

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 14 October 2025 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber – South Kesteven House,
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham, NG31 6PZ

Committee Members: Councillor Murray Turner (Chairman)
Councillor Barry Dobson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey, Councillor Emma Baker, Councillor James Denniston,
Councillor Gareth Knight, Councillor Robert Leadenham, Councillor Chris Noon and
Councillor Rhea Rayside

Agenda

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

1. **Public Speaking**
The Council welcomes engagement from members of the public. To speak at this meeting please register no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting via democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk
 2. **Apologies for absence**
 3. **Disclosure of Interests**
Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
 4. **Minutes from the meeting held on 15 July 2025** (Pages 3 - 13)
 5. **Minutes from the Extraordinary meeting held on 28 August 2025** (Pages 15 - 23)
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| 6. | Updates from the previous meeting | (Page 25) |
| 7. | Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service | |
| 8. | Play Area Strategy Update
To provide an update to the Committee on progress of the Action Plan accompanying the Play Area Strategy. | (Pages 27 - 45) |
| 9. | Grantham Parks Update
To provide the Committee with information relating to the three main Grantham Parks and the facilities and activities provided | (Pages 47 - 57) |
| 10. | Cultural Strategy 6 monthly Update
To update the committee on progress with the action plan and KPIs regarding the cultural strategy. | (Pages 59 - 79) |
| 11. | Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021 - 2026) – October 2025 Update
To provide an update on the progress and delivery of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021 - 2026) and the accompanying Action Plan. | (Pages 81 - 92) |
| 12. | LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report
To provide an update to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the performance of LeisureSK Ltd against the leisure management contract objectives | (Pages 93 - 100) |
| 13. | Work Programme 2025/26 | (Pages 101 - 103) |
| 14. | Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent | |

Minutes

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 15 July 2025, 10.00 am

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

Committee Members present

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

Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor James Denniston
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Tim Harrison

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Paul Stokes (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Philip Knowles (Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance & Licensing)

Other Members present

Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Nikki Manterfield

Officers

Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Culture, Leisure and Place)
Kay Boasman (Head of Waste and Markets)
Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)
Charles James (Policy Officer)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

David Scott (Director of LeisureSK Ltd)

1. Public Speaking

There were no public speakers.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chirs Noon, Emma Baker and Philip Knowles.

Councillor Tim Harrison substituted for Councillor Emma Baker.

3. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

4. Minutes from the meeting held on 15 May 2025

Minutes from the meeting held on 15 May 2025 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as an accurate record

5. Updates from the previous meeting

There were no actions from the previous meeting.

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

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure welcomed Members to the meeting.

7. Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report - End-Year (Q4) 2024/25

The Corporate Policy Officer presented the report that outlined South Kesteven District Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2024-27 KPI's for Q4 2024/25.

The performance against eight actions was presented for Q4 2024/25. Seven actions were rated green overall meaning they were on or above target as planned.

One action was rated red, meaning it was significantly below the planned target. The action related to the adoption of a tourism strategic framework.

A query was raised on an action relating to the 'on target' attendance at leisure centres.

It was requested that attendance data be provided in a graphical format in the future to scrutinise trends over a period of time.

It was clarified the action itself was on target around reducing the annual subsidy year on year. Attendance was a sub-section of the target. The data could be provided in a graphical format in the future.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure clarified there were specific KPI's under the leisure contract. Officers would bring forward a client report in the future to scrutinise the contractual KPIs.

A query was raised whether the actions rated red purely related to the lack of staffing and would instantly be rated amber/green following the recruitment process.

Within the Economic Growth team, there were 2 vacancies: an Officer on maternity leave and a vacancy for the Head of Economic Development. The Head of Economic Development vacancy was due to be filled by September 2025 and the Officer on maternity leave had returned to work.

It was clarified there was a typographical error in attendance figures within the reports and all attendance figures were for Q3 and not Q1.

It was queried whether the action on UKSPF funding being obtained for table tennis tables and bike marking kits would be delivered across the district.

ACTION: For the Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure to provide further information on bike marking kits and the locations in which these would be promoted.

A query was raised on why the action relating to cleanliness was quantified on rectification rather than total number of issues reported. A suggestion was made that issues reported and issues resolved be compared and provided in the future.

It was clarified the term 'rectification' was from client visits and related to issues raised and not just those which had been resolved.

Members praised Officers for their work.

That the Committee:

1. Notes and scrutinises the performance against the Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators in relation to the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024-27.

8. Report on provisional outturn and first quarter performance - LeisureSK Ltd

The Director of LeisureSK Ltd presented the report.

A new 10-year contract had been agreed and in place which was operating under the agency model from the 1st April 2025.

Overall fitness memberships remained stable with a minor 0.6% reduction over the comparative 12-month period to the end of May.

Across the individual sites, Bourne increased its membership by 19 (1.4%), Grantham increased by 84 (6.1%), while Stamford decreased by 125 (15.6%), this is due to increased competition following a new gym opening nearby earlier this year.

There had been a reduction in numbers overall of 4.8% but the budget price increase in September 2024 had helped mitigate most of the financial impact.

Events had continued to be held regularly at Grantham Meres and generate income supporting the cashflow of the Company.

At a previous Committee meeting it was raised that the Company would be approaching the Council for a loan so that the gym can be refurbished at Grantham Meres, a business case was in the process of being drafted.

(It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to go into private session, to discuss the exempt appendices)

(The Committee returned into public session)

(Councillor Philip Knowles declared an interest in his capacity as a LeisureSK Ltd Board Member)

It was highlighted that Pure Gym provided some competition with Stamford Leisure Centre. It was queried whether any grounds of partnership agreement could be requested, for example Pure Gym does not have a swimming pool, whereas Stamford Leisure Centre does.

It was hoped that LeisureSK Ltd could explore why Bourne was having a lower uptake in memberships.

One Member questioned whether market research would take place when developing the business case for the gym equipment at Grantham Meres.

The Director of LeisureSK Ltd clarified a review was taking place for options around Stamford and what mitigations could be implemented in terms of competitors.

Following the recent investment in gym equipment at Bourne Leisure Centre, the membership figures had increased but were now levelling out. The Board were exploring options on how the membership rates could be further increased.

The business case for gym equipment at Grantham Meres would be brought back to the Committee to include details on the investment and expectations around modelling of membership price increase.

One Member noted that feedback from residents stated that facilities at Stamford Leisure Centre were not clean. Members felt the facilities in Stamford needed to be of a high standard if partnerships with competitors was to take place.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure confirmed issues around cleanliness at Stamford Leisure Centre had been reported. The team had undertaken more spot checks on the facility and there had been improvements in levels of cleanliness. The changing rooms were outdated and required investment in the future.

Condition surveys were being completed on all Leisure Centres, with a focus on Category D items (end of life and health and safety).

It was outlined that competitors, such as Pure Gym offer a full package of cleanliness of facilities and changing rooms, high standard equipment and a well-maintained car park.

Members discussed gym equipment reaching the end of its life. It was queried whether spending money on refurbishing gym equipment would be the reason residents obtain a membership. It was further outlined that the cleanliness of centres could have a big impact on people obtaining a membership.

It was requested that a breakdown of what facilities members use when visiting the leisure centres be brought to the Committee in future.

One Member queried whether the Committee could review the KPI's for LeisureSK Ltd.

ACTION: For the Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces to provide the Committee with KPI's for LeisureSK Ltd.

The Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces confirmed that a structural refurbishment of changing rooms would sit with the responsibility of the Council rather than LeisureSK Ltd.

To provide an update regarding the performance and budget position of LeisureSK Ltd covering the provisional outturn for 2024/25 and the year-to-date position for 2025/26.

9. Markets Action Plan Update

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report.

The report provided an update on the markets action plan, which was agreed in February 2025.

The action plan was developed to facilitate the delivery of recommendations from the High Street Experts review of Bourne, Grantham and Stamford markets.

The updated action plan was within the report at appendix 1 and had been updated to include progress against the agreed actions and deadlines.

The report outlined four outstanding actions and these were due to be completed once the new Economic Development Manager was in post by the end of the year.

Overall, good progress had been made on the agreed actions and the action plan would be completed before the end of the financial year, as agreed.

It was highlighted that Bourne market was the weakest of the markets, it was queried what the action plan would bring to increase the popularity of Bourne market.

The Head of Waste and Markets clarified Bourne Town Hall was due to undergo major renovation.

Based on consultations with the current stall holders of Bourne market, the plan was to leave the market within the Corn Exchange car park which would limit any improvement works taking place during the major renovations.

The action plan included a full rebranding exercise for Bourne market. A full marketing package had been created for improvements, following the renovations. The works were hoped to be commenced in October/November 2025.

One Member felt that in terms of marketing and rebranding, Bourne market should be a priority. Concern was raised that if serious attention was not given to Bourne market, it would be abolished in the coming months. It was felt that Bourne market was only given a small amount of UKSPF funding.

ACTION: For the Head of Waste and Markets to forward the bespoke communications marketing plan and events calendar to the Committee.

It was noted the market had a small proportion of the car park and the current traders were adamant they wanted to remain where they were, due to regular customers. It was not possible to advertise for any more traders at present, due to the restriction of space.

Members queried the following, in relation to Bourne market:

- Whether any feedback or discussions had taken place with market traders on preferred days of the market taking place.
- Other barriers identified as a risk to the progress of the market and how it would be addressed.
- Whether the traders would be charged full price for their pitches when the building work commences.

It was clarified an alternative location had been offered to the traders, however, they were satisfied to stay within the car park, during the works.

The Head of Waste and Markets confirmed current feedback from traders was positive in terms of location and number of customers. The Council would continue to work with the traders throughout the building work.

It was felt that Bourne market taking place on a Thursday could be a barrier to the success. The High Street Experts had advised changing the day/time of the market, holding a themed or event-led markets may increase footfall and interest.

A query was raised whether a discount scheme for traders at Bourne could be implemented within the budget, due to being weaker in comparison to other markets.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure confirmed the team had tried incentive schemes in order to bring the traders in. It was suggested that Bourne market needed champions for the market.

One Member highlighted a Farmers Market that operated successfully once a month on a Sunday in the leisure centre car park.

It was noted that traders wanted to trade where the highest footfall was. Councillors could champion and advertise the market to drive footfall.

A query was raised whether the Council considered reaching out and working in collaboration with the Sunday Bourne market.

It was noted that Bourne Councillors had requested to open the Corn Exchange and library on a Thursday to increase footfall on market day, however, the library was the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council.

Within the report, phase 3 stated that £60,000 Future High Street Funding would be spent on a stage and bistro chairs. One Member felt that was high amount of money and requested further information on the usage plans of the equipment.

A question was put forward to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure if there would be a sizeable events budget for all market towns within the next financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure hoped that events could be developed over the financial year. Some events may need to be self funded which would be reviewed alongside discussion on the usage plans for the stage, which could be used by all towns within South Kesteven.

It was queried whether the estimated £10,000 on improving accessibility would apply to all 3 markets.

The Head of Waste and Markets highlighted the monies to improve accessibility would apply to all markets, following a consultant-led review by the High Street Experts. Stamford market was highlighted in particular for poor accessibility. This

accessibility consultation had taken place in summer of 2024, however, the new audit would fall under the responsibility of the Economic Development Manager once they were in post.

A suggestion of a projector screen was made to increase the footfall, where major sporting events could be shown.

Another Member noted that the Council can hire a screen for a smaller price, rather than buying a screen.

The Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place clarified the feasibility and options on the idea would be explored.

The Committee were reminded that events taking place in Grantham marketplace were currently funded by Future High Street Fund, which was due to end in March 2026. There was currently no provision within the budget for continuation of events.

The Committee to:

1. Review the Action Plan and note the progress to date and amended deadlines for actions.

10. Work Programme 2025/26

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2025/26.

For the following items to be added to the meeting on 14 October 2025:

- LeisureSK Ltd – KPI Report (Q1)
- (Provisionally) Grantham Town Football Club

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure provided a brief update on Grantham Town Football Club. They had recently appointed a new Chairman, negotiations had taken place, and the Council had received a proposal from them. The Council was currently assessing the proposal and asking for more information. It was hoped that Grantham Town Football Club could come to the October meeting, however, a thorough report would need to be considered when the information was available. The Council had received more engagement from the club than previously.

One Member requested whether a public speaker could be invited to the next Committee to provide information on 'Margaret Thatcher Festival week'.

The Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place confirmed that speakers within the Festival were committed to a programme of talks. It was confirmed that a report would be brought back to the Committee in the future to provide an overview on the effectiveness and expenditure of the Margaret Thatcher Festival.

Councillor Tim Harrison noted he was available to substitute for the next meeting on 14 October 2025.

Councillor James Denniston noted he was not able to attend the next meeting on 14 October 2025.

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

There were none.

12. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:50.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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COUNCIL

Thursday, 28 August 2025, 10.00
am

Committee Members present

Councillor Murray Turner (Chairman)
Councillor Barry Dobson (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Elvis Stooke

Other Members present

Cabinet Members

Councillor Paul Stokes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure

Officers

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

David Rushton, Chairman LeisureSK Ltd
Matt Chamberlain, Contract Manager Leisure SK Ltd
David Scott, Director of Leisure SK Ltd

13. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matt Bailey who was substituted by Councillor Gloria Johnson, Councillor Emma Baker who was substituted by Councillor Elvis Stooke, Councillor James Denniston who was substituted by Councillor Tim Harrison and Councillor Rhea Rayside who was substituted by Councillor Max Sawyer.

14. Disclosure of Interests

None disclosed.

15. Grantham Meres Leisure Centre Gym Refurbishment

The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd, David Ruston gave a presentation to the Committee on why investing in the fitness suite at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre was necessary. Mr Ruston informed the Committee that he had been involved in various sectors of the leisure industry for a considerable amount of time and had been involved with the Meres Leisure Centre when it had first opened.

It was stated that income from the health and fitness sector was not as strong as it used to be when the Meres Leisure Centre first opened due to the increased level of competition, however, it was still a critical income generation for any leisure centre particularly those within South Kesteven.

The industry was movable and with customer expectations, it was critical that fitness suites stayed relevant and maintained a competitive edge in an increasing competitive market.

It was noted that the fitness offer had been performing well within LeisureSK Ltd and was performing above targets and budgets.

The equipment at the Meres Leisure Centre was between seven and ten years old and was in need of replacement, it was generally acknowledged that the lifespan of gym equipment was eight years. Doing nothing in respect of the equipment at the Meres was not an option as the equipment would become unreliable if not replaced. Although this was an investment proposal, what was being looked into was the replacement of equipment to keep the fitness suite offer competitive.

The proposal was for a £240,000 investment to refurbish the Meres fitness suite including replacing all equipment. It was proposed that a competitive tendering process would be undertaken to include the whole project that included equipment, fixtures, fittings, flooring, lighting etc as this was best practice within the industry to let one contract rather than split the contract which could lead to complications in the future.

It was noted that of the £240,000 investment, 90% would be for the equipment replacement. It was expected that work on the gym suite would be carried out in December 2025, before January 2026 as January, February and March were peak times for people to use a gym following New Years resolutions to join a gym.

The procurement process would be undertaken as soon as possible working with Welland Procurement and would be focused on delivering Best Value and the process would encourage the latest solutions and innovations.

Reference was made to the refurbishment that had taken place at Bourne Leisure Centre in 2022 which had resulted in a significant increase in income.

The fitness suite at the Meres was currently operating at 30% less than pre pandemic levels in terms of membership numbers. It was stated that there was potential for more people to join the gym once a competitive offer could be given. Reference was made to the customer survey that had been undertaken with current customers and the feedback given which was contained in the appendix to the report and was also presented on a slide in relation to the increase in monthly income following Bourne Leisure Centre's refurbishment. It was stated that the income had exceeded the cost of the capital.

Customer feedback had been undertaken electronically or through the App or through coaches talking to customers.

Of those that responded to the question of "how important it is for the gym to have the latest equipment" 63% responded that it was very important which supported the need to keep the gym offer relevant and up to date. Further slides shown covered if improvements were made to the gym what would you like to see and these covered increased free weights and the largest was more variety of machines with some wanting increased floor space.

It was confirmed that currently the gym was doing quite well, however if nothing was done to keep customers happy and keep the offer relevant people would go elsewhere.

In terms of the return on investment this was outlined within the exempt appendix to the report. The essence of this was that membership costs would be increased by £2 per month with membership numbers projected to increase between 5% and 15% which were still below pre pandemic levels.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member responsible for Leisure indicated that the situation had been presented within the report and the presentation given to the Committee.

Members discussed the report before them with the following questions being asked:

- What were the membership numbers and also how many pieces of equipment were being replaced. It was noted that 59 stations which contained a mixture of cardio and weight training equipment would be replaced. The other information was contained within the exempt appendix.
- It was felt that it wasn't a fair comparison to use Bourne Leisure Centre as a template for the Meres Leisure Centre as Grantham had far more competition with gym organisations within the town. It was stated that it was an example to show the membership growth on the back of investment/refurbishment.
- Realistic growth for the Meres Leisure Centre was between 5% - 15%

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to exclude the press and public at this point of the meeting as it was anticipated that, in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public may be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because of the likelihood that otherwise exempt information, as described in paragraph 3 of the Act (as amended) would be disclosed to them.

Public session resumed at 10:24am

A Member of the Committee thanked Officers for the report and stated that new gym equipment often generated new membership in a gym and he felt that the figures of between 5% -15% was conservative. The Member indicated that this was the proactive investment needed, especially due to the age of the current equipment which kept breaking down and would be detrimental to retaining membership of the gym. Doing nothing would also risk losing existing members. The Business Plan before members he felt was sound and even with no growth in membership the refurbishment would pay for itself within the lifetime of the contract. It was of massive community benefit to Grantham to help people lead a more active healthy lifestyle. The timing for the works to be carried out were ideal and a comprehensive refurbishment and refit would give Grantham a facility to be proud of and he proposed the recommendation as contained in the report.

Another Member thanked the Officer for the presentation and the arguments put forward together with the evidence submitted which were overwhelming but felt that there were two areas for consideration. The Member did not disagree with what had been said but felt that caveats should be added. He felt that LeisureSK Ltd should not be trying to compete with the private sector, the role was to provide a leisure facility that the private sector could not provide and to minimise costs in carrying that out.

The Member then stated that he did not feel that he had an interest but that both of his sons had swimming lessons at the Meres. He was not a member of the Meres and neither was his wife, the reason that they weren't members of the Meres was due to the changing rooms. The Member agreed that refurbishing the gym was necessary but felt that the state of the changing rooms impacted the bottom line. The Member made reference to Bourne and Stamford also in relation to the changing room facilities and also the number of comments made recently about the attention that the Meres Leisure Centre was getting. He spoke about the number of children who attended on a Saturday morning and he felt that those who were "adjacent", parents, grandparents who brought their children to swimming lessons, but were not members of the Meres, should be surveyed as he felt that the issue of the changing rooms would score highly in any survey about the reason why they weren't members of the Meres. He felt that a proper review of the changing facilities in all three leisure centres needed to be undertaken and a potential maintenance budget put in place to address an issue that frustrated a lot of people. He felt that the loan for the gym equipment was necessary but it should be conditional on LeisureSK Ltd or the Council carrying out a survey with people who are member "adjacent" to find out what is most off putting for them

being members of the Meres. He wanted the Cabinet to commit to undertaking a proper review of how the changing facilities could be improved.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Leisure stated that he didn't want anything to slow down what was happening with the gym, but indicated that the Cabinet were aware of the situation in respect of the changing facilities. Money had been allocated and the Deputy Leader stated that there was a commitment in place to look at addressing the issues.

The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd, Mr Rushton stated that a Business Plan was being compiled to look at the changing facilities particularly in Bourne and Stamford as there was evidence within the leisure industry that moving from segregated changing to a changing village improved the financial performance of the facilities. Mr Rushton agreed with what had been said in relation to the changing facilities at all three leisure centres and confirmed that it was on LeisureSK Ltd's radar.

Further discussion followed in respect of the changing facilities and the acknowledgement that money was available for the work to be undertaken, however the Member felt that due to the current political pressures within the Council in respect of the four towns within the District, he felt that much more certainty and political drive was required regarding the work. Reference was made to the Government grant received in respect of the solar panels for the Meres which had led to a lot of social media reaction. The Member felt that far more certainty around works to the changing facilities needed to be made even if it required the maintenance budget to be advanced forward.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer reassured the Committee that the Investment Reserve that had been established as part of the out-turn for 2025/26, and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee was not time limited. He stated that the Reserve was available now and Officers were looking at the work from an objective perspective through the condition surveys route. The surveys would look at the age of the buildings and the deterioration of some of the areas within the buildings as well as customer feedback and LeisureSK Ltd's view from customer feedback. All that information would be brought through the committee cycle within the next few months to rationalise how the £500k would be used.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer indicated that he was doubtful that the money would be enough for all four sites (3 leisure centres and Grantham Stadium). Areas being looked at were the changing areas, toilets as well as communal areas, meeting spaces, any interactive point within the buildings where the customer enters a building from the reception point onwards. He stated that care would need to be taken on how the funding was allocated out across the sites which would be led by evidence following the surveys.

The Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer stated that the changing facilities in all the leisure centres appeared "tired" and it was what work was required, whether this was cosmetic and more a cleanliness issue or whether something

more fundamental was required such as repurposing or re-modernisation as highlighted by the Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd. He reiterated that he felt the £500k would not be sufficient, but it was enough to make a start and move forward with what the evidence showed and the customer feedback received.

It was stated that there was nothing to stop Cabinet as part of the next budget cycle to recommend to Council further investment in this part of the leisure asset base. It was noted that there was also a significant maintenance programme in place which would touch all the leisure centres as well as the Council's other assets. There were millions of pounds going into the leisure centres, not all of which could be seen from the public's perspective but money was being invested to make sure the assets remained open and stayed legally compliant.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure stated that Cabinet were aware of the issues and were under "no illusions" that the changing facilities in the leisure centres needed addressing.

The comments made regarding the changing rooms were acknowledged but it was stated that they were not the reason that the meeting had been convened it was for the gym refurbishment and the Member referred to the proposal that he had already made and whether there was a seconder.

The Chairman indicated that he was giving Members the opportunity to make comment before a vote was taken.

Another Member echoed comments made by previous Members and made reference to comments made at a previous meeting of the Committee. He was in favour of the refurbishment of the gym but felt that the changing facilities also needed to be addressed. He then made reference to an email that he had forwarded to the Chairman of the Committee which he had received from the Chairman of Grantham Swimming Club complaining about the state of the facilities such as cold showers, children changing in communal areas. The Member felt that if one of the biggest customers of the Meres was complaining about the facilities and had been complaining for some time about the "woeful inadequate facilities" the overall package offered needed to be addressed. He stated that he would circulate the email to Members of the Committee. The Chairman indicated that he had replied to the email and passed it on to the Deputy Leader and the Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place).

The Chairman stated that it seemed to be the will of the Committee that work was undertaken in respect of the changing room facilities. He referred to the Investment Reserve fund that had been implemented by the Committee to look not just at buildings but the aesthetics of them and how they may be improved in the future.

The Chairman stated that he appreciated that the changing facilities were not on the agenda but he did want to make reference to them following the email that he had received.

The proposal put forward received a seconder and on being put to the vote was **AGREED.**

Recommendation

That the Committee reviewed the business plan and endorse the commencement of a procurement exercise to provide the refurbishment of Grantham Meres Leisure Centre gym.

16. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 10:45am.

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Action Sheet

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Actions from meeting of 15 July 2025

Min no	Agenda item	Action	Assigned to	Comments/Status	Deadline
7	Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report – End- Year (Q4) 2024/25	For the Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure to provide further information on bike marking kits and the locations in which these would be promoted.	Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place)	Email sent to Committee Members on 12 August 2025	Complete
8	Report on provisional outturn and first quarter performance – LeisureSK Ltd	For the Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces to provide the Committee with KPI’s for LeisureSK Ltd.	Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)	Email sent to Committee Members on 21 July 2025	Complete
9	Markets Action Plan Update	For the Head of Waste and Markets to forward the bespoke communications marketing plan and events calendar to the Committee.	Kay Boasman (Head of Waste and Markets)	Email sent to Committee Members on 18 August 2025	Complete

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14 October 2025

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

Play Area Strategy Update

Report Author

Michael Chester, Team Leader - Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces

 michael.chester@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide an update to the Committee on progress of the Action Plan accompanying the Play Area Strategy.

Recommendations

Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:

- 1. Note the significant work undertaken over the past 12 months in delivering the Action Plan and the improvements made to the Council's play areas.**
- 2. Agree to receive a further update detailing the progress made against the actions identified in 12 months' time.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting Communities Effective Council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The adoption of the Play Area Strategy 2024 and accompanying Action Plan has provided a basis for the Council to prioritise spend in this area, with equipment that has reached or is nearing its end of life being replaced.
- 1.2 During 2024/25 £341k was spent on improvements to play areas which is summarised in the table below including various funding sources the Council accessed to support investment.

Funding Source	Beeden Park	Wild Witham Play Area	Arnoldfield Play Area	Empingham Road	Dysart Park	Wellhead Play Area	Other Play Areas
UKSPF	£0	£10,696	£24,683	£16,850	£30,000	£0	£0
S106	£40,090	£0	£0	£0	£0	£35,176	£0
FCC Communities Foundation	£100,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Rotary Club of Grantham	£5,000	£0	£0	£0	£10,000	£0	£0
SKDC	£0	£0	£3,491	£0	£6,210	£960	£57,565
Total	£145,090	£10,696	£28,174	£16,850	£46,210	£36,136	£57,565

- 1.3 As shown the table above, in 2024/25 the Council allocated £100k towards investment in play areas of which £68k was spent. The remaining £32k has been carried forward into 2025/26. There is further allocation of £100k within the Council's General Fund Capital Programme for this financial year for investment into play parks which therefore brings the overall total to £132k for 2025/26.
- 1.4 It is proposed these budgets will be prioritised in line with the revised Action Plan. Officers will continue to explore further funding opportunities over the course of the current financial year to supplement the approved budget further where possible.

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

Procurement

- 1.5 The works which have taken place to replace equipment and improve play areas have been procured in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 1.6 Officers are in the process of developing a tender opportunity for a repair, supply and inspections contract for play equipment. This competitive process will ensure a suitably qualified contractor is secured for a longer period providing continuity of works and assurance on value for money.

Completed by: **Helen Baldwin, Procurement Lead**

Legal and Governance

- 1.7 There are no legal and governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: **James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager**

Health and Safety

- 1.8 Following the installation of any new play area, an independent post installation inspection will be carried out to ensure that the playground meets the required standards of EN 1176 and EN 1177 where applicable and has been installed correctly.
- 1.9 The Council is responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for the safety of those using its play areas and the maintenance of the equipment as well as the condition of the play area. There is a defined inspection and maintenance regime in place to ensure that equipment and play area condition is monitored and identified hazards are mitigated in a timely manner.

Completed by: **Phil Swinton, Health and Safety & Emergency Planning Manager**

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan 2024/27 sets out the Council's ambition to be 'A thriving District to live in, work and visit', with the aim of encouraging physical activity to support healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities. Underpinning this are the key priorities for the Council of 'Connecting Communities' and being an 'Effective Council'.
- 2.2. The provision of high-quality play areas continues to support the Council's corporate ambitions and provides opportunities for improved health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities, particularly in relation to children and young people.

- 2.3. At a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 03 September 2024, the Council's Play Area Strategy 2024 Action Plan (Action Plan) was presented to Members and was subsequently endorsed, with an agreement to provide an update to Members on its progress in 12 months' time (see **Background Papers**).
- 2.4. Since the endorsement of the Action Plan, Officers have undertaken extensive work to deliver on the 20 actions which were initially agreed, with 15 actions having been completed in full. Three actions are considered as ongoing and in progress, and a final two actions have been put on hold due to wider issues within the location. A copy of the completed actions can be found at **Appendix One**.
- 2.5. A presentation can be found at **Appendix Two** which showcases some of the improvements made to the Council's play areas during 2024/25.
- 2.6. A review of the Action Plan for the current year, 2025/26, has been undertaken by Officers, again using the findings from the play area inspections which are undertaken by Council Officers, Kompan Limited (who are contracted to undertake the monthly operational inspections) and Zurich Insurance (who undertake six monthly insurance inspections on behalf of the Council). The life expectancy audit previously undertaken was also revisited by Kompan Limited in April 2025. This has provided the Council with an updated indicative timeframe for when equipment will need to be replaced. Consideration is also given for any s106 developer contributions which have been specifically agreed for enhancing play equipment in certain areas.
- 2.7. The updated Action Plan lists how each action will be achieved, and which service area is responsible. Each action has been assigned a priority level based on the current equipment's risk scoring, and further notes and considerations are provided where appropriate. The Action Plan can be found at **Appendix Three**.
- 2.8. The Action Plan will continue to be used as a live document and be reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to meet the Strategy's aims and objectives and takes account of any new information.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Spend on play areas is discretionary for the Council, and it is important that the management and any investment undertaken demonstrates value for money, and that the resources invested deliver the priorities the Council is seeking.
- 3.2. The Action Plan aligns with the Play Area Strategy 2024 and the Council's corporate vision, ensuring a priority approach to any spend

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Within the Council's Corporate Plan there is a key theme of supporting healthier lifestyles, and the provision of high-quality play areas supports this ambition. Therefore the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The Play Area Strategy 2024 provides a basis for the Council to manage and prioritise the replacement of equipment or refurbishment of its play areas. The Action Plan which has been developed sets out how the Council will achieve this with clear actions being identified for the forthcoming year.
- 5.2. The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to receive a further update in 12 months' time to assess the effectiveness of the Action Plan and ensure that it has been effectively implemented.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1. *Play Area Strategy Action Plan* – Report to Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published 23 August 2024, available online at: <http://moderngovsvr/documents/s43220/Play%20Area%20Strategy%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix One – Play Area Strategy 2024 Action Plan – Completed Actions
- 7.2. Appendix Two – Presentation showcasing improvements made to the Council's play areas
- 7.3. Appendix Three – Play Area Strategy 2024 Action Plan

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Play Area Strategy 2024 Action Plan – Completed Actions

Action	Play Area	Resources	Priority	Notes & Considerations
Replacement of fort at Wellhead Play Area in Bourne meets requirements of s106 monies. Arrange 3 quotes from contractors for replacement	Wellhead- Bourne	Leisure, Property, Planning	High	Completed Apr 25
Review maintenance arrangements to ensure high standards are achieved, current contract with Kompan ends February 2025. Review operational support required.	All	Leisure, Parks	High	Maintenance contract extended to 31 March 2026
Seek fundraising opportunities and apply for funding through the Landfill Communities Fund. Other funding sources may be identified through searching online with GrantFinder	All	Leisure, Parks	Medium	Funding received from FCC Communities Foundation for Beeden Park Refurbishment 2024, Gonerby Hill Foot Refurbishment 2023, Wyndham Park Seniors 2022
Develop a bid to the UK Shared Prosperity fund for replacing equipment in play areas which has been removed due to health and safety and not replaced	Troughton Walk- South Witham Empingham Road- Stamford Arnoldfield- Grantham College Close- Stamford	Leisure	High	Replacements: Swing Set – South Witham Slide – Empingham Road Nest Swing and Zip Line – Arnoldfield Dysart Park – Fitness Equip and Older Childrens unit Completed Feb 2025
Seek opportunities and funding to increase the provision of outdoor fitness equipment into play areas and open spaces	All	Leisure	Medium	Funding obtained from Rotary Club of Grantham to increase fitness equipment in Dysart Park. Funding from UKSPF to provide outdoor table tennis tables to 4 parks across the District in

				Stamford, Grantham, Dyke, and Deeping St James
Completion of asset transfer for Crowson Way, Jubilee Park play area	Crowson Way-Deeping St James	Property	High	Asset transfer completed 5 th September 2024
Replacement of see saw and repairs to safer surfacing and edging surrounding swing set	Andrew Road-Stamford	Leisure, Parks	Low	Completed
Replacement of net bridge due to timber decay and rope traverse ape crossing	Arnoldfield-Grantham	Leisure, Parks	Low	Completed
Replacement of roundabout due to handles missing, recommended removal	Churchfield Close-Deeping St James	Leisure, Parks	Medium	Completed
Replace hoop section due to corrosion and missing backboard	Elizabeth Road-Stamford	Leisure, Parks	Low	Completed
Replace bank slide due to poor condition, toddler slide and double flat swing due to timber condition	Empingham Road-Stamford	Leisure, Parks	Medium	Completed
Replace motorbike springy due to corrosion, replace spinner and see saw due to condition	Foxglove Road-Stamford	Leisure, Parks	Low	Completed
Replace springer seesaw, post carousel and bench due to poor condition	Harrowby Lane-Grantham	Leisure, Parks	Medium	Completed
Replace double cradle swing due to condition and repairs required to safer surfacing	Manor Close-Langtoft	Leisure, Parks, Property	Low	Completed
Replace 2 bay flat seat swings due to condition and 2 swing sets missing out of 4	Princess Drive-Grantham	Leisure, Parks	Medium	Completed

Improvements to Council Play Areas 2024/25

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee
14 October 2025



SOUTH
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Beeden Park, Grantham

- £126,570 project delivered by Wicksteed Leisure
- Funded by FCC Communities Foundation, The Rotary Club of Grantham, and South Kesteven District Council



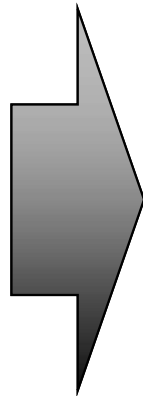
Wellhead Play Area, Bourne

- £35,176 project delivered by Kompan
- Funded by s106 developer contributions



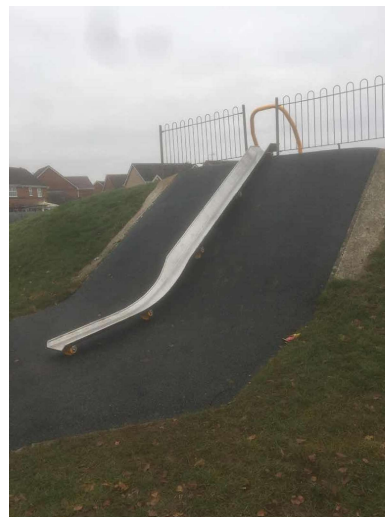
Dysart Park, Grantham

- £40,000 project delivered by Sutcliffe Play
- Funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and The Rotary Club of Grantham



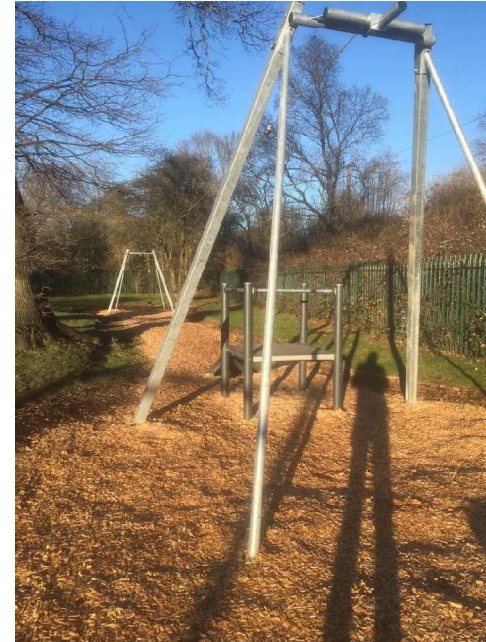
Empingham Road, Stamford

- £24,621 project delivered by Wicksteed Leisure
- Funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund



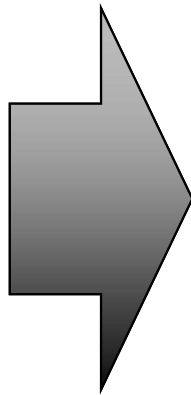
Arnoldfield, Grantham

- £24,683 project delivered by Kompan
- Funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund



Troughton Walk, South Witham

- £10,696 project delivered by Kompan
- Funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund



Smaller Projects funded by South Kesteven District Council

Churchfield Close, Deeping St James

£2,054 project delivered by Sutcliffe Play



Foxglove Road, Stamford

£8,733 project delivered by Sutcliffe Play



Harrowby Lane, Grantham

£8,896 project delivered by Sutcliffe Play



Princess Drive, Grantham

£8,072 project delivered by Sutcliffe Play



Manor Close, Langtoft

£8,869 project delivered by Sutcliffe Play



Andrew Road, Stamford

£5,582 project delivered by EKM Ltd



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Play Area Strategy 2024 – Action Plan

This action plan sets out the programme of actions which will be carried out to deliver the Council’s Play Area Strategy 2024. It lists how each action will be achieved and who is responsible for achieving them. Where appropriate a priority level is indicated and any further considerations highlighted. This action plan will be reviewed annually, and targets monitored to ensure actions have been achieved. End of life data for equipment along with risk ratings have been used to identify actions for specific equipment within the next five years.

The actions have been classified as follows:

- **Low** – actions which have a low impact on play area provision
- **Medium** – actions which have a moderate impact on play area provision
- **High** - actions which have a high impact on play area provision

Action	Play Area	Resources	Priority	Notes & Considerations
Engage with all Parish and Town Councils to establish whether there is any appetite for an asset transfer	All	Leisure, Property	High	South Witham already confirmed no desire to asset transfer Troughton Walk Play Area To be progressed further
Investigate any s106 monies available with a requirement to enhance play equipment	All	Leisure, Property, Planning	High	Wellhead Bourne playing field has money allocated – completed Apr 25. July 25 - Currently working on plans to improve Harrowby Lane play area and surrounding open space.
Completion of asset transfer for Denton play area	Denton - Grantham	Property	High	Equipment removed – currently in the process of being asset transferred
Replace flat net bridge and balance beams, boulders and posts due to condition UPDATE 2025: Develop a proposal for an application to the Landfill Communities Fund to rejuvenate the play area due to the condition of additional equipment: multi climber	Troughton Walk- South Witham	Leisure, Parks	Medium	

with nets, seesaw rotating springy, multi climber with slide, slide				
Replace multi play climber with slide unit due to condition	Tyndal Road-Grantham	Leisure, Parks, Property	Low	Equipment end of life date 2029 – on hold due to drainage issues which Property are investigating with Anglian Water
Develop a tender opportunity for the supply, maintenance and inspections of play equipment in conjunction with Welland Procurement to ensure compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to take effect from 01 April 2026	All	Leisure, Parks	High	
Replace climbing frame and safer surfacing due to condition	Andrew Road - Stamford	Leisure, Parks	High	
Replace rope traverse ape crossing, net bridge and flat seat swings due to condition and timber deterioration	Arnoldfield – Grantham	Leisure, Parks	Low	
Replace motorcycle springy	College Close – Stamford	Leisure, Parks	Low	
Replace springy 3 seat chickens	Dysart Park – Grantham	Leisure, Parks	Low	
Replace double flat swing due to condition	Elizabeth Road, Stamford	Leisure, Parks	High	
Replace basketball hoop/backboard and surfacing due to condition, zip wire due to condition	Empingham Road, Stamford	Leisure, Parks	Medium	
Replace frog rocker, bike rocker and associated surfacing due to condition	Hereward Way, Deepings	Leisure, Parks	Low	
Replacement of outdoor fitness equipment due to condition and corrosion	Kesteven Drive, Deepings	Leisure, Parks	Medium	
Replacement of outdoor fitness equipment and springy wombat due to condition	Lonsdale Road, Stamford	Leisure, Parks	High	

Replace multiplay climber with slide due to condition	Morton	Leisure, Parks	Medium	
Replace zip wire due to condition, forest activity trail and stepping stumps due to timber deterioration, spica carousel and hurricane due to condition and corrosion	Queen Elizabeth Park, Grantham	Leisure, Parks	Medium	Order placed to replace zip wire due to failure – due summer 2025
Replace spinning basket due to condition	Wellhead - Bourne	Leisure, Parks	Medium	
Replace stepping posts, zigzag balance beams and rope bridge due to condition	Witham on the Hill	Leisure, Parks	Low	
Replace seesaw springer, yellow springer bike and red springer bike due to condition	Wyndham Park Infants – Grantham	Leisure, Parks	Low	
Investigate options for repainting equipment across play areas	All	Leisure, Parks	Low	

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**SOUTH
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COUNCIL**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14 October 2025

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

Grantham Principal Parks Update

Report Author

Michael Chester, Team Leader - Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces

✉ michael.chester@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with information relating to the three main Grantham Parks including the facilities and activities provided.

Recommendations

Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the contents of the report.

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
Which wards are impacted?	Grantham St Vincents; Grantham St Wulframs;

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 three Grantham parks sit within the Grantham Special Expense Area (SEA) and any works completed to date have been undertaken within identified budgets and using grants awarded to the Council. If any initiatives are identified which require budget or investment, then an appropriate business case will be developed which identifies the cost and the associated benefit to the community.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no legal and governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan 2024/27 sets out the Council's ambition to be 'A thriving District to live in, work and visit', with the aim of supporting a thriving society that all our residents are proud to be a part of, and championing our District to be a clean, green and healthy environment for future generations. Underpinning this are the key priorities for the Council of 'Connecting Communities' and 'Sustainable South Kesteven'.
- 2.2. Grantham is home to three urban parks notably Wyndham Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and Dysart Park which are all connected by the Riverside Walk. Each offer something different for the residents of Grantham and visitors to the town.
- 2.3. The remainder of this report is broken down into the following subsets for ease of reading:
 - A. Green Flag Awards
 - B. An overview of events in the parks
 - C. An overview of stakeholder engagement in the parks
 - D. An overview of improvement works undertaken the parks
 - E. Volunteering

(A) Green Flag Awards

- 2.4. Each of the three parks has been awarded the coveted Green Flag Award which recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.
- 2.5. The Green Flag Award is managed by Keep Britain Tidy under license from the UK Government Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- 2.6. The purpose and aim of the Green Flag Award scheme is:
- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
 - To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
 - To establish standards of good management.
 - To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.
 - To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.
- 2.7. As part of the award, each park is subject to a formal assessment every two years and a mystery visit in between, ensuring that it continues to meet the aims and requirements of the award.
- 2.8. Both Wyndham Park and Dysart Park were last formally assessed in May 2024, and Queen Elizabeth Park received its most recent formal assessment in April 2025.
- 2.9. The Council have been successful in retaining the accreditation across all the parks for another year. This announcement was made at an awards ceremony held at Smethwick, Sandwell, in July which was attended by the Council's Senior Parks and Cemetery Officer and Parks and Events Community Engagement Officer. Flag raising ceremonies were then held by the Council during Love Parks Week on 28 July 2025 with Officers, Councillors and representatives from each of the parks volunteer groups in attendance.
- 2.10. In addition to the Green Flag raising ceremonies, the Council hosted a celebratory afternoon tea event at Wyndham Park Visitor Centre on 19 August 2025 to recognise all the hard work and efforts of the Officers and Volunteers involved in maintaining the Council's three parks.



Dysart Park



Queen Elizabeth Park

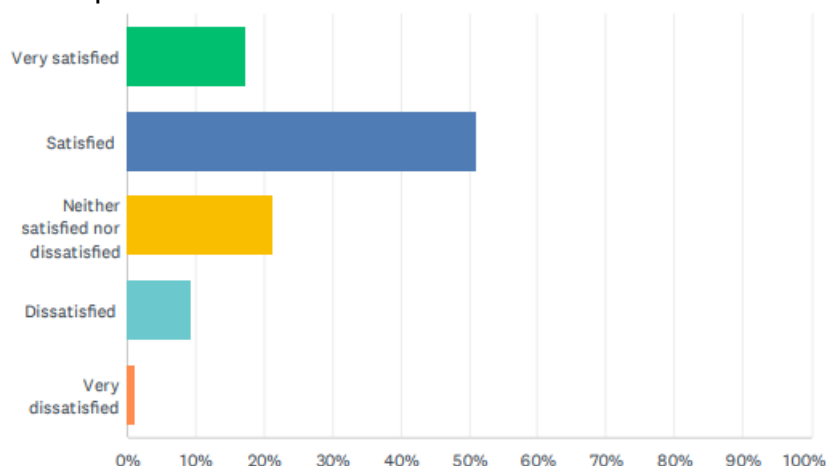


Wyndham Park

- 2.11. Wyndham Park has been awarded the award for its 14th consecutive year and was also awarded the Green Heritage Site Accreditation, supported by Historic England, for the management and promotion of its historic features. Queen Elizabeth Park has been awarded for its fifth consecutive year, and Dysart Park for its third.
- 2.12. Annual consultations are held in each of the parks to find out the views of residents and users, to understand satisfaction levels, and to help with planning any potential future investment. The responses to satisfaction levels are shown below:

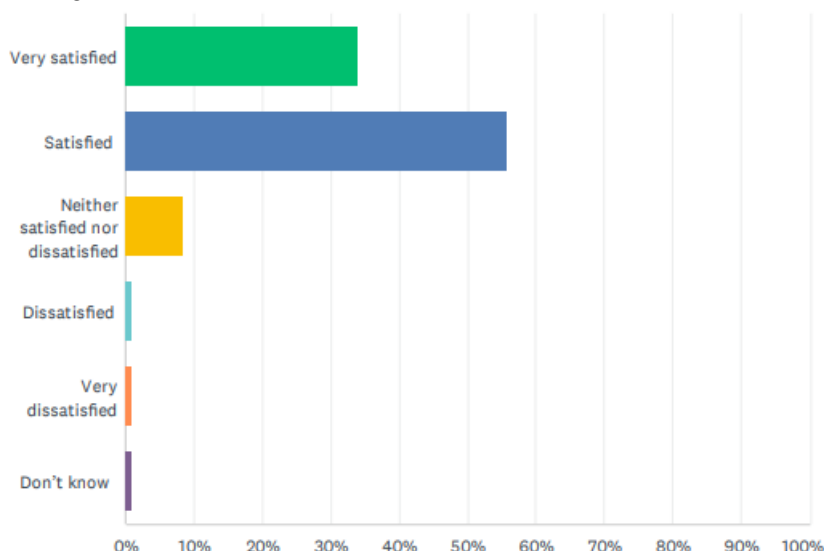
Dysart Park

- Just over two thirds of respondents were very or fairly satisfied, with a fifth of respondents neither satisfied nor dissatisfied



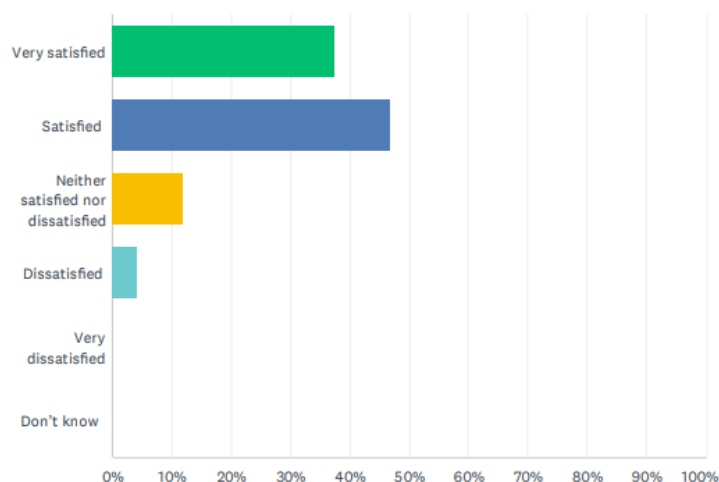
Wyndham Park

- 89.5% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the park, with less than 10% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied



Queen Elizabeth Park

- 84% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the park, with 12% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied



(B) An overview of events in the parks

- 2.13. Since the introduction of the Parks and Events Community Engagement Officer role in 2023, there has been a greater focus on utilising the parks to showcase their features, helping to attract more visitors to each of them. This includes the Council hosting events within the parks and also working with other organisations who wish to host their own events.
- 2.14. So far during 2025 there have been a total of 24 events held across the three parks with **Table One** below providing an overview of each of the events.

Table One: An overview of events across the parks in 2025			
Date	Location	Event Details	Organiser
21 st March – 6 th April	All Parks	Great British Spring Clean	Grantham RiverCare
12 th April	Wyndham Park	Scavenger Hunt	Wyndham Park Forum
19 th April	Wyndham Park	Easter Trail White Rabbit Event and Bonnet Competition	SKDC
4 th May	Wyndham Park	May Day	Wyndham Park Forum
11 th May	Dysart Park	Gingerbread Festival	Dysart Park Action Group
24 th – 26 th May	Wyndham Park	Winnibriggs Stone Age Festival	Lindissi CIC
1 st June	Dysart Park	Volunteering Everywhere	Grantham Town Council

8 th June	Wyndham Park	Grantham Journal Fun Day	Grantham Journal
15 th June	Wyndham Park	Great Big Green Week	SKDC
6 th July	Dysart Park	Family Fun Day	Dysart Park Action Group
19 th July	Queen Elizabeth Park	Dragonfly Day	Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park/Wyndham Park Forum
25 th July – 3 rd August	Wyndham Park	Love Parks Week	SKDC
26 th July	Wyndham Park	Wyndham Park Forum 20 th Anniversary Day	Wyndham Park Forum
2 nd August	Dysart Park	The Pantaloons: Robin Hood	Dysart Park Action Group
9 th August	Wyndham Park	Busking Festival	SKDC
13 th August	Wyndham Park	Shine Family Fun Day	Shine Lincolnshire
13 th August	Wyndham Park	Dog Show	SKDC
13 th August	Wyndham Park	Lego Day	Lego Club Sleaford
17 th August	Wyndham Park	Brass Band in the Park	Linda Jackson
14 th September	Dysart Park	Jazz Festival	Dysart Park Action Group
25 th October	Wyndham Park	Apple Day	Wyndham Park Forum
26 th October	Wyndham Park	Halloween Trail	SKDC
7 th December	Wyndham Park	Santa Fun Run	Rotary Club of Grantham
11 th December	Dysart Park	Christmas Festival	Dysart Park Action Group

2.15. In addition to the events listed in **Table One** above there is now also a programme of regular activities which take place at Wyndham Park Visitor Centre throughout the year, these are overseen by many of the Council's own volunteers. These include:

- Monthly Book Club with Little Readers Book Club during school holidays
- Weekly Wellbeing Walks
- Lincolnshire Police drop in sessions
- Grantham Deaf Chat Group
- Arts and Crafts activities
- Young Adults Social Group
- Building Better Futures Coffee mornings

- 2.16. During each of the school holiday periods the opening hours of the visitor centre increases to five days per week with a themed programme of free events taking place. These have included love and friendship, easter, Halloween and nature.

(C) An overview of stakeholder engagement in the park

- 2.17. To help strengthen relationships and communication amongst all the stakeholders within the parks, the Council introduced quarterly stakeholder meetings in March this year. There is a short agenda for these meetings which provide each stakeholder the opportunity to provide a short update from their group, as well as the Council providing a general update on what is happening in the parks.
- 2.18. Membership of the group is made up of the following:
- The Council – including Officers, and the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture
 - Wyndham Park Forum
 - Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park
 - Dysart Park Action Group
 - Grantham RiverCare
 - Grantham Model Boat Club
 - Cliffe Edge Cycles
 - Grantham Tennis Club
- 2.19. During the most recent meeting Grantham Tennis Club announced that the refurbished tennis courts in Wyndham Park had won the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Lincolnshire Tennis Award for Park of the Year. Volunteers from their Wyndham Park Activator Project collected the award at The Nottingham Open in June 2025.

(D) An overview of improvement works undertaken the parks

- 2.20. The Council is continuously looking at ways in which the parks can continue to be a welcoming place whilst offering an array of different activities.
- 2.21. One of the ways in which the Council can identify potential improvements within the park is through the annual surveys undertaken. Whilst it is not always possible to take forward all suggestions received, the responses do help in providing evidence for improvements when applying for funding to facilitate these.
- 2.22. As a result of feedback received, the Council were awarded UK Shared Prosperity Funding for the creation of a dual use area in the top field of Wyndham Park to promote biodiversity as well as a dog exercise paddock. This was completed in March 2025 and later opened in July 2025, once the wildflowers had established.

An application is now being made to the Green Flag Best of the Best Awards 2025 following the delivery of this project.



- 2.23. Survey results over the past few years have demonstrated a demand for a skate park to be re-introduced in Wyndham Park following its removal several years ago. Following some preliminary work undertaken by both Officers and Councillors, a successful application for £125,000 was made to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in August 2025 to facilitate this. The skatepark will be in the same location as previously in the junior teen zone area of the park, and it is anticipated that this will be installed and ready for use by February 2026.
- 2.24. Dysart Park is often referred to as the forgotten of the three parks. As such the Council have made this a focus for improvements over the past 12 months. Improvements have been funded by the Council's Central Property Maintenance budgets, UK Shared Prosperity Funding, and third-party funding by the Rotary Club of Grantham and include:
- Replacement of tennis court fencing and cleaning of court surface
 - Rebuilding of park boundary wall
 - Rebuilding of car park entrance pillars
 - Extensive drainage improvements
 - Installation of additional fitness equipment and older children's play equipment
 - Installation of outdoor table tennis table
 - Footpath repairs
 - New fencing around the spring
 - Roofing repairs to the toilets, pavilion and store areas
- 2.25. Following the success of the refurbished tennis courts in Wyndham Park, Officers have explored whether there is funding available through the LTA to undertake

similar works to upgrade the tennis court at Dysart Park. Unfortunately, the funding scheme previously used is no longer available, therefore a successful application was made to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in August 2025. The funding received will enable the court to be resurfaced and will complement the works already undertaken by the Council. It is anticipated that these works will commence in September 2025, although this is weather dependant, and will provide an improved facility which will remain free to use by the public.

(E) Volunteering

- 2.26. Since the introduction of the Council's Volunteer Policy in September 2023 a total of 15 SKDC Volunteers have been recruited and are working within Wyndham Park on a regular basis. During 2025 the parks team have also supported two work experience students from Grantham College within the Visitor Centre, who were looking to develop their skills and confidence.
- 2.27. Each volunteer is required to sign up to the Council's Volunteer Policy, and as part of this receives an initial induction which covers health and safety, Council policies and procedures, along with requirements of the role.
- 2.28. To support the development of the volunteers and the continued success of the parks, there are five different categories of volunteer roles within the park with each volunteer assigned to one or more category showcasing their individual skills. These volunteer categories are:
- Learning and Engagement
 - One-off Opportunities
 - Wildlife and Conservation
 - Horticulture
 - Outdoors
- 2.29. During recent months, five of the Council's volunteers have begun developing their skills further by undertaking light gardening duties within Wyndham Park, maintaining planters and some flower beds around the Visitor Centre and Ticket Office. This in turn has helped support the Grounds Maintenance team as well as giving the volunteers a sense of achievement in their work.
- 2.30. Prevent Duty training has been undertaken by each of the volunteers earlier this year, to develop their skills and align them with the Council's policies and procedures. Officers are currently exploring expanding this to include safeguarding training with the Council's Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- 2.31. Working with Lincolnshire Co-op's Community Co-ordinator a total of eight volunteers have completed their Wellbeing Walk Leader training, with a weekly wellbeing walk now taking place across the parks.

- 2.32. It is estimated that during 2024 a total of 3,378 volunteering hours were completed by the Council's volunteers which is in addition to those hours completed by the parks other stakeholders; Grantham RiverCare, Wyndham Park Forum, Dysart Park Action Group, and Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. This report provides information on each of the three Green Flag accredited public parks within Grantham. It offers the opportunity for Members to ask any questions in relation to the parks.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee have previously agreed to receive an update report on the Grantham Parks. Therefore the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. This report is purely for noting and to provide Members with an opportunity to raise any questions in relation to the three parks in Grantham which are managed by the Council.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. Annual consultations have been undertaken with users of each of the parks as part of the Green Flag Awards. Satisfaction results from each of these can be found within the main body of the report.
- 6.2. To support the application for the biodiversity area and dog exercise paddock in Wyndham Park, consultation was undertaken with the community and park stakeholders to establish support for the project. A total of 286 responses were received which were overwhelmingly in support of the project.
- 6.3. Consultation surrounding the skate proposal was undertaken with stakeholders and Ward Members, this demonstrated significant support for the project.

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 16 October 2025

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

Cultural Strategy Action Plan

Report Author

Jade Porter, Arts and Cultural Services Manager

✉ jade.porter@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the delivery of the Cultural Strategy for South Kesteven, including progress with the accompanying Action Plan, and the achievement of the Key Performance Indicators previously agreed.

Recommendations

The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the information provided and offer suggestions on any additional information required for future updates in relation to the implementation of the Council's Cultural Strategy.**
- 2. Agree to receive a report at the next meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 'Thatcher Fest' including the costs incurred.**

Decision Information

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

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Connecting Communities

Which wards are impacted?

All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Activity is being delivered within existing budgets and financial performance is monitored on a monthly basis.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 It is within the remit of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor and assess the performance of the Council's Arts and Cultural Service. There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan (2024 to 2027) sets out the vision for South Kesteven to be "A thriving district in which to live, work and visit". To underpin this vision, the key priority of Connecting Communities identifies the Council's role in delivering and facilitating a sustainable leisure and cultural offer and celebrating and promoting the strong heritage and rich culture of South Kesteven.
- 2.2 The Council's Cultural Strategy 2023 to 2026 (the Strategy) was developed during 2023. The draft Strategy was considered at a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 June 2023 prior to it being formally adopted at a meeting of Cabinet held on 11 July 2023.
- 2.3 The Strategy is the guiding document for the Council's Arts and Culture Team and underpins cultural activity within the Council's three artistic venues, outreach activity across the district, and how the team engage with the wider cultural sector.
- 2.4 At a further meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 September 2023, a suite of key performance indicators were agreed against the key themes in the Strategy. It was proposed these Key Performance Indicators would be used to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the Strategy.

- 2.5 Since the adoption of the Strategy there has been a significant amount of progress made, this being the second six monthly update provided to this Committee. For ease of reading, an update of work undertaken has been split into sub sections alongside other relevant updates:

- A) Pay It Forward Scheme
- B) Outreach Activity
- C) Marketing
- D) Venues – Use of Space
- E) Bid to Arts Council England
- F) General Venue Updates
- G) Event Officer Role
- H) Update on Key Performance Indicators

A) Pay it Forward Scheme

- 2.6 The Pay It Forward Scheme was launched in September 2023 and to date has received donations from patrons of the arts service totalling more than £13,200. The funds raised are used to provide arts and cultural opportunities to residents who would otherwise be unable to access these services for whatever reason.
- 2.7 How the donations have been used is displayed on the websites of all three Council venues, and people who make donations automatically receive a thank you email.
- 2.8 Since the last update, the following activity has been organised utilising the fund:
- Children who are currently in foster care attended ‘Persephone’, a children’s sensory performance about animals and nature in the Stamford Arts Centre Ballroom
 - ‘Sublime Science’, a STEM based science workshop and performance was hosted at Inspire+ HAF Camps across all four towns, this included a workshop for the children in attendance. Approximately 210 children were engaged across the district.
 - Teenagers from Art Pop Ups Youth Group attended the new Disney Lilo and Stitch Film at Stamford Arts Centre Cinema.

B) Outreach Activity

- 2.9 The Council contributes just over £3500 annually to the Rural Touring Scheme, which is also funded by Arts Council England. The scheme takes high quality live performances to rural spaces. Being operated by Live and Local, the Scheme

continues to be extremely well supported in South Kesteven. The events which have taken place, and are planned, include a range of drama, music and comedy. The latest programme runs across 2025 and 2026, engaging 8 venues across the district with a total of 14 events. **Appendix One** provides a detailed report.

- 2.10 The Music in Quiet Places programme continues to be successful, with four events taking place across the district in rural churches. For the 2025 season, the locations were Hough-on-the Hill, Witham on the Hill, Folkingham and Greatford. The most recent series sold 495 tickets across the four events, which is an improvement on the performance in 2024 when 424 tickets were sold, and in 2023 when 355 tickets were sold.
- 2.11 Two family fun days were held in late August 2025 in Bourne and the Deepings. The Bourne Event was due to take place in the car park at the Corn Exchange, but due to the predicted wet weather, was moved inside.
- 2.12 The Bourne event consisted of:
- Animal Club, an educational animal handling experience
 - Vegetable Critter Making with Joker Entertainment
 - Butterfly and Dragonfly crafts with Lincolnshire artist Hannah Peacock
 - Nature Lab, planting Lincolnshire wildlife seeds and using microscopes to inspect resin bugs
- 2.13 The Deepings event was arranged in conjunction with Deepings Library, who were hosting the Summer Reading Challenge, alongside Barmpot Theatre's 'To the Moon and Back', a short puppet performance inside the venue. For this day, the Council provided several activities on the Parish Council land opposite the library including:
- Deepings Forest School, providing small craft activities and promoting their services to the community
 - Outwood CIC, creating wooden animals and teaching children basic woodwork and tools skills
 - Making Vegetable Critters with Joker Entertainment
 - Nature Lab, planting Lincolnshire wildlife seeds and using microscopes to inspect resin bugs
 - Craft activity including decorating sea creature themed pencil pots

- 2.14 Both days were marketed with the use of banners, posters on lampposts in the centre of each town, a press release from the Council's Communications Team, social media posts across the arts centre pages, listings on all three venue websites, as well as direct E-shots to family audiences.
- 2.15 The cost of the two days totalled just under £4,000 which was good value for money and offered free opportunities to children and their families. This has utilised the total outreach budget for the current financial year.
- 2.16 Both days were extremely well attended for the duration, with all the activities being consistently busy, sometimes with a queue to participate.
- 2.17 Staff ensured they spoke to as many attendees as possible throughout the day to get their feedback, some of which is captured below:

Bourne:

- Customers heard about the event through a range of channels, including social media and printed materials displayed around the town (banners, lamppost posters, flyers and posters).
- The QR codes included on marketing materials were highlighted as being particularly useful, as people often find it difficult to locate detailed event information.
- Many customers shared positive comments as they were leaving, with several expressing their appreciation for hosting the event.
- One customer remarked: *"Please continue to produce printed materials as I'm not on social media."*
- Attendees were satisfied with the balance between paid workshops/experiences (e.g. Animal Club at £8) and the free wraparound activities.
- Feedback included: *"It would be good to have more activities in Bourne. I don't drive, and the venue is within walking distance for most of the town. There isn't much available for mums to keep their children entertained."*
- Some families also mentioned that they were also considering attending the event in Deeping two days later.
- The range of activities successfully kept children engaged, with one family staying for almost three hours and participating in every activity.

- There was a noticeable absence of parents or guardians using mobile phones during the sessions – families appeared genuinely engaged.
- One customer commented that she often takes her grandson to free or low-cost local events, as he spends a lot of time with her, and found this type of activity particularly beneficial for them both.
- Another customer shared that they bring their child, who has autism, to smaller events like this, as larger-scale events with too much on offer can feel overwhelming.
- One attendee reported first seeing the event advertised on the Stamford Arts Centre website.
- Several customers also noted they had previously attended *The Whale* event earlier in the year.

Deepings:

- Outdoor activities were especially well received.
- One family shared their observation that there is currently a lack of arts-based activities for children in the Deepings.
- A customer praised the woodwork workshops delivered by Outwood CIC as an excellent idea, noting that children rarely have the chance to use tools such as hammers and nails.
- Another customer mentioned that they regularly use the library and enjoy the activities hosted there.
- Customers generally heard about the event via social media and the library's newsletter and email communications. Some did mention seeing the lamppost poster's throughout the town.

Thatcher Fest:

- 2.18 Through the Arts and Cultural Services Team, the Council have convened a group of stakeholders to mark the centenary of Margaret Thatcher's birth (13 October 2025). Between local groups, businesses and organisations, a week-long programme of events has been created in Grantham exploring her life, legacy, and the social, cultural and political history associated with her.
- 2.19 This has been a genuine collaboration and the groups involved include: Grantham Library, Grantham Museum, Grantham Civic Society, Grantham Labour Group, Christ Church, and Kesteven and Grantham Girls School. This approach lowers

risks to the Council in terms of delivery, financial exposure, and operational responsibility. It has also helped to activate community engagement, giving local groups the opportunity to participate, contributing to civic pride, heritage awareness, and local identity. It is intended to take forward this model of working and for the Council to deliver future festivals or events via coordination and partnership rather than direct delivery.

C) Marketing

Cultural Strategy Themes: Equality and Inclusion, Placemaking, Partnership and Collaboration, Cultural Venues and Programmes, and Value for Money

- 2.20 "What's On" brochures are printed three times a year for the Guildhall and Stamford Arts Centres. These brochures are also distributed by staff around the towns in locations like shops, cafes, and hairdressers, making them easily accessible for customers.
- 2.21 Each venue has established branding, with large 'What's On' diary pages printed as roller banners and large outdoor posters. These have received really good feedback and work as a point of reference for passing customers who may not be familiar with the activities offered within the arts centres.
- 2.22 Across the venues, social media is being used not just for show promotion but also to deliver more interactive, engagement-driven content. More recently reels are being utilised to share short-form videos after events, which typically generates stronger audience interaction and helps nurture connections with followers. The aim is ultimately to drive ticket sales.
- 2.23 Social Media followers currently stand at:

Guildhall Arts Centre Facebook: 7,100
Guildhall Arts Centre Instagram: 1,535

Stamford Arts Centre Facebook: 9,700
Stamford Arts Centre Instagram: 4,170

Bourne Corn Exchange Facebook: 2,600
- 2.24 The three venues use Spektrix as their box office ticketing system. This provides a range of reports, offering valuable data and insights. The top four ways audiences find out about events at the venues are:
 - 1. Word of Mouth, 2. Brochures, 3. Website and 4. Direct Email Notifications.

- 2.25 Hirers at Bourne Corn Exchange who choose to sell their tickets via the venue benefit from receiving marketing via our social media channels and being included on E-shots to customers on our database.
- 2.26 Stamford and Guildhall Arts Centres send monthly E-shots about upcoming events for all subscribers. Targeted emails are then sent to bookers based on their specific booking history to inform them of similar events they might enjoy. Currently, the Guildhall email list includes 9942 subscribers, Stamford Arts Centre has 12137, and the newly established Bourne list has 340 subscribers.
- 2.27 A Marketing and Communications Strategy was originally proposed for completion by April 2025. However, this has been delayed, whilst the core framework of marketing has been reviewed and new processes implemented over the past year. Marketing Officers are now in a position where tasks are scheduled and decision-making processes for events are underway. The Marketing and Communications Strategy is now expected to be written and finalised by April 2026.

D) Venues – Use of Space

Themes: Cultural Venues and Programmes, Value for Money, Equality and Inclusion

- 2.28 The venues remain active hubs for a diverse mix of community and cultural activity through room hire arrangements. Events booked, range from dance and youth drama sessions to yoga, meditation, Tae Kwon Do, and dementia support groups. Where activities complement the Cultural Strategy, or bring opportunities beyond the core arts programme, reduced hire rates can be offered on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.29 Beyond arts programming, the venues are widely used by local organisations, businesses, and individuals. They frequently provide space for occasions such as parties, wedding receptions, wakes, conferences, and meetings. Promotion of room hire opportunities is ongoing, with regular visibility through both social media channels and printed brochures.
- 2.30 Both the Guildhall and Stamford Arts Centres have coffee shops operating as tenants within their premises. These coffee shops benefit from the high footfall generated by events and frequently provide additional catering services for meetings and event bookings.
- 2.31 Digby's Coffee Shop, located within the Guildhall Arts Centre, continues to manage the events bar in the Ballroom and provides bar services for theatre performances. The bar in Stamford Arts Centre is managed in-house.

E) Bid to Arts Council England

Themes: Value for Money, Placemaking, Equality and Inclusion

- 2.32 A recent expression of interest was submitted to the Arts Council Creatives Fund, which was established to fund capital works in two strands, up to £1million and up to £10million.
- 2.33 The focus for the Arts Service became the roof works for the Gallery space which will require works to be undertaken within the next few years, and the potential addition of a lift to gain access to the upper floor offices, rehearsal studio and art room.
- 2.34 Due to the building's layout, installation of a lift would require the removal of a section of the roof and the addition of an external column to house the lift. These works are therefore interdependent and would be better undertaken concurrently.
- 2.35 Unfortunately the expression of interest was unsuccessful and the advice received was to not progress an application.
- 2.36 Other sources of funding will be explored if and when they arise. In the meantime, Officers are working with Property colleagues to plan the remedial works required to the Gallery roof.

F) General Venue Updates

- 2.37 Last year saw the first in house pantomime at Stamford Arts Centre, Mother Goose. The arts centre had not hosted a pantomime since January 2022. The feedback from the pantomime was extremely positive, with many families pleased there was a professional pantomime back at the venue.
- 2.38 This year's pantomime, Alice in Wonderland, is performing strongly, with ticket sales currently almost £2,000 ahead of last year's production of Mother Goose.
- 2.39 Stamford Cinema continues to see improved ticket sales with monthly programmes being programmed which is allowing films to be shown closer to release dates. The films to be shown in October have just been released and achieved just over £9,000 of sales within the first week.
- 2.40 Stamford Arts Centre is running the 'Into Film Festival' for the first time this November. This is a free, annual, nationwide celebration of film and education for 5-19 year olds. The festival aims to help educators bring learning to life for across the UK by inspiring young people to watch, understand and make films in new and creative ways.
- 2.41 The festival is being hosted at no direct cost to the arts centre, and all ticket bookings are entirely free to schools. The Into Film Festival programme features

thousands of film screenings, special events and previews, and includes interactive Q&A sessions with screen industry professionals, making it the perfect opportunity to support young people in enjoying the big screen experience. Stamford has one screening of David Attenborough's 'Ocean', and 'Kensuke's Kingdom' which has already been allocated to Billingborough School. The scheme is a great way to raise the profile of cinema within the arts centre.

- 2.42 The Guildhall Arts Centre's roof repairs are complete after the programme of works taking slightly longer due to additional works being required. These included the removal of the bell and turret for restoration works. The bell will be reinstated in 2026, with a function installed to allow the bell to be sounded on marked occasions.
- 2.43 Bourne Corn Exchange has recently had works completed to maintain and repair the drainage system to prevent recurring blockages due to the aged pipework.

G) Event Officer Role

- 2.44 A new Events Officer post has been created on a one-year fixed-term basis. This will provide maternity cover for the current Marketing and Events Officer, with the potential for the post to be made permanent subject to a successful budget bid for financial year 2026/27. The role will strengthen the Council's ability to deliver a high-quality, community-focused events programme in line with the Cultural Strategy and Corporate Plan.

The postholder will:

- Work directly with communities across the district to identify and respond to local cultural needs, particularly in areas with limited access to arts and cultural experiences.
- Use insight from the 2024 community surveys in Bourne and the Deepings as a baseline, ensuring programming reflects local aspirations and is spread across the district.
- Develop, manage, and safely deliver a wide range of cultural and community events that increase opportunities for engagement and participation.
- Support underserved areas of the district to ensure everyone has access to meaningful cultural experiences.
- Build strong partnerships with community groups, cultural organisations, and external providers to expand the reach and impact of Council-supported events.
- Promote events widely across multiple platforms, working closely with the Marketing team to maximise visibility, participation, and impact.

- Seek additional external funding opportunities to extend the programme's scope and sustainability.

2.45 This new post is designed to increase inclusivity, strengthen community identity, and raise the profile of arts and culture across South Kesteven. It provides an opportunity to test and demonstrate the value of a dedicated community-focused events function, with the ambition that, if successful, it will become an established role in future years.

H) Update on Key Performance Indicators

2.46 An update on activity undertaken to support the Key Performance Indicators previously agreed at a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 September 2023 is provided in **Table One** below:

Table One – Key Performance Indicators		
Partnership and Collaboration	Numbers of providers engaged with a Council established cultural network	Since the last update, a second SK Creatives meeting was hosted and 18 artists from the local area attended. This was a significant increase from the first event. Two attendees subsequently hired the venue at an introductory rate to try and expand their businesses.
		The Arts Service has led on the Stakeholder group for 'Thatcher Fest', inviting and liaising with community groups and businesses to curate a series of events, providing a 'festival' feel. This approach has been received well by stakeholders and will be used as a model for similar future collaborations, including marking 300 years since Newton's death.

		Nature Day in Deepings was created in partnership with Deepings Library, and Deepings Forest School.
Placemaking	Number of outreach events held or supported by the Arts and Cultural Services team	The 'Into Film Festival' is due to be hosted at Stamford Arts Centre in November 2025.
		'Nature Makers' days were held in both Bourne and Stamford, providing free family activities
		The Pay it Forward Scheme has also allowed for outreach activities to take place, as well as bringing people into venues. (See Section A).
		Music in Quiet Places sold 495 tickets across the four events in 2024.
		Funding continues to be allocated to the Rural Touring Scheme providing events in rural areas of SKDC – (See Section B)
Attendance Numbers at Venues		<p>For the same time period (1st January to 15th September) the Arts Centres sold:</p> <p>Guildhall 2024: 16,945 tickets Guildhall 2025: 16,283</p> <p>Stamford 2024: 24,786 tickets Stamford 2025: 30,060 tickets</p> <p>Bourne 2024: 379 tickets sold through Spektrix. Bourne 2025: 810 tickets sold through Spektrix</p>

Health and Wellbeing	Social prescribing service established and residents engaged	The Arts Service has worked alongside Inspire+ to provide Activities for HAF Camps using Pay it Forward donations
		Meetings have been set up with Lincolnshire County Council's HAF Camp Project Officer to establish partnership working on a wider level.
	Numbers of participants engaged with the arts service from target groups	Information has been provided in the body of the report how the Pay It Forward Scheme is benefitting residents who would not otherwise be able to access the arts service.
		Stamford Cinema now regularly uses the Audio Description and Watch Word equipment for cinema screenings, opening up accessibility to deaf and visually impaired audiences.
		Stamford Arts Centre continues to work with 'Watch Word' receiving updates on new products, and testing opportunities as we are their local venue.
	Take Up of Rural Touring programme across district	The Scheme continues to be extremely well supported in South Kesteven with fourteen performances planned to take place across eight different venues.

Value for Money	Amount of external funding secured to support the service	Future High Street Fund monies have been allocated to the Guildhall Arts Centre in order to improve the coffee shop furniture, aged curtains in the Ballroom, and provide a new theatre lighting desk to replace the current failing one to ensure the live programme of events can continue.
Cultural Venues and Programmes	Number of volunteering hours engaged in delivery of Arts and Cultural Events	Since the beginning of this financial year the total number of volunteer hours at the Guildhall Arts Centre have been 1137 hours, between 41 volunteers.
		Stamford Arts Centre held a volunteer information day in August 2025, and have had a series of volunteer applications through. These are currently being processed. Training will be undertaken to allow volunteers to commence work as secondary ushers.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. This report provides an update on work being undertaken since the adoption of the Cultural Strategy and the achievement of the agreed Key Performance Indicators.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 It has previously been agreed that the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a six monthly update on the Cultural Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 As the Council strives to deliver best value and the widest engagement with its arts and cultural service, Members are requested to provide suggestions on any additional information they wish to see.
- 5.2 It is important that the Council's arts service delivers value for money. Therefore, Members are requested to consider the effectiveness of the collaborative approach to 'Thatcher Fest' and the opportunities this presents for future events.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Cultural Strategy 2023-2026 report to cabinet published:
[Cultural Strategy 2023 to 2026.pdf](#)
- 6.2 Cultural Strategy Key Performance Indicators – Report to Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published 5 September 2023, available online at:
<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s38848/Cultural%20Strategy%20KPIs.pdf>

7. Appendices

- 7.1 **Appendix One** - Live and Local Rural Touring Report

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Live & Local Lincolnshire Monitoring

South Kesteven District Council

Autumn Healthcheck Report

As at: 17/09/2025

Programme Year: 2025/2026

These quantitative reports represent the outcomes from local authority funds committed in the equivalent financial year to the above Programme Year. However they support activity during our Program Year period, crossing two financial years (June to May).

Outputs Summary

The Performances and Shows

Unique Events	14	(Count: 14)
Unique Shows	12	
Priority Performances	2	(14%)
Diverse Performances	0	(0%)
BAME Performances	0	(0%)
International Performances	0	(0%)
Creative Case Performances	0	(0%)

The Communities & Promoters

Unique Groups	8
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Promoter Groups List

Active Groups with Events Booked

	Events
Ropsley Village Hall Management Cttee	2
Swayfield Ministry of Fun	2
West Deeping Village Hall Cttee	1
Braceborough & Wilsthorpe Village Hall Cttee	1
Greatford Village Hall Cttee	3
Barrowby Open Door	2
Events at Corby Glen	1
Long Bennington Village Hall Cttee	2
<hr/>	
Total Promoter Groups:	8
Total Events:	14 (Count: 14)

Promoter Enquiries

Currently in recruitment process:

(Total: 3)

Promoting Group

Prospect Level

Grantham Music Club

Cool

Careby, Aunby & Holywell Village Hall Cttee

Warm

Boothby Pagnell Village Committee

Hot

[Any updates will be given at the meeting](#)

Show Details

05/10/25	Barrowby Memorial Hall	Manouche and more	Music (Gypsy Jazz)	Adults/Older Children
17/10/25	Long Bennington Village Hall	Dead on Cue	Drama	Adults/Older Children
17/10/25	West Deeping Village Hall	Crumbs	Comedy Theatre	Adults/Older Children
07/11/25	Greatford Village Hall	Swing from Paris - an evening of Parisian-flavoured music	Music (Gypsy Jazz)	Adults/Older Children
24/01/26	Swayfield Village Hall	Kathy's Song: A Celebration of the Music of Simon and Garfunkel	Music/Storytelling	Adults/Older Children
25/01/26	Ropsley Village Hall	The Campfire Sessions	Storytelling/Music	Adults/Older Children
27/02/26	Braceborough Village Hall	Janice Burns & Jon Doran	Music (Folk)	Adults/Older Children
07/03/26	Swayfield Village Hall	The Pocket Choral Society	Music (Other)	Suitable for All
15/03/26	Ropsley Village Hall	Great Britons	Comedy Theatre	Adults/Family
19/03/26	Long Bennington Village Hall	Victor and Albert - Purveyors of fine musical comedy	Cabaret	Adults/Older Children
27/03/26	Greatford Village Hall	Just Like That! The Tommy Cooper Show	Drama	Adults/Family
28/03/26	Ron Dawson Memorial Hall	Dead on Cue	Drama	Adults/Older Children
10/05/26	Barrowby Memorial Hall	Scratchy Beard's New Folk Explosion	Music (Folk/Blues)	Adults/Older Children
16/05/26	Greatford Village Hall	The Pocket Choral Society	Music (Other)	Suitable for All
Total Events 14		(Count: 14)		

Events by Audience & Show

Adults/Older Children

Crumbs	1	
Dead on Cue	2	
Janice Burns & Jon Doran	1	
Kathy's Song: A Celebration of the Music	1	
Manouche and more	1	
Scratchy Beard's New Folk Explosion	1	
Swing from Paris - an evening of Parisian	1	
The Campfire Sessions	1	
Victor and Albert - Purveyors of fine musi	1	
Total this Group:	10	71%

Adults/Family

Great Britons	1	
Just Like That! The Tommy Cooper Show	1	
Total this Group:	2	14%

Suitable for All

The Pocket Choral Society	2	
Total this Group:	2	14%

Total Events for Year:	14	(Count: 12)
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Events by Artform & Show

Drama		
Dead on Cue	2	
Just Like That! The Tommy Cooper Show	1	
Total this Group:	3	21%
Music (Folk)		
Janice Burns & Jon Doran	1	
Total this Group:	1	7%
Comedy Theatre		
Crumbs	1	
Great Britons	1	
Total this Group:	2	14%
Storytelling/Music		
The Campfire Sessions	1	
Total this Group:	1	7%
Music (Other)		
The Pocket Choral Society	2	
Total this Group:	2	14%
Music (Gypsy Jazz)		
Manouche and more	1	
Swing from Paris - an evening of Parisian-flavoured music	1	
Total this Group:	2	14%
Music (Folk/Blues)		
Scratchy Beard's New Folk Explosion	1	
Total this Group:	1	7%
Cabaret		
Victor and Albert - Purveyors of fine musical comedy	1	
Total this Group:	1	7%
Music/Storytelling		
Kathy's Song: A Celebration of the Music of Simon and Garfunkel	1	
Total this Group:	1	7%
Total Events for Year:	14	(Count: 12)

Priority Performances Summary

These are companies or shows that have a particular significance within the overall programme and that we have said to our main arts funders (Arts Council England) that we will support. Their subsidy is partly predicated on these shows featuring in the final performance programme. They are companies or shows that:

- Came through our DART programme including work that has been created in partnership with promoters and/or their audiences;
- Are our current artform priorities (currently dance, drama and live literature);
- Are our audience priorities (currently children and young people);
- Have featured at the NRTF New Directions showcase;
- Have an uncommon, exceptional or surprising content or presentational style.

Priority	2	14%	(Count: 14)
Non Priority	12	86%	
Total	14	100%	
International	0	0%	
Diverse	0	0%	
Drama	3	21%	
BME	0	0%	
Priority	2	14%	
Creative Case	0	0%	

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14 October 2025

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

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021 - 2026) – October 2025 Update

Report Author

Bethany Goodman, Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead

✉ bethany.goodman@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the progress and delivery of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021 - 2026) and the accompanying Action Plan.

Recommendations

The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the progress and delivery of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for South Kesteven.**
- 2. Consider the results of the latest Active Lives data available for South Kesteven.**
- 3. Note the progress and steps to refresh the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.**
- 4. Suggest enhancements to the extent and clarity of the information produced for the next six-monthly report.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

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

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no legal and governance implications arising from 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 delivering the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (the Strategy) which was adopted in 2021 and refreshed in 2024. The Council's Leisure Team is responsible for implementing the actions identified in the Strategy, targeting key areas, and working with partners to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to live healthy, active lifestyles.
- 2.2. The Council's Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously agreed to receive a six-monthly report to highlight progress made on the delivery of the Action Plan contained within the Strategy, the most recent update being

provided at a meeting of the Committee on 15 May 2025 (**see Background Papers**).

2.3. The remainder of this report provides a further update and is broken down into three key areas with subsets as follows:

A. An overview of the work undertaken to support the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

- Physical Activity Initiatives for Council Employees
- Partnerships and Collaborative Working
- Leisure Facilities
- Action Plan

B. The Active Lives Survey

C. Plans to refresh the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in 2026.

A. Overview of the work undertaken to support the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

Physical Activity Initiatives for Council Employees

2.4. The Council's Leisure and Wellbeing Teams have both played an important role in South Kesteven District Council being a finalist for the Workforce Optimisation Award at the MJ Awards in June 2025.

2.5. Encouraging officers to be more active yields numerous benefits, including improved physical and mental health, increased work productivity, reduced absenteeism, and better team morale. As a result, there has been a 53% reduction in mental health-related absences, 9% reduction in staff turnover and a remarkable rise in employee engagement levels, with many taking part in physical activity initiatives.

2.6. In April 2025, 18 colleagues attended a sleep health workshop which explored insights behind sleep and its vital role in improving our health and wellbeing.

2.7. In May 2025, the Council partnered up with LeisureSK Limited to offer free health checks to employees. Blood pressure, height, weight, peak flow and other health checks were undertaken. 14 colleagues had a health check completed throughout the session.

2.8. Across June and July 2025, colleagues played tennis amongst one another on a weekly basis at Wyndham Park. This created opportunities for physical activity and to build positive relationships amongst Officers.

- 2.9. In August 2025, the Wellbeing Team offered the opportunity to play lawn bowls at Wyndham Park and 16 colleagues attended. Lawn bowls offers physical benefits such as improved balance, coordination and cardiovascular fitness, whilst promoting mental health through stress reduction and cognitive engagement.

Partnership and Collaborative Working

- 2.10. The Council alone cannot achieve its corporate ambition of Connecting Communities; accordingly Officers have continued to collaborate with partner organisations, stakeholders, and communities. Since the previous update provided to this Committee, new relationships have been developed and activities attended, these include:
- Monthly attendance at UK Active Webinars.
 - Attendance at 'We are Undefeatable' webinars.
 - Attendance at the Grantham Partnership Board where local initiatives relating to physical activity are discussed and promoted.
 - Attendance at the South Lincolnshire Alliance for Mental Health meetings where provision that supports mental health for residents is discussed and ideas are shared.
 - Attendance at the Lincolnshire District Wide Health and Wellbeing Working Group, which enables knowledge sharing and communication across the District Councils.
 - Attendance at the Lincolnshire District Wide Health Weight Partnership Board.
 - Attendance at workshops and roundtable seminars hosted by the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA).
 - Attendance at the Physical Literacy Conference.
- 2.11. The Council's Leisure Team is attending the Grantham Business Club on Friday 16 January 2026 to promote the importance of workplace wellbeing in South Kesteven.
- 2.12. Officers are continuing to work with The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) by feeding into the Lincolnshire Local Skills Accountability Board. This brings employers and education providers together to identify sector challenges, skills gaps and concerns within Lincolnshire. A sport and physical activity sector local skills plan is in the process of being created which will have themes, recommendations, actions and objectives within it.
- 2.13. Cross council working has taken place to upskill Council volunteers who are based at Wyndham Park Visitor Centre, allowing them to become qualified instructors to deliver 'Our Parks' sessions. 'Our Parks' sessions will bring free group exercise classes, led by qualified and insured instructors to the park. More information about 'Our Parks' can be found here [Our Parks | Get Fit For Free](#). Two classes will be launching, one for Older Adults new to exercise and one for the Young Adults Social Group.

- 2.14. Conversations are continuing with Lincolnshire County Council to promote Active Travel, with officers working to identify any routes or schemes that could be developed within South Kesteven to be considered for future funding.
- 2.15. In June 2025, cross council collaboration saw the delivery of four events across the district to support the 'Great Big Green Week'. Great Big Green Week is a celebration of community action to tackle climate change, a call out was made for everyone to make simple swaps that will add up to substantial changes, making our communities better, greener and healthier for the future. Officers encouraged residents to travel actively, primarily in the form of walking and cycling.
- 2.16. Council Officers are working with Lincolnshire County Council and Outspoken (Bikeability delivery) to undertake bike marking sessions at schools throughout the district. These kits reduce the chances of residents within South Kesteven becoming a victim of cycle theft by allowing individuals to register their bikes on a National Police approved database for free.
- 2.17. A bike marking session was held at Wyndham Park Visitor Centre as part of 'Love Parks Week' in July 2025, as well as hosting outdoor fitness circuits using the outdoor gym equipment.
- 2.18. The Council's Leisure Team have been involved over the last 24 months with the development of the South Kesteven Design Code by the Planning Team. This is currently in draft format and undergoing review. Leisure Officers focused on three of the design requirements; Movement, Public Spaces and Built Form.
- 2.19. The Council's Leisure Team and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture have been working closely with the Football Foundation, Lincolnshire FA and Continuum Leisure to refresh the South Kesteven Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP). The LFFP is a detailed report that maps out the football facilities needed across South Kesteven and considers the predicted growth of the population and sports clubs. The LFFP for South Kesteven can be found online at: [South Kesteven Local Football Facility Plan](#).
- 2.20. The Council continues to work closely with Active Lincolnshire, with Officers promoting the online Activity Finder, enabling residents to source activities in their local area. This can be found online at: <https://www.activelincolnshire.com/get-involved/lets-move-lincolnshire/club-and-activity-finder>, or accessed through the Council's website, making it even easier for residents to find activities: <https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/arts-leisure-and-culture/sports-and-leisure/activity-finder>.
- 2.21. Council Officers attended the Shine Lincolnshire Family Fun Day at Wyndham Park in August 2025 to promote the Let's Move Activity Finder. The event showcased a

range of activities available in the community such as Yoga in the Park, guided bike rides, outdoor fitness sessions, tennis and football coaching and much more.

Leisure Facilities

2.22. Officers within the Leisure Team continue to work with the Council's leisure provider LeisureSK Limited to deliver the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. The list below details activity currently being undertaken:

- Wellbeing walks continue to take place from Bourne Leisure Centre on a Wednesday and Friday morning, Stamford Leisure Pool on a Tuesday afternoon, and Grantham Meres Leisure Centre on a Thursday.
- Good Boost, which is an app based therapeutic water exercise programme for people with musculoskeletal conditions, continues to be delivered at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.
- Summer holiday swim crash courses continue to be delivered across all three centres.
- Exercise on Prescription continues to be delivered across Bourne Leisure Centre (62 starters since April 2025) and Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) swimming lessons and dedicated family swim sessions continue to run at Bourne Leisure Centre, Stamford Leisure Pool and Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.
- Fighting Fit Cancer Rehabilitation classes continue to run at Bourne Leisure Centre in partnership with the Lincoln City Football Foundation.
- Specialist classes are being held at Bourne Leisure Centre which provide targeted interventions and enhanced health and wellbeing outcomes. These include classes for those suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Cardiac Rehabilitation, Disability Circuits, Mindfulness Meditation, and classes to aid balance and coordination.

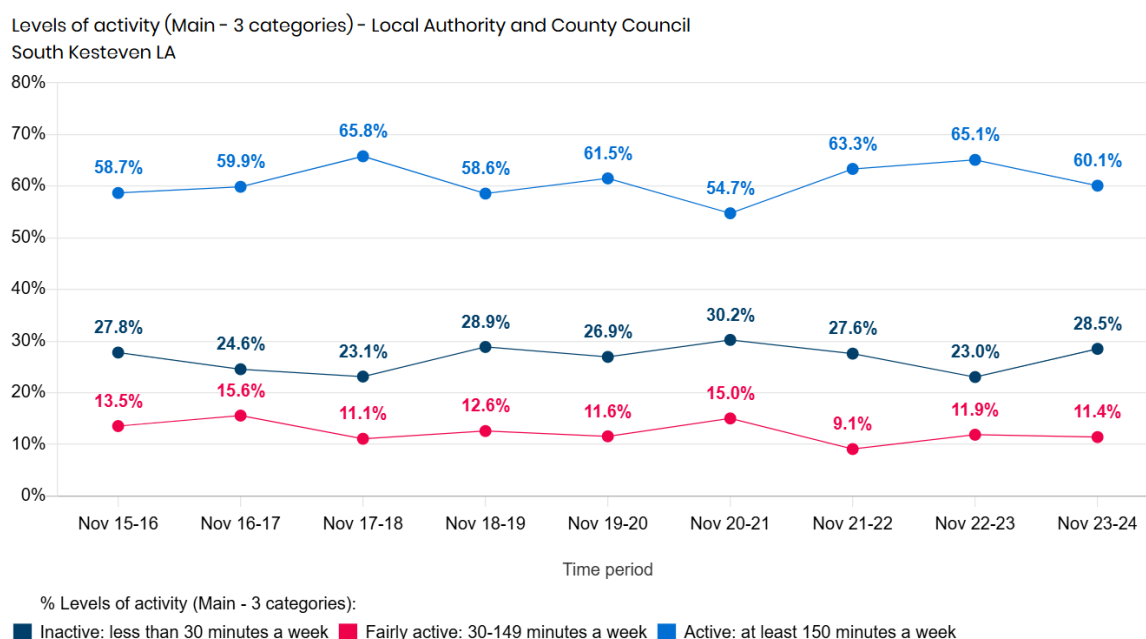
2.23. In addition, the Council are continuing to invest in its leisure centres using funding initiatives such as the Council's Climate Reserve and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase3c, as well as undertaking ongoing maintenance works which form part of the planned preventative maintenance schedule. A Leisure Investment Reserve has also been established and a proposed criteria developed in order to provide a clear methodology to allocate the funding

2.24. The information provided in **Appendix One** highlights planned future activity in the coming months.

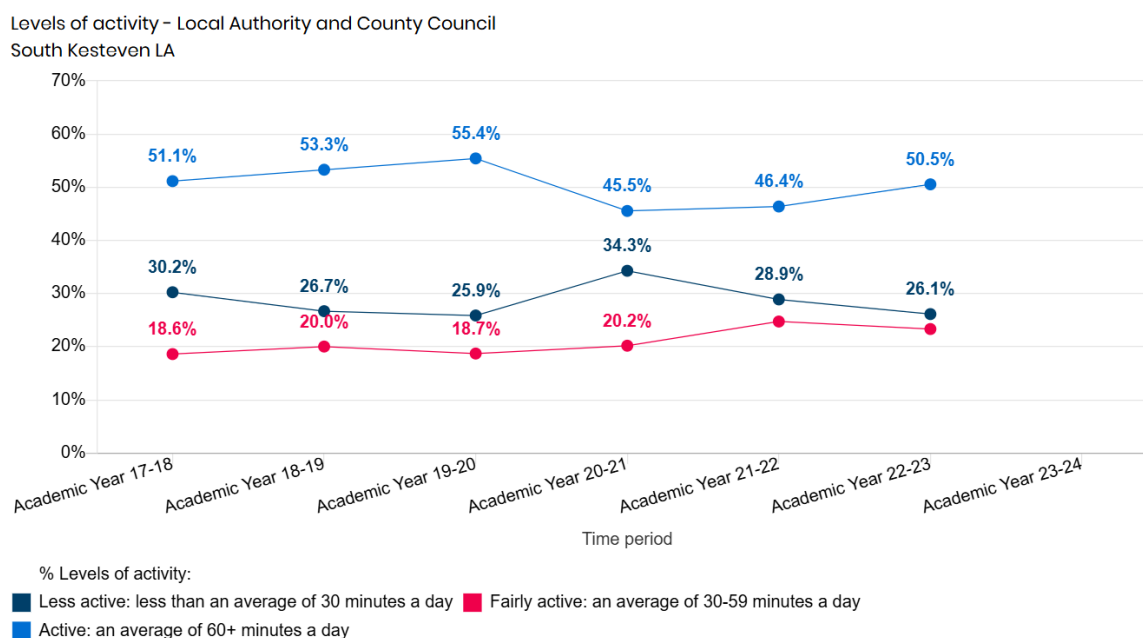
B. The Active Lives Survey

2.25. The most recent Active Lives Adult Survey Data was published in April 2025 and is available online at <https://activelives.sportengland.org/>.

- 2.26. The graph below presents the levels of activity across South Kesteven for Adults since November 2015 – November 2016.



- 2.27. The graph below presents the levels of activity across South Kesteven for Children and Young People (CYP) since academic year 2017 – 2018.



C. Plans to refresh the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy in 2026

- 2.28. The current Strategy is dated 2021/26 and is therefore due to be reviewed. The Council aspires to have a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy which brings together

a wide group of partners with shared objectives, creating, promoting and enhancing opportunities for sport and physical activity as a key means to help create a healthier district.

2.29. Refreshing the Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy is essential to ensure the goals and objectives remain relevant and aligned with the needs of our community. The refreshed Strategy should demonstrate the Council's commitment to improving public health, reduce inequalities in participation and ensure the mission remains 'to provide opportunities for people to be more active, more often.'

2.30. A range of strategies, documents and data are to be considered during this process which include the below:

- [The NHS 10 Year Health Plan: Fit for the Future](#)
- [10 Year Health Plan – opportunities for physical activity | Sport England](#)
- [South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan - 2024 to 2027](#)
- [The Richmond Group of Charities 'Millions More Moving'](#)
- [Let's Move Lincolnshire Strategy - Active Lincolnshire](#)
- [Let's Move Lincolnshire Blueprint](#)
- [Get Active: A Strategy for the future of sport and physical activity](#)
- [Horizon Scanning: Future Trends in Sport and Physical Activity](#)
- [Uniting the Movement | Sport England](#)
- [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)
- [Local Authority Health Profiles - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)
- [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub](#)

2.31. It is proposed that the draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2027 - 2032 will be presented to a meeting of this Committee on 13 May 2026 for consideration and review before formal adoption.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. The Council's Leisure Team continue to work on the delivery of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, collaborating with the Council's leisure provider LeisureSK Limited and a range of partners across South Kesteven.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee have previously agreed to receive six-monthly updates on the delivery of the Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. Therefore, the 'do nothing' option has been discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy provides a basis for the Council to deliver on its ambition to increase health and wellbeing outcomes across South Kesteven. Members are encouraged to suggest enhancements to the extent and clarity of the information produced for the next six-monthly update report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1. *Sport and Physical Activity Strategy – May 2025 Update* – Report to Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published 7 May 2025, available online at: [Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2021 - 2026.pdf](#)

7. Appendices

- 7.1. **Appendix One** – Delivery of the Sport and Physical Activity Action Plan

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Appendix One - Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Action Plan

Activity Area	Theme	Future Actions
Active Society	Ensure Participation is affordable and accessible to the whole community	Encourage schools to participate in 10 @ 10 on National Fitness Day (24th September) or undertake some form of short activity. Promote National Fitness Day through social media channels and encourage movement in any form.
		Grantham Meres Leisure Centre continues to host holiday activities partnered with Junior Adventures Group (JAG) to enable opportunities to stay active outside of term time. Officers are to develop partnerships to promote further HAF opportunities in the district.
		To continue to work in partnership with local British Cycling trained ride leaders/advocates to offer monthly guided rides through Belton House, with talks from the rangers about the wildlife and the park.
		Create self-guided routes to support the Cycle to the Woods route from Wyndham Park to Londonthorpe Woods.
	Encourage physical activity as a holistic approach to wellbeing, including a focus on mental health	Work with health partners to promote opportunities to be active to help with overall health and wellbeing. Review the Council's website to promote Workplace Wellbeing and include Physical Activity, Diet and Lifestyle Advice. A guide will also be created and made into a printable version to share across the district.
		Continue to encourage GP Practices to sign up to the Active Practice Charter to make positive changes in their surgeries to boost staff and patient wellbeing by becoming more active.
		To continue to provide physical and wellbeing initiatives within the Council, raising awareness through a range of different challenges and charities.
		Work with Active Lincolnshire and We are Undefeatable to develop a local campaign with local people, to encourage physical activity.
Active Place	Invest in the Council's Leisure Facilities to ensure they meet the needs of the customers	Work is underway utilising funding from Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 3c to upgrade the heating system at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre to make it more energy efficient and sustainable. This is due for completion in February 2026.
		The Council's Property and Leisure Teams will continue to work through the condition surveys prioritising works based on severity and risk.
		Continue to monitor the customer satisfaction levels via surveys and other data to ensure that the leisure facilities meet the needs of the customers. This includes monitoring feedback included on the leisure monitoring reports.
		A £500k Leisure Investment Reserve has been established with a criteria developed to provide a clear methodology to allocate the funding across each of the facilities to provide decorative and cosmetic improvements in areas where there is a strong interface with the customers and where there is clear evidence investment is required.
		The next annual Sport England Moving Communities Customer Satisfaction Survey was published in September 2025.
	Explore opportunities to use parks and open spaces within the district	The qualified 'Our Parks' volunteers based at Wyndham Park Visitor Centre will launch two free beginner exercise classes, one for older adults and one for the Young Adults Social Group.
		Continue to use social media, web pages and other promotion of green and open spaces within the district. The Parks Community Team will continue to develop a programme of events and activities to attract visitors to Wyndham Park, Grantham.

Active People	Support a broad range of sport and physical activity opportunities that reflect the needs of the community and visitors to the district	Timetable and programming for leisure facilities are being continuously reviewed and new initiatives added to ensure there are a broad range of activities on offer to residents and visitors. Actions are due to be delivered following the results of the Moving Community Communities Survey such as sessions for beginners, older adults and women and girls.
		Understand the priorities in Public Health within South Kesteven using data to influence the work we do.
		Continue to promote 'We are Undefeatable' and the new app which will inspire people living with long term health conditions to build physical activity into their daily routines or encourage them to try something new.
		Create a 'Fighting Fit' class in Stamford which supports people living with or recovering from cancer. This work is in collaboration with The Lincoln City Foundation, Stamford Health Education and Awareness Charity (SHEAC) and LeisureSK Limited. This is due to launch in January 2026.
	Work with the Council's leisure provider and partners to run health intervention programmes that result in improved health and wellbeing for residents and deliver outreach activities in our communities	More marketing is required to promote opportunities, especially for GP's and hospitals. Continue to develop partnerships with further GP practices through the PCN, following the success of Bourne initiatives.
		Work with partners to create one wellbeing event in each market town to showcase local physical activity opportunities allowing people to give new activities a try to improve their wellbeing. The Grantham event is being scheduled for 1st November 2025 at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.
		Encourage partners to create walking sport groups such as walking tennis, walking netball and reintroduce a programme of activities at leisure facilities.
Active System	Recognise that physical activity is more than participation in sport and includes activities such as walking, dancing and gardening	Council Officers are to undertake walking audits of each of the main towns, which will also assist with the Age Friendly Communities work.
		Ensure positive messages are communicated to residents in a variety of ways, including social media, about how activity can be integrated into everyday life, showcasing the benefits relating to general health and wellbeing.
		Continue to work with other organisations to promote activities and events taking place across South Kesteven.
		Development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Grantham, The Deepings and Stamford through Lincolnshire County Council.
	Facilitate partnerships between authorities, organisations, communities, and groups to empower those who can make a change	Collaboration with local businesses on workplace health, active travel and physical activity initiatives. Deliver a Workplace Wellbeing Presentation at Grantham Business Club in January 2026.
		Increase cycle parking opportunities within South Kesteven, working in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and the Grantham Market Place project.
		An SKDC officer working group meets quarterly to ensure collaboration across the whole council can be effective to achieve the South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan which was adopted in December 2023.
		Explore funding opportunities with Active Lincolnshire and Sport England through the 'Place Universal Offer' (PUO) to support long-term systemic change that reduces physical inactivity and inequality in local areas.
		Develop positive relationships with the Public Health Team at Lincolnshire County Council to target specific audiences in the district, data dependent. Understand the priorities in Public Health within South Kesteven.



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 14 October 2025

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

LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report – Quarter 1 2025/26

Report Author

Michael Chester, Team Leader - Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces

✉ michael.chester@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide an update to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the performance of LeisureSK Ltd during quarter 1 in financial year 2025/26 against the leisure management contract objectives.

Recommendations

Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee are recommended to note the contents of the report.

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
Effective Council

Which wards are impacted?

Bourne East; Grantham Earlesfield;
Stamford St Georges;

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no financial implications from the Council's perspective in relation to this report. As part of the agency contract arrangement income is collected by LeisureSK Ltd on behalf of the Council and a monthly reconciliation is carried out. Any expenditure incurred in delivering the service is deducted before the surplus income is transferred to the Council.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for assessing the performance of LeisureSK Ltd in line with the Council's agreed performance indicators as set out in the Leisure Services Specification – April 2025. The Committee has previously agreed to receive six monthly updates on performance.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright – Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan 2024-27 sets out the key priorities for the Council and its leisure service. Providing a high-quality sustainable leisure offer helps support the Council's corporate ambitions and provides opportunities for improved health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities.
- 2.2. The Council entered a new 10-year agency agreement with LeisureSK Ltd on 1 April 2025 which includes a refreshed suite of key performance indicators (KPI's). The Council's leisure contract with LeisureSK Ltd focusses on embedding an approach that seeks to continuously improve service delivery and customer experience.
- 2.3. Previously the Council's Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee have received operational and financial performance updates directly from LeisureSK Ltd. This report will therefore focus solely on the Company's performance against the KPI's embedded within the Leisure Services Specification.

- 2.4. During year one of the contract with LeisureSK Ltd, baseline data will be collected to measure the performance of the company against across the remainder of the contract period. Therefore, the information provided in **Appendix One** is the baseline contract data collected during quarter one (Q1) of the current financial year.
- 2.5. Council Officers continue to undertake regular monitoring visits across each of the leisure facilities. These focus on the customer experience journey whilst ensuring that the delivery of the service is aligned with the performance requirements set out in the Leisure Services Specification.
- 2.6. During the period April to June 2025 a total of 12 monitoring visits were carried out by the Council's Leisure Team, covering the three leisure facilities and the stadium in Grantham.
- 2.7. **Table One** below shows the findings for cleanliness and maintenance issues raised from the leisure monitoring visits during this period. Also included in brackets is the variance compared to the same reporting period in 2024.

Table One: Findings from the leisure monitoring visits and the items raised for rectification between the period of April 2025 to June 2025 with the variance in brackets compared to the same reporting period in 2024		
Facility	Total Cleanliness Items	Total Maintenance and Repair Items
	April – June 2025	April – June 2025
Bourne Leisure Centre	82 (+27)	53 (+16)
Grantham Meres Leisure Centre	170 (-24)	96 (+32)
South Kesteven Sports Stadium	128 (+5)	106 (+31)
Stamford Leisure Pool	88 (-11)	22 (-9)

- 2.8. Monitoring of the rectification numbers for cleanliness and maintenance issues forms part of the corporate KPI's reported to this Committee.
- 2.9. Under the terms of the contract LeisureSK Ltd must inform the Council should there be any closure of the pools. During Q1 there were a total of five pool closures reported as detailed below:
- Bourne Leisure Centre had two closures due to a medical emergency and chemical dosing issues.
 - Stamford Leisure Pool had two closures due to a water supply issue and the early finishing of a session due to unaccompanied children.
 - Grantham Meres Leisure Centre has one closure due to faecal fouling during swimming lessons.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. This report provides information on the leisure contract performance and monitoring arrangements for LeisureSK Ltd and offers and opportunity for Members to raise any concerns around the facilities and the level of service being offered.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee have previously agreed to receive six monthly updates on the performance of LeisureSK Ltd against the contract KPIs.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The Council has a duty to ensure the leisure contract provides value for money and delivers on its corporate objectives. The information detailed within the report provides Members with an opportunity to assess the performance of LeisureSK Ltd.

6. Appendices

- 6.1. **Appendix One** – LeisureSK Ltd performance data Q1 2025/26

Appendix One – LeisureSK Ltd performance data Q1 2025/26

Table One: An overview of the performance indicators for LeisureSK Ltd against the Council's priority outcomes during Q1 2025/26		
Priority Outcome	Performance Indicator	Q1 Result <i>*These are actual results and will form the baseline data for future reporting against</i>
1) Improving the health of residents by encouraging and providing opportunities for people in South Kesteven to be more active, more often.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a 1% YOY increase in the activity levels in the number of adults who undertake 150 minutes of physical activity per week. Achieve a 1% YOY increase in the activity levels in the number of children who undertake 60 minutes of physical activity per day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults 60.1% (Nov 2023/24) Children 50.5% (Academic Year 2022/23)
2) Tackling inactivity in priority groups and areas, increasing the numbers of people taking part in physical activity and the frequency this is undertaken to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Authority's priority wards and rural areas Young people (under the age of 16) Women and ethnic groups Older adults (over 55's) People with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions 	Measured annually from the Operator's available data and compared to data from Sport England's Active Lives Survey. See Priority Outcome 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection of baseline data for target groups in year 1 Achieve a 1% increase in the number and participation dedicated to each of the key target groups identified from year 2 onwards 	Young people: 4,188 Older adults: 3,906 <i>*Reporting dashboard currently being reviewed by LeisureSK CRM provider to assist with other metrics</i>
3) Provide high quality leisure facilities and activities to deliver positive and affordable opportunities for people to improve their health and wellbeing.	Measured annually from the Operator's available data and compared to data from the Sport England annual Moving Communities Customer Experience Survey. Achieve a 2% YOY increase in total usage across each Facility	Grantham: 99,426 Bourne: 65,713 Stamford: 36,164 Total: 201,303

Appendix One – LeisureSK Ltd performance data Q1 2025/26

<p>4) Nurture robust and meaningful partnerships across sectors to improve activity opportunities and encourage partnership working and improve community cohesion</p>	<p>To be completed through the Operator sharing available information on a quarterly basis with the Authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One You Lincolnshire for Exercise on Prescription • Lincoln City Football Foundation to deliver Fighting Fit Cancer Rehabilitation • Lincolnshire Co-op for Healthy Wellbeing Walks • Bourne Galletly Practice for Seated Exercise • The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) for development of a Workforce Development Strategy • One You Lincolnshire for delivery of Gloji Energy
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Appendix One – LeisureSK Ltd performance data Q1 2025/26

<p>5) Improving knowledge of the benefits of physical activity and deliver a positive customer experience for those who visit the Authority's leisure facilities and engage with services</p>	<p>Measured annually from the Operator's available data and compared to data from the Sport England annual Moving Communities Customer Experience Survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a 2% YOY increase in the levels of customer satisfaction at each Facility • Achieve a YOY increase in the NPS score for each Facility 	<p>Annual customer experience survey 2024 results</p> <p><u>Satisfaction</u> Grantham: 80% Bourne: 82.11% Stamford: 80.88%</p> <p><u>NPS</u> Grantham: 9.09 Bourne: 30.85 Stamford: -1.51</p>
<p>6) Improve the energy efficiency of the leisure estate and review further renewable energy opportunities to support the Authority's aim to reduce its carbon footprint by 30% by 2030, and to achieve net zero by 2041.</p>	<p>To be completed through the Operator sharing available information on a quarterly basis with the Authority on energy consumption and carbon emissions for each Facility.</p> <p>Achieve a 5% reduction in consumption at each Facility each year in the first three years of the contract</p>	<p><u>Gas consumption (kW)</u> Grantham: 519,427 Stadium: 16,551 Bourne: 324,458 Stamford: 181,594</p> <p><u>Electricity consumption (kWh)</u> Grantham: 142,285 Stadium: 15,351 Bourne: 123,384 Stamford: 71,322</p>

Appendix One – LeisureSK Ltd performance data Q1 2025/26

Table Two: An overview of the key performance indicators for LeisureSK Ltd during Q1 2025/26		
Key Performance Indicator	How this will be measured	Q1 Result
1) Total members – total number of members visiting per centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a 2% YOY increase – last quarter vs same quarter previous year 	Grantham: 1,697 Bourne: 1,876 Stamford: 2,132
2) Total pay as you go users (PAYG) – PAYG users per centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a 2% YOY increase – last quarter vs same quarter previous year 	Grantham: 5,749 Bourne: 5,951 Stamford: 5,626
3) Total throughput – total number of visits per centre including members and PAYG users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a 2% YOY increase – last quarter vs same quarter previous year 	Grantham: 99,426 Bourne: 65,713 Stamford: 36,164 Total: 201,303
4) Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses – total number of accidents, incidents and near misses across the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a YOY reduction – last quarter vs same quarter previous year 	Total: 108
5) Swim School Occupancy – total percentage of occupancy filled for the Swim School against total capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a recommended lessons occupancy of 85% but no more than 90% - last quarter vs same quarter previous year 	Growth of 1.4% across Q1 Grantham: 94% Bourne: 90% Stamford: 86%
6) Membership Sales – total number of new membership sales across the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a YOY increase – last quarter vs same quarter previous year 	Total: 485
7) Membership Leavers – total number of membership leavers across the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a YOY reduction – last quarter vs same quarter previous year 	Total: 459
8) Quest Plus Accreditation – progress Quest scoring over the contract length with all facilities achieving Quest Plus and a minimum rating of very good by the end of year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved scoring YOY with a minimum rating of very good by the end of year 3 – annual vs previous year 	<u>Quest 1 Day Results</u> Grantham: Very Good Bourne: Good Stamford: Good

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2025/26

WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/ PRIORITY
14 October 2025				
Grantham Town Football Club Lease (Verbal Update)	Lead Officer: Michael Chester (Team Leader Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)			
Play Area Strategy Review	Lead Officer: Michael Chester (Team Leader Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)	To report on progress on the Action Plan accompanying the Play Area Strategy	Committee requested an update be provided in 12 months at the September 2024 meeting	
Parks Update	Lead Officer: Michael Chester (Team Leader Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)	To highlight the Committee with information relating to the Grantham Parks and the facilities and activities provided	Agreed by the Chairman at Agenda setting on 3.6.25	
Cultural Strategy Update	Lead Officer: Jade Porter (Arts and Cultural Services Manager)	To scrutinise performance of the Council's Arts and Cultural Service, including the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and achievement of the action plan	This forms part of regular six-monthly updates which are provided to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Connecting Communities
Sports and Physical Activity Update	Lead Officer: Beth Goodman (Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead)	6 monthly review	Update requested at the meeting held on 3 September	

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/ PRIORITY
LeisureSK Ltd – KPI Report (Q1)	Lead Officer: Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)	To scrutinise the performance in the first quarter against the agreed key performance indicators.		
11 December 2025				
Corporate Plan 2024-27: KPI Report Q2 (Mid-Year) 2025/26	Lead Officer: Charles James (Policy Officer)			
Visit from Grantham Town FC	Lead Officer: Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place)	To consider a report detailing the negotiations between the Council and Grantham Town Football Club regarding a new lease of the Stadium in Grantham	Committee have requested an update prior to this being considered by Cabinet.	
3 February 2026				
13 May 2026				
FUTURE ITEMS				
Play Area Strategy review – September 2025 Sports and Physical Activity Update – Due November 2025				

REMIT

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

- Arts and Culture
- Heritage
- Markets and fairs
- Sport and physical activity
- Leisure SK Ltd
- Visitor Economy

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