required for a relevant and proportionate purpose
- Footage which is allowed to be revealed under The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1997.

- 7.5 BWV is supporting evidence and officers will be required to provide written statements which must include the audit trail for the capture of the footage and the subsequent production of the master disc/DVD.
- 7.6 Persons subject to recording may request access to footage (if retained for investigation or legal proceedings) involving them under a Subject Access Request, unless certain limited exemptions apply.

8.0 Production of Exhibits

- 8.1 Data will not be downloaded to any device other than the dedicated computer provided as stated.
- 8.2 All footage recorded to the BWV unit will be downloaded as soon as practical and evidential footage downloaded will be saved on the relevant stand-alone BWV

computer as per the approved procedure. It will be identified by exhibit/unique reference number.

- 8.3 As soon as reasonably practical two copies of the BWV footage will be made. The first will be a 'master copy' which will be sealed, labelled. The second will be a 'working copy' for investigation and file preparation purposes. DVDs should be retained in line with the Councils retention policy. There will be a clear and transparent audit trail throughout this process.

9.0 Training, Compliance and Authorisation

9.1 All Authorised Officers must receive training on:

- Lawful and appropriate use of BWV
- RIPA compliance and implications of unlawful surveillance
- Data protection responsibilities
- De-escalation techniques and best practices

9.2 A list of Officers that are authorised to use South Kesteven BWV (Authorised Officers) and are suitably trained in accordance with the above, shall be recorded and maintained by the relevant Head of Service or Senior Manager for that Service area. A coordinated list will be kept by the Data or Deputy Data Protection Officer.

10.0 Misuse and Disciplinary Action

10.1 Improper use of BWV including but not limited to the following:

- Covert use without RIPA authorisation
- Unauthorised access to footage
- Editing or deleting footage

will result in disciplinary action and may lead to legal proceedings.

11.0 Review and Governance

11.0 This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes. The Information Commissioner's Office has published guidelines on the use and security of body worn cameras which will always be adhered to. Oversight rests with the Data and Information Governance Officer and the Senior Responsible Officer.

Appendix 1 – Equipment Use

The following is guidance on the use of South Kesteven BWV when recording incidents.

Decide: Officers will wear BWV when on operational duties or as required by a supervisory officer, the camera should be switched on when footage might support 'professional observation' or would corroborate what would be written in a pocket notebook (PNB). The decision to record or not to record any incident remains with the user. The user should be mindful that failing to record incidents that are of evidential value may require explanation in court.

Start recording early: It is evidentially important to record as much of an incident as possible; therefore, recording should begin at the earliest opportunity from the start of an incident.

Recordings to be Incident Specific: Recording must be incident specific. Users should not indiscriminately record entire duties or operations and must only use recording to capture video and audio during inspections or incidents that would normally be the subject of PNB entries or as 'professional observation', whether or not these are ultimately required for use in evidence.

Talk: At the commencement of any recording the user should, where practicable, make a verbal announcement to indicate why the recording has been activated. If possible, this should include:

- Date, time and location
- Confirmation, where practicable, to those present that the inspection/incident is now being recorded using both video and audio.

Inform: If the recording has commenced prior to arrival at the site or scene of an inspection/incident the user should, as soon as is practicable, announce to those persons present that recording is taking place and that actions and sounds are being recorded. Specific words for this announcement have not been prescribed in this guidance, but users should use straightforward speech that can be easily understood by those present, such as, "Please be aware I am wearing and using body worn video".

Collateral intrusion: In so far as is practicable, users should restrict recording to areas and persons necessary in order to obtain evidence and intelligence relevant to the incident and should attempt to minimise collateral intrusion to those not involved.

Private dwellings: In private dwellings, users may find that one party objects to the recording taking place; for example, when lawfully on premises and abuse is apparent or expected. In such circumstances users should continue to record and explain the reasons for recording continuously. These include:

- Where an operational plan or procedure is in place
- A warrant is in force or powers under current legislation
- There is a requirement to secure best evidence of any offences that have occurred.
- Continuing to record would safeguard both parties with true and accurate recording of any significant statement made by either party

- Continuing to record would safeguard vulnerable persons.
- Where an incident having previously taken place may reoccur in the immediate future

Sensitivities connected with faith/equalities issues: The filming in domestic circumstances could be an issue with some faiths. An example may be where the female may not have a face covering within the home. Officers should be aware of this fact and be sensitive to the wishes of those involved.

Do not interrupt filming: Unless specific circumstances dictate otherwise recording must continue uninterrupted from commencement of recording until the conclusion of the incident.

Concluding filming: It is considered advisable that the officer continues to record for a short period after the incident to clearly demonstrate to any subsequent viewer that the incident has concluded and the user has resumed other duties or activities.

Prior to concluding recording the user should make a verbal announcement to indicate the reason for ending the recording this should state:

- Date, time and location
- Reason for concluding recording

Do not delete: Once a recording has been completed this becomes South Kesteven District Council information and must be retained and handled in accordance with PACE and the council's CCTV Code of Practice. Therefore, any recorded image must not be deleted by the recording user and must be retained as required by the procedures. Any breach of the procedures may render the user liable to disciplinary action or adverse comment in criminal proceedings.

Selective Capture: In general, the BWV user should record entire encounters from beginning to end without the recording being interrupted. However, the nature of some incidents may make it necessary for the user to consider the rationale for continuing to record throughout entire incidents.

For example, the recording may be stopped in cases of a sensitive nature or if the incident has concluded prior to the arrival of the user. In all cases the user should exercise their professional judgement in deciding whether or not to record all or part of an incident.

In cases where the user does interrupt or cease recording at an ongoing incident they should record their decision including the grounds for making such a decision.

Recording of Interviews: BWV should not be used to record interviews of suspects under caution which occur at an office or public place.

BWV can and should be used to capture hearsay evidence. An example of this is where a person gives his account of suspected offender's actions to an investigating officer, in the presence and hearing of the suspect.

Scene Review: An additional use of BWV is to record the location of objects and evidence at the scene of a crime/incident or inspection e.g. property hazards, defects and deficiencies. This can be particularly beneficial in allowing a Senior Officer an opportunity



**SOUTH
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COUNCIL**

Cabinet

10 March 2026

Report of the Chief Executive

Cabinet Forward Plan

Report Author

Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

 l.bonshor@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report highlights matters on the Cabinet's Forward Plan.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the content of this report.

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Cabinet's Forward Plan

- 1.1** The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the minimum requirements for publicity in connection with Key Decisions. The Council meets these legislative requirements through the monthly publication of its Forward Plan.
- 1.2** Cabinet may also receive reports on which it is asked to make recommendations to Council or review the contents and take necessary action. These items are also listed on the Forward Plan.
- 1.3** Non-Key Decisions made by Cabinet are also included within the Forward Plan.

2. Appendices

- 2.1** Appendix A – Cabinet's Forward Plan



SOUTH
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CABINET FORWARD PLAN
Notice of decisions to be made by Cabinet
27 February 2026 to 26 February 2027

At its meetings, the Cabinet may make Key Decisions and Non-Key Decisions. It may also make recommendations to Council on matters relating to the Council's budget or its policy framework.

A Key Decision is a Cabinet decision that is likely:

1. To result in the District Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the District Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates (for these purposes, South Kesteven District Council has agreed £200,000 as the threshold at which a decision will be considered significant); or
2. To be significant in terms of its effects on communities that live or work in an area comprising two or more wards.

The Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan is a rolling, 12-month plan that will be updated on a regular basis. It includes those Key Decisions and Non-Key Decisions that are scheduled to be considered by Cabinet during the plan period.

Notice of future Cabinet decisions and recommendations to Council

Summary	Date	Action	Contact
Sport and Physical Activity Strategy - Key Decision			
To provide a refreshed Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for 2026-2031.	10 Mar 2026	To consider approving the draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026-2031	Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture (Councillor Paul Stokes) Bethany Goodman, Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead E-mail: bethany.goodman@southkesteven.gov.uk
Local Plan Grant - Key Decision			
To consider a Local Plan Grant from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).	10 Mar 2026	To accept the Local Plan Grant from MHCLG and approve the creation of a budget to enable Funding allocated and spent.	Cabinet Member for Planning (Councillor Phil Dilks) Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth) E-mail: emma.whittaker@southkesteven.gov.uk
General Fund Finance Update Report: Quarter 3 (April to December) 2025 – Non Key Decision			
To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of December 2025 with specific regard to: • General Fund Revenue Budget • General Fund Capital Programme	10 Mar 2026	To note report	Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development (Councillor Ashley Baxter) David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer E-mail: david.scott@southkesteven.gov.uk

Summary	Date	Action	Contact
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Update Report: Quarter 3 (April to December) 2025 - Non Key Decision			
<p>To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of December 2025.</p> <p>The report covers the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget • Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 	10 Mar 2026	Note the report	<p>Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development (Councillor Ashley Baxter)</p> <p>David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer E-mail: david.scott@southkesteven.gov.uk</p>
MHCLG Statutory Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire: Response by South Kesteven District Council - Key Decision			
To consider South Kesteven DC's response to the MHCLG Statutory Consultation on proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Greater Lincolnshire	10 Mar 2026	Approval of consultation response for submission to MHCLG	<p>Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development (Councillor Ashley Baxter)</p> <p>Charles James, Policy Officer E-mail: charles.james@southkesteven.gov.uk</p>

Summary	Date	Action	Contact
Biodiversity Action Plan for South Kesteven - Key Decision			
To present the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan.	10 Mar 2026	To consider agreeing the Plan.	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste (Councillor Rhys Baker) Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager, Louise Case, Sustainability Project Support Officer E-mail: serena.brown@southkesteven.gov.uk , louise.case@southkesteven.gov.uk
Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven - Key Decision			
To present to the Cabinet the Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven.	10 Mar 2026	To consider agreeing the Plan.	Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste (Councillor Rhys Baker) Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager E-mail: serena.brown@southkesteven.gov.uk
Contract Award for Microsoft Software Agreement - Key Decision			
Award of contract for renewal of Microsoft Software Agreement for 3 years	10 Mar 2026	To approve the contract award	Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement (Councillor Richard Cleaver) Gary Andrew, IT Services Manager E-mail: gary.andrew@Southkesteven.gov.uk

Summary	Date	Action	Contact
Statement of Community Involvement Consultation - Key Decision			
To seek agreement for a six-week consultation with minor amendments delegated to Portfolio and Assistant Director.	10 Mar 2026	To agree to consultation for 6 weeks with minor amendments delegated to Portfolio and Assistant Director	Cabinet Member for Planning (Councillor Phil Dilks) Jessica Morris E-mail: jessica.morris@southkesteven.gov.uk
Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Key Decision			
To seek agreement for a six-week consultation with minor amendments delegated to Portfolio and Assistant Director.	10 Mar 2026	To agree to consultation for 6 weeks with minor amendments delegated to Portfolio and Assistant Director.	Cabinet Member for Planning (Councillor Phil Dilks) Jessica Morris E-mail: jessica.morris@southkesteven.gov.uk
Tenancy Strategy - Key Decision			
To seek approval of the Strategy, that was considered by Housing OSC on 5 February 2026.	10 Mar 2026	To consider approving the Strategy.	Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Virginia Moran) Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing Options) E-mail: sarah.mcqueen@southkesteven.gov.uk
Body Worn Video Policy – Non Key Decision			
To approve and adopt the Body Worn Video Policy	10 Mar 2026	Cabinet are to consider approving the policy.	Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing (Councillor Philip Knowles) Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection E-mail: ayeisha.kirkham@southkesteven.gov.uk

Summary	Date	Action	Contact
Repairs and Voids Materials Contract - Key Decision			
To seek approval to enter into a new contract with a supplier of materials for our internal works teams.	7 Apr 2026	To seek approval to enter into a new contract with a supplier of materials for our internal works teams.	Cabinet Member for Housing (Councillor Virginia Moran) Mark Rogers, Head of Service (Technical Services) E-mail: mark.rogers@southkesteven.gov.uk
SK Community Fund - Key Decision			
To consider the proposed changes to the SK Community Fund which include amendments to grant levels and eligibility criteria. The proposed changes will allow for the Fund to re-launch for the 2026/27 financial year.	7 Apr 2026	To seek approval of the proposed changes to the SK Community Fund	Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture (Councillor Paul Stokes) Carol Drury, Community Engagement & Manager E-mail: carol.drury@southkesteven.gov.uk
Leisure Improvement Works – Phase One - Key Decision			
To seek approval for the appointment of a contractor to carry out the leisure improvement works – phase one	5 May 2026	To confirm the contractor for phase one of the leisure improvement works	Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture (Councillor Paul Stokes) Michael Chester, Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader E-mail: michael.chester@southkesteven.gov.uk

Summary	Date	Action	Contact
Crisis and Resilience Fund - Key Decision			
<p>This report will provide information regarding the Crisis Resilience Fund and will present the proposed scheme for Cabinet approval.</p>	<p>2 Jun 2026</p>	<p>Approval of the proposed scheme</p>	<p>Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development (Councillor Ashley Baxter)</p> <p>Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and Community) E-mail: claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk</p>

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