

# Minutes

## Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 3 February 2026, 2.00 pm

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

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### Committee Members present

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

Councillor Matthew Bailey  
Councillor Emma Baker  
Councillor James Denniston  
Councillor Gareth Knight  
Councillor Chris Noon  
Councillor Rhea Rayside

### Cabinet Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Paul Stokes (Deputy Leader of the Council)

### Other Members present

Councillor Robert Leadenham  
Councillor Helen Crawford  
Councillor Graham Jeal  
Councillor Ian Selby

### Officers

Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Culture, Leisure and Place)  
Jade Porter (Arts and Cultural Services Manager)  
Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)  
Beth Goodman (Health and Wellbeing Lead)  
Sally Bird (Events Officer)  
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

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## 47. Public Speaking

There were none.

**48. Apologies for absence**

All Committee Members were present.

**49. Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

**50. Minutes from the meeting held on 11 December 2025**

Minutes from the meeting held on 11 December 2026 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as an accurate record.

**51. Updates from the previous meeting**

All actions were completed.

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

The Deputy Leader of the Council updated the Committee on the £2m for Grantham improvements that was being diminished by Lincolnshire County Council administration. At an executive briefing at Lincolnshire County Council, the decision had remained the same.

SKDC administration felt this could potentially be a misappropriation of public funds. They thanked Cllr Richard Davies (Grantham) speaking at the meeting in support of the funding for Grantham.

**53. Sport and Physical Activity Strategy**

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which provided an updated sport and physical activity strategy for 2026-2031.

Progress had been made in the past 5 years by the Council's Leisure Team in implementing the actions identified in the current strategy, targeting key areas and working with partners to provide opportunities for residents and visitors to live healthy, active lifestyles.

The information detailed in the report included the supporting documents which had been reviewed and where relevant actions had been incorporated in the draft strategy.

The draft strategy was structured around 4 key pillars and included an action plan along with key performance indicators. The four pillars are mentioned as active society, active place, active people and an active system. The refresh of the strategy was essential to ensure the goals and objectives remain relevant and

aligned to national context along with the needs of the community in South Kesteven.

It was outlined that Lincolnshire County Council administration was considering diminishing all funding for One You Lincolnshire physical activity initiatives. Therefore, the Council may need to review future ambitions to mitigate the removal of funding.

The Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead clarified the funding from Lincolnshire County Council currently covered the healthy weight programmes and exercise referral programmes in leisure centres, smoking cessation and community programmes.

One Member highlighted a KPI relating to attendance at leisure facilities within the District (1.2). Concern was raised that the Council could be committing themselves to a KPI which was out of their control.

It was confirmed that reviewing the KPI would be beneficial. The particular KPI (1.2) was from the LeisureSK Ltd contract specification and tracked who was using Council facilities. The KPI measured the inactivity and activity levels and tracked data for people throughout the District.

The Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place suggested the Committee requested the strategy be taken away for further review of the percentage of inactive adults, as the strategy did not set a target at present.

It was noted that many venues held physical activity events, however, were not owned by the Council. It was queried how the attendance at these venues was accounted for.

The Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead confirmed that the data relied on individuals feeding into the Active Lives Survey data.

A query was raised on how the strategy would specifically address rural isolation and transport barriers within the District, which could hinder participation for smaller villages. It was further questioned whether the Council worked with any partners.

The Council were working with Active Lincolnshire to overcome rural barriers, they were proposing a neighbourhood place profile to identify areas of focus.

Another partner such as 'We Are Undefeatable' were a free organisation that people can access from anywhere, offering online workouts and specifically targeted individuals with long-term health conditions.

One Member asked whether people living in the District had been utilising the 'We Are Undefeatable' service.

**ACTION: For the Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead to provide statistics on the numbers of people within the District using the 'We Are Undefeatable' service.**

A query was raised on whether the Council liaised with other sport providers requesting information on data.

Concern was raised over KPI (1.3) and it may need to be removed due to the lack of funding.

A 'Moving Communities' survey had previously been undertaken, whereby sport providers had provided information into the data. The data did not show the direct numbers of participants.

The Committee were informed that LeisureSK Ltd were currently exploring alternative options to the 'healthy weight' programmes.

One Member requested whether there was any more recent data, as the most recent data within the strategy related to 2022-23. It was highlighted that inactivity levels may be linked to the covid pandemic.

The Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead stated that nationally, recent data was unable to be sourced due to small sample sizes from surveys in South Kesteven, however, it was noted that inactivity levels were on the rise.

A query was raised on whether the 'We Are Undefeatable' service was advertised on the Council's website or in SK Today.

'We Are Undefeatable' service was advertised on the Council's website. Leaflets for the service were handed out at events attended by Council Officers and a social media plan was being undertaken.

One Member queried whether the strategy encouraged the use of green flag status parks.

The Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Place clarified that the strategy encouraged use of green flag status parks and recognised the importance of them.

It was queried whether the Council would partner with GP surgeries as well as the NHS to target inactive adults.

The Council worked in partnership with Primary Care Networks (PCN's) and social prescribers to promote offerings around the District. The Council worked directly with some GP surgeries, however, outreach was an issue with surgeries.

One Member highlighted that for every 3 people with diabetes in Stamford, there were 4 people in Bourne and the Deepings. A query was raised on why diabetes

was so prevalent in one specific area and whether it was due to the lack of access to facilities.

**ACTION: For the Health and Wellbeing Lead to provide further information on why the rates of diabetes were higher in certain parts of the District.**

**The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:**

**1. Consider the updated Sport and Physical Activity Strategy to cover the period 2026 – 2031.**

**2. Recommend to Cabinet that the draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026 – 2031 is adopted following a further review of the KPI's.**

#### **54. Leisure investment works across the district**

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report that provided an update on work undertaken as part of the leisure investment programme, alongside support provided by the Council to community organisation in the District.

The Leisure Investment Reserve was established earlier in the financial year. The primary objective was to improve the cosmetic appearance on each of the Council's leisure centres and improving the customer experience.

Work was well underway to finalise the scope of the specification, which was due for completion on 6 February 2026. The tender opportunity due to go live on 9 February 2026.

Any future reports regarding progress and the associated spend would continue to be reported to the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The report also outlined the support provided to different community organisations across the District to improve the overall leisure offering and the current lease arrangements in place between sporting organisations and the Council.

One Member expected to review a heatmap on where the investments were across the District. It was hoped the report would explain where the investment was being allocated across South Kesteven to ensure fair and equal distribution.

It was queried whether any money had been allocated to sport groups through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place confirmed any information regarding the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was reported to the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund had concluded now, however, a list of all villiages/towns and the funding they received could be viewed on the website.

A query was raised on whether other activities rather than usual activities were considered within the strategy to be advertised.

The Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces clarified the leisure centres promoted most activities. There was group of block bookings at each of the centres. The Council were working with Lincolnshire Co-op on the 'healthy walks programme'.

Members outlined activities and groups that were upcoming and required publicising:

- Football club in Thurlby
- Walking group in Bourne (from leisure centre)
- Bourne Woods (walking)
- Table Tennis Club in Folkingham
- Pointon Football Club
- Carlton Scroop Table Tennis Club
- Grantham Canal Partnership – 33 miles of free walks

One Member would share the activity groups within Grantham with the Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces.

Members recognised the great advertisement from the team on the leisure centres on social media.

The 'Activity Finder' on the Council's website provided different groups and activities taking place locally in the area.

A non-Committee Member shared that they felt the Meres Leisure Centre was outdated.

### **The Committee noted the contents of the report**

#### **55. Proposed Events Programme 2026/27 (Subject to Budget Approval)**

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report that outlined possible funding for an events Officer and an events programme. Should the funding be approved, this represents an exciting opportunity to invest consistently in outreach and events, working towards a more planned and sustainable programme of cultural activity.

A draft programme of events had been developed in consideration of the Council's corporate objectives and the Cultural Strategy which was adopted in 2023.

The suggested programme draws on feedback from previous Council events and the results from a consultation exercise undertaken with residents, artists and community organisations in Bourne and the Deepings.

The aim of the programme was to respond to the needs of residents, remove barriers for participation and reach audiences who do not currently engage with the Council's venues or cultural offer.

Evaluations would be collected at each event, providing feedback to inform future decision-making and ensure that future work continues to reflect community need and provide value for money. The programme has been designed with legacy in mind .

Where possible, the proposed events had been structured to support practitioners and community groups to create activity that can continue beyond direct Council delivery.

The ambition was to grow cultural activity across the District rather than creating ongoing reliance on the Council to deliver the same events year after year.

Members praised the funding allocated for the Future High Streets Fund previously.

It was suggested whether the budget could be reviewed to continue events in Grantham marketplace to build on the success from the previous year. It was queried whether any other funding was available for the marketplace.

The Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place confirmed that funding being provided was £100,000 and Officers had been given a clear remit that this should be spread equally across the whole District.

It was noted the table detailing costs of Lincolnshire Day and the silent disco did not add up to the whole number.

One Member felt that spending over £10,000 on Covid Remembrance was not a great use of the funding.

Members discussed the need for Councillors to enable and partner with the Council to help increase the attendance of these such events.

A query was raised on whether Officers had explored match funding for some of the events in co-operation with Grantham Town Council.

It was confirmed that the Council were working in conjunction with Town and Parish Council's on Council and non-Council run events. It was hoped that communities would take on the events in future years.

Members discussed the Issac Newton 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his death and the events that would be arranged to commemorate that.

It was requested that the Council work with schools to invite them to these events, alongside requesting school pupils to host events e.g. a theatre production.

One Member noticed the importance and success of British Racing Motors (BRM) within Bourne.

A query was raised on the 'Bike Night' in Grantham and the £6,000 stage. It was outlined that Markets had used their UKSPF funding to purchase a stage, it was suggested this stage be shared with the Council to save funds.

It was noted that Deepings commonly had less money spent on their town in terms of events.

The Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place clarified the stage had been delivered and had certain limitations around setting up the stage. The stage required to be independently assessed once built.

A non-Committee Member requested a meeting with the Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place to discuss 'picnic in the park' and 'open-mic' events for Grantham to raise money for local charities.

A suggestion was made on whether the Council could supply each Parish Council with an apple tree/seeds to plant in the Parish to commemorate the 300 year death of Issac Newton.

It was confirmed this idea would be explored.

One Member queried what Members were on the stakeholder group and how Members of the Committee could become involved.

The Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place clarified the first stakeholder group had taken place on 2 February 2026. The stakeholders would operate similarly to arrangements the 'Thatcher Fest'. At present, the Council had primarily engaged with artists, organisations and practitioners who would provide activities or events.

*(Councillor Matt Bailey left the meeting at 15:30)*

One Member queried whether the idea of a portable projector had been considered for the marketplace to showcase major sporting events.

It was highlighted that the cost of a projector for the two-day cinema had previously cost £12,000.

One Member noted a previous Cycle Race in Bourne was poorly organised. The planning of events was deemed important and can be successful if planned correctly.

Members thanked Officers for the report and noted events were important ways of uniting communities, footfall and supporting businesses.

A query was raised on when the outdoor mobile cinema would be visiting Billingborough.

The Events Officer confirmed bookings were provisionally booked for Haconby and Long Bennington.

One Member emphasised that local, Ward Councillors should be invited to meetings of Issac Newton celebrations. The Assistant Director for Culture, Leisure and Place confirmed it was being explored as to how Members could be involved in the process.

One Member clarified that Bourne Cycle Race was not unorganised, however, the organisers received a lack of funding.

An event called 'Music in Quiet Places' was ongoing and organised by the arts centres. Several events were upcoming:

- 28 May (St Mary and St Peter's Church, Harlaxton)
- 11 June (St Andrew's, Billingborough)
- 25 June (St Andrew's Church, West Deeping)
- 9 July (Careby, near Stamford)

One Member requested a monthly update be sent to Councillors on events taking place around the District.

All events were publicised in SK Today, if timing allowed. Events were also published on the Council's social media platforms.

The Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place confirmed following budget approval and consideration of Cabinet. Members would receive monthly lists of events to share with their communities.

**The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the proposed events calendar and considered making any further suggestions or amendments.**

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to recommend Cabinet to consider an additional £20,000 in the events budget ringfenced for preparation for the Newton Festival. Additionally, £10,000 from the community fund for the Newton Festival.

## **56. Work Programme 2025/26**

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2025/26.

It was confirmed that heads of terms between the Council and Grantham Town Football Club had been agreed and the lease was awaiting sign off in March 2026.

A query was raised on whether a visit to Grantham Town Football Club would be arranged prior to the next meeting.

It was suggested that Grantham Canal Partnership be invited to a Committee meeting in the future.

It was clarified that Grantham Town Football Club had envisaged to attend the next meeting to update the Committee in person.

The Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces confirmed a KPI update on LeisureSK Ltd (year 1) would be brought to the Committee on 13 May 2026.

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

There were none.

**58. Close of meeting**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 15:45.