

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 3 February 2026 at 2.00 pm
Council Chamber - Council Offices,
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.

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|------------|--|-----------------|
| 4. | Minutes from the meeting held on 11 December 2025 | (Pages 3 - 14) |
| 5. | Updates from the previous meeting | (Page 15) |
| 6. | Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service | |
| 7. | Sport and Physical Activity Strategy
To provide a refreshed Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for 2026-2031. | (Pages 17 - 36) |
| 8. | Leisure investment works across the district
To provide an update to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the ongoing schemes of work across the leisure asset base in the district. | (Pages 37 - 42) |
| 9. | Proposed Events Programme 2026/27 (Subject to Budget Approval)
Consider the proposed events calendar, should the budget be approved, making any further suggestions or amendments. | (Pages 43 - 62) |
| 10. | Work Programme 2025/26 | (Pages 63 - 66) |
| 11. | Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent | |

Meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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COUNCIL

**Thursday, 11 December 2025,
10.00 am**

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 Tim Harrison
Councillor Max Sawyer

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Paul Stokes, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture
Councillor Philip Knowles, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing also Director of LeisureSK Ltd

Officers

Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)
Jade Porter, Arts and Cultural Services Manager
Michael Chester, Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader
Charles James, Policy Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

David Rushton, Chairman LeisureSK Ltd
David Scott, Director of LeisureSK Ltd

33. Public Speaking

There were no public speakers.

34. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Emma Baker, Councillor Chis Noon and Councillor Rhea Rayside.

Councillor Noon was substituted by Councillor Tim Harrison and Councillor Rayside was substituted by Councillor Max Sawyer

35. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor James Denniston disclosed an interest in respect of gym equipment due to his employment that, depending on the discussion in respect of LeisureSK Ltd agenda items would require him to leave the meeting during discussion.

Councillor Philip Knowles stated that as he was a Director of LeisureSK Ltd he had an interest in those agenda items.

36. Minutes from the meeting held on 14 October 2025

The minutes from the meeting held on 14 October 2025 were proposed, seconded and agreed.

37. Updates from the previous meeting

The Democratic Officer confirmed that all actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

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

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture made the following announcements:

BBC Radio Lincolnshire had produced a podcast celebrating 75 years of BRM (British Racing Motors) in Bourne. The Podcast was due to be aired over the Christmas period. Reference within the podcast made by Jackie Stewart stated the importance of Bourne in respect of the current multi-billion pound industry that motor racing had become and that it would not exist without Bourne and the BRM opposing Ferrari at that time, it was a good piece of marketing material for Bourne.

The next announcement was in respect of the improvements being carried out in respect of play parks across the District which Members had been notified of. The Play Park Strategy was working well and the Deputy Leader of the Council asked the Committee to acknowledge the work being undertaken by the Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader, Michael Chester in respect of the improvements. *(Michael Chester received a round of applause from those present).*

The third announcement was in respect of the Christmas light switch on and Christmas markets held in all the four towns and the work carried out by the Teams to make this happen. In some cases it had been the Town Councils, in respect of Grantham it had been South Kesteven District Council. Acknowledgement was also made of those rural areas that had been involved in Christmas celebrations for everybody. Grantham Christmas light switch on and market had been very successful with a number of people attending and he thanked the Arts and Cultural

Services Manager and her Team for all their hard work in delivering a fantastic event. *(Jade Porter received a round of applause from those present)*

The final announcement was in respect of a decision that had been made at a recent Cabinet meeting where an opportunity had arisen in respect of some sports facilities for the Deepings. Deepings Sports and Social Club had been working with the Football Foundation and Lincolnshire FA. They had reached a point where they could potentially receive a grant of £700,000. A contribution was required from the District Council to match the Deepings Sports and Social Club contribution which was given by the Cabinet subject to various conditions being attached to the Council's grant to allow the Football Foundation grant to move forward. The Council granted £200,000 but it was stressed that there were conditions attached to the grant which had to be met by the Deepings Sports and Social Club in relation to usage and planning and the grant from the Council had to be in place in order to receive the £700,000 grant from the Football Foundation.

Members suggested that this grant should have been scrutinised by the Committee, however, there was not sufficient time between the meeting and the Cabinet meeting to enable this. The Chairman requested that wherever possible this could be achieved in the future.

A request was made about erecting notices on the play parks to advise when they were closed so that residents were aware. It was stated that once definitive dates were known then notices would be erected accordingly.

39. Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report - Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26

Before presenting the report the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing stated that there was a museum in Bourne which had replicas and memorabilia in respect of the BRM and its founder Raymond Mays which was opened at weekends for those interested in BRM and F1 motor racing.

The report before Members presented the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2024-27 within the remit of the Culture and Leisure OSC for Quarter two and was the third report that the Committee had received.

There were eight actions within the report of which six were green, on or above target and two were amber but it was expected that these actions would improve. The Committee were reminded that the targets belonged to the Committee and if they thought there were no longer relevant or were inadequate then they could ask for them to be changed to more appropriate KPI's going forward. The Cabinet Member thanked Charles James, Policy Officer for the work in compiling the information before the Committee.

The Chairman asked a question about financial worth and how it was calculated in respect of COM4 and the total social value generated. It was stated that information came from the Moving Communities platform from Sports England who measured the health benefits from those people who used the Council's leisure

centres, how many times per week, how long they used it for which equated to health benefits, so a financial figure. A detailed calculator had been developed by Sheffield Hallam University and it was stated that the Officer would try and provide further information for Members. The figure shown was that received from Moving Communities platform.

The Chairman indicated that he would like to see how the calculations were made at some point.

Further discussion followed with one Member asking how the KPI's could be scrutinised when there did not appear to be measurable targets included. The Chairman stated that the Committee had drawn up the targets with as many as possible being given a number, however some of the targets were subjective. It was noted that the targets were qualitative rather than quantitative in respect of this OSC with an emphasis on qualitative commentary rather than a target number with reference being made to the Housing OSC KPI targets.

More discussion in respect of where information for the KPI's came from and the qualitative v quantitative nature of the information supplied.

Members noted the report.

40. LeisureSK Ltd Performance Report - Quarter 2 2025/26

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which gave the Committee an update on the performance of LeisureSK Ltd during quarter 2 2025/26. The performance requirements were against the Leisure Management Contract as set out in a new agency agreement which had commenced in April 2025.

It was noted that some of the KPI's had changed from the previous Leisure Management Contract and the data shown in the appendix would form the baseline data from which performance would be measured going forward. It was not a measure of how LeisureSK Ltd was performing against each individual KPI. Regular monitoring was carried out in respect of the leisure centres and sports stadium and any issues that required to be addressed were reported to the Centre Management Team. If any rectification required was the responsibility of the Council, this was reported accordingly internally to the service area responsible.

Members discussed the report and the following issues were raised:

- Questions around the NPS score contained in the Appendix Table which appeared to have drastically reduced across all three leisure centres, why had it dropped so significantly compared to the last set of data and what mitigation and plans were being put in place to address this drop. The Member asked if a report was required from LeisureSK Ltd in respect of a mitigation plan answering the questions of why the NPS had dropped and how this could be recovered.

- The NPS score was a measure of a customer's experience based on how likely they would recommend the centre to family and friends. Each year the leisure centres undertook the Sport England Moving Communities Customer Experience Survey. This was a standardised survey that was sent out to all local authorities and operators and looked at the users of the facilities within the last three months. It was calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors, those that scored 0 – 6 on the NPS survey from the percentage of promoters that scored 9 – 10 on a scale of 0 – 10. It was noted that the range could be from a low of minus 100 where the customer was a detractor to a high of 100 if every customer was a promoter. It was noted that the figure had gone down as it was linked to the customers experience within the leisure centres. It was for LeisureSK Ltd to state what actions they would take to address the results the surveys had produced, it was noted that the NPS was just one question on the survey and that there were a host of other questions asked.
- A further comment was made in respect of the National NPS level which was currently 21.9, however, it was noted that this was for different sized operators and operator models and it was hard to mirror operators exactly, it was an issue to pick up with LeisureSK Ltd to put plans in place to address the data.
- The Member who had raised his concerns asked if this could be an action for a report to come back to Committee.
- The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd referred the Member to the Business Plan for next year which was an item on the agenda. Objective 9 of the Business Plan was to develop a Customer Service Strategy which would measure customer engagement and satisfaction. Reference was made to the Moving Communities data which did not necessarily mean customers were dissatisfied, its whether they would be less likely to recommend the leisure facility. The information did not give a reason for the recommendation. The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd stated customer information was an area LeisureSK Ltd wanted to develop further in respect of the information held regarding customer engagement and satisfaction. Information was not measured as well as it could be. Customer satisfaction was a key objective for LeisureSK Ltd for 2026 to enable more information to be given on the reasons for the numbers reported. The reasons “why” would inform how the Customer Service Strategy was developed; customer experience and satisfaction would be a main focus area for improvement for 2026.
- The Chairman asked if the information and format was an issue. The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd stated that it was the content of the Moving Communities data which was very high level and collected the same way for each local authority most surveys were carried out by email and telephone and had a limited sample size. The Moving Communities Data did not help LeisureSK Ltd understand the level of customer engagement and it was an area that needed to be improved.

- Clarity was sought in respect of the difference between a NPS survey and a satisfaction survey to which the Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader responded.

A comment was made in respect of the cleanliness items contained within the report in respect to Stamford Leisure Centre. It was stated that the majority of the items had been rectified. The £100,000 the Member referred to would cover more maintenance items especially in areas such as the changing rooms. It was noted that Stamford had received more visits during quarter two following customer feedback during the summer period and these visits had been carried out at a different time of the day with reports in respect of cleanliness items being rectified required within 72 hours. Deep cleaning of the changing rooms by a professional contractor at Stamford Leisure Pool had also been undertaken which had been successful. A further question was asked in respect of the refurbishment plans and it was stated that these would focus on the changing room areas as £100,000 had been allocated to Stamford and the specification and procurement route were currently being looked at.

The Deputy Leader of the Council was confident that the issues would be addressed but stated that the cleanliness of the leisure centres was simply not good enough at the present time. It was noted that the LeisureSK Board were taking the cleanliness of the centres very seriously and it had to improve.

Further comments were made which included:

- Financial implications which the report had implied that there were none – the report before Members dealt more with metrics rather than finance which was within the next agenda item.
- Maximum occupancy of Grantham Swim School had not been highlighted – Swim England allowed a capacity of 85% which allowed movement between children in swimming lessons, it was how the programme could be expanded further with the limited pool space available especially in respect of Grantham. The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd stated that the swimming programme at Grantham was being looked at with a view to moving some club slots to release more capacity.
- 31% reduction in accidents although no denominator was shown – this had been picked up by the LeisureSK Board and data would be presented with more context going forward the same with complaints. It was noted that the Council's Annual Health and Safety report did report on the accidents and it was suggested that the KPI in respect of this may be changes slightly going forward.
- It was explained that this was the first year of a contract and would form the baseline data going forward
- More comments were made in respect of having mystery shoppers, the development of the Customer Service Strategy, cleanliness of the leisure centres, capturing everyone's experience who attended the leisure centres including those who may not necessarily book in for an activity but spectate.

The Committee noted the report.

41. LeisureSK Ltd Finance and Operational Performance Update - Quarter 2 2025/26

Members received the LeisureSK Ltd Finance and Operation Performance report for quarter 2, 2025/26. The report stated that an increased surplus was expected as outlined and summarised in Appendix 1.

(10:55 Councillor Matt Bailey left the meeting and did not return)

The overall budget surplus was achieving a profit of £148,000 which was an achievement of £76,000 against the budget which was a positive position with surpluses being reinvested back into the business. Focus would continue to be on what was being spent and what income could be generated. The Board was pleased with the direction that was being taken and the Business Plan which was the next item on the agenda was also showing a positive operational direction for the sites across the District.

Questions were asked about how the leisure centres could compete with other companies such as PureGym and were there any speculative figures for surpluses beyond 2026.

The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd referred to where your “niche” in the market was. If it was Pure Gym then the leisure centres probably couldn’t compete but leisure centres offered other programmes and also they had the use of large swimming pools which was how you differentiated yourself from other gym organisations.

A further question was asked in respect of the reduction in membership at Stamford would this be permanent and it was stated that this was being monitored closely and if supply increased then market share would be affected. Research was being undertaken to see what Stamford’s “niche” should be and work was on going in that regard.

Although a profit was being forecast it was noted that memberships were down, swim schools were down, income was behind budget and also Pure Gym was causing market erosion and maintenance demands were rising how could the business be operating at a profit. The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) responded that this was a new agency contract in its first year which was dealing with some financial difficulties from the previous year which had arisen from irrecoverable VAT. That was why the accounts were showing a surplus for the year.

The Chairman stated that it was hard to quantify a profit when it was a wellbeing facility that was being provided for the general public. These type of facilities did not always seek to make money, but provide facilities that helped the wellbeing of people to lead more fulfilling lives. However, value for money should always be sought wherever possible.

Further questions were asked about the backlog of work and it was stated that a much better way of working across the sites than had perhaps happened historically was in place with closer working with the Council. Reference was made

to investing money in the sites which needed to be maintained and looked after and LeisureSK Ltd was looking at this and repairs were being carried out more. It was noted that the previous budget may not have been set at the right level and reference was made to the next item where the revenue repairs and maintenance budget had been increased to ensure sufficient funding was in place to undertake required maintenance. Closer working with the Council to address issues within the Centres was key.

A date for when the backlog would be completed was part of the bigger programme of investment in the overall sites. The Chairman reminded the Committee about the £500,000 reserve that the Committee had put in place and the Deputy Leader of the Council stated that significant progress needed to be carried out at the leisure centres within the next 12 months.

A comment was made that it may be helpful for future reports if a breakdown per centre was included with a few headlines to stop any confusion with regard to the figures before the Committee. The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) stated that she would take the comments made and discuss this with the LeisureSK Board outside of the Committee.

The report was noted.

42. LeisureSK Ltd Annual Budget and Business Plan 2026/27

The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd presented the report. He began by stating that he was confident that LeisureSK Ltd would overperform financially for 2025/26. LeisureSK Ltd was aware that there were issues on the non-financial side which needed to be improved. The Chairman of LeisureSK Ltd referred the Committee to page 13 of the Business Plan appended to the report which stated that an operating surplus would be reached. It was proposed that a review of the Stamford gym area would be looked at with a plan developed to undertake refurbishment to look to increase overall participation increase by 5% across the contract. It was stated that the increase would be more likely in respect of the Grantham and to a lesser extent Bourne Leisure Centres.

Two areas that would be looked at in respect of capacity. It was proposed that a Business Development, Sales and Marketing Officer be recruited to start in April 2026. Reference was made to the comments that had been made during the meeting in respect of Stamford and it was noted that Stamford did not have a dedicated manager and LeisureSK Ltd were looking to recruit a dedicated manager for Stamford Leisure Centre in the New Year.

Utility consumption at all sites would be reduced mostly in Grantham through the decarbonisation programme which was currently in progress. It was proposed to increase fitness membership by 5%. It was also proposed that Padel Tennis would be launched at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre, however a low risk approach had been taken and it was proposed that a padel tennis lease holder be contracted and a procurement process would be undertaken in the New Year.

The timetable for Grantham Meres Leisure Centre was being reviewed with a view to finding more capacity for the swim school. A strategic and systematic approach to customer services was also being taken in terms of measuring customer engagement and satisfaction. Nine core objectives were proposed as outlined within the report.

Questions and comments raised by Members included:

- How data was collected by users of the swimming pools
- The proposed 5% increase in gym membership and it was noted that the gym had not been enhanced, the equipment was only being replaced and the cost of living crisis did impact membership which was why only a 5% increase had been proposed
- How the proposed padel tennis was being procured and the low cost route being taken.
- That some of the content of the pink papers appended to the report could be in the public domain as it was basic information. The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) stated that she acknowledged the comments made in respect of the pink papers and that would be taken into consideration in future reports.
- The Business Plan was still a draft document and it should contain realistic ambitions and it was acknowledged that LeisureSK Ltd appeared to be in a better position than it had two to three years ago and it was moving the right direction.
- A question was raised about Local Government Reorganisation and how this would affect contracts specifically the paddle tennis contract – the contract would be co-terminus with the LeisureSK Ltd contract.

Officers and Directors of LeisureSK Ltd were congratulated for the work undertaken to turn LeisureSK Ltd around.

43. Overview and Effectiveness of the approach and outcomes of Thatcher Fest, celebrating Thatcher's 100th birthday

The Committee received a report presented by the Deputy Leader of the Council which provided an overview and evaluation of the collaborative approach taken to deliver “Thatcher Fest”, a week-long cultural programme marking the centenary of Margaret Thatcher’s birth.

The review highlighted the strong outcomes achieved through the approach which included diverse programming and significant audience engagement, particularly from first time visitors. There was extensive regional, national and international

media coverage which raised Grantham's profile and supported local organisations and demonstrated the value of partnership working.

Events were delivered within existing budgets and the Council's programmed activity generated a modest surplus which showed that high quality cultural delivery could be achieved in a cost effective and sustainable way.

The Committee were asked to note the report and consider using the collaborative model in respect of future cultural events and festivals.

(11:35 Councillor Philip Knowles and David Rushton left the meeting and did not return)

The Arts and Cultural Services Manager was thanked for organising the successful event. The Council had been used as an enabler to promote the events which had been successful and it was felt that the same approach should be taken in the future. One Member stated that he would like to see an annual festival put in place with the Council being the enabler rather than the organiser as it had been so successful and he thanked everyone who had been involved.

One Member echoed the comments made but made comments in respect of the costings shown. It was stated that the 80's music event had already been programmed using Future High Street Funding it just happened that the event took place during Thatcher Fest. The Arts and Cultural Manager referred the Committee to events listed within the report and stated that those at the top were undertaken within the Arts Centre allocated pre-existing budget. If the funding from the Future High Street etc hadn't been received those events listed would not have taken place. A distinction had tried to be shown between what was within the existing programmed budget and that nothing had been added.

It was felt that the event had been fantastic and the Team had done excellent work. A question was asked in respect of next year's festival and whether there was a theme. It was stated that during the budget for 2026/27 it was proposed that an Events Officer role be introduced and an associated revenue budget. It was important that this type of work was carried out across the district and it was noted that Grantham had benefited from the Future High Street Fund which had been brilliant, however the whole district has to be looked at. Possible events for the next year were a celebration of the Queens 100th birthday and work was being done to reach out to Town and Parish Councils and stakeholders to see if there was an appetite for a celebration although it was stressed that it was early days. There was also a National Covid Reflection day planned for the 8 March 2027 so that was also being looked into.

Members noted the report.

44. Work Programme 2025/26

The Chairman stated that currently there were two items on the Work Programme for the meeting scheduled for 3 February 2026:

- Draft refresh of the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy
- Visit from Grantham Town FC

Confirmation was sought from the Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) regarding the visit by Grantham Town FC. The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) stated that she had a meeting with the Chairman and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture on Monday and that agreement in respect of the Heads of Terms was imminent following legal input. However, she felt that perhaps February was too early and more information would be known after the meeting the following week.

➤ **Action**

That the visit by Grantham Town FC scheduled for February be moved to later in the year.

One Member made reference to the Wellbeing event that had been held at the Meres Leisure Centre in October at which 12-14 independent stalls had been present. He stated that he was the only Member who had attended the event and asked if the event was to be repeated in January. The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) stated that Beth Goodman was leading on the project and it was expected that events would be repeated in Bourne, Stamford and The Deepings. As soon as dates had been confirmed they would be circulated to the Committee. The Member asked if there would be another one at the Meres and it was indicated that this could be factored into the plan as it had worked very well.

The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) suggested that an item be included on the Work Programme for February in respect of the £500k reserve that had been put in place for investment in the Leisure Centres to update the Committee on progress and any future funding. It was proposed that the £500k be replicated in the budget for 2026/27.

The Chairman referred to an email received from Councillor Bailey in respect of the money that had been committed for investment which totalled £1m. He had requested a report which indicated where the money had been invested in leisure within the District as a whole. The Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) indicated that it could be incorporated within the report she had proposed.

➤ **Action**

Item to be included on Work Programme for February 2026 on Investment of Leisure Reserve, to include other investments highlighted and where the money had been invested within the district as a whole.

One Member made reference to frustration in respect of certain leisure investments which seemed to be happening “outside” of the Committee to which both the Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place) together with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture responded.

A question was asked about visiting the refitted gym at the Meres and it was stated that a visit by the Committee would be arranged.

➤ **Action**

That a visit to the refurbished gym at the Meres be arranged for the Committee once completed.

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

A Member asked a question in respect of the closure of Stamford Arts Centre during the Stamford Christmas lights turn on and market event. The proposal for next year was for a two day event and it was asked whether the Arts Centre could be opened. It was stated that it wasn't financially viable to open the Arts Centre during this period as there were no bookings and two members of staff had to be present at the centre. However, once dates were known and confirmed a conversation could take place.

It was noted that Grantham Christmas Lights turn on would take place on Sunday 29 November 2026 and it was asked that this date be avoided in Stamford and the following week was suggested.

46. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 12:05.

Action Sheet

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Actions from meeting of 11 December 2025

Min no	Agenda item	Action	Assigned to	Comments/Status	Deadline
44	Work Programme 2025/26	That the visit by Grantham Town FC scheduled for February be moved to later in the year.	Democratic Services	Agenda item moved to May 2026.	Completed
44	Work Programme 2025/26	Item to be included on Work Programme for February 2026 on Investment of Leisure Reserve, to include other investments highlighted and where the money had been invested within the district as a whole.	Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)	Report going to Committee on 3 February 2025.	Completed
44	Work Programme 2025/26	That a visit to the refurbished gym at the Meres be arranged for the Committee once completed.	LeisureSK Ltd	Members were invited to attend the Meres on 23 December 2025	Completed

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**SOUTH
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COUNCIL**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 3 February 2026

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

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026 - 2031

Report Author

Bethany Goodman, Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead

✉ bethany.goodman@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To consider the draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2026 - 2031.

Recommendations

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.**

Decision Information

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

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There is currently no direct budget implications associated in adopting this Strategy. Any future initiatives resulting in budgeting implications will be, in the first instance, be managed within existing service area budgets. Where additional funding is required, this will be requested formally, taking the appropriate action.

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

Legal and Governance

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

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

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

- 2.4. The refreshed draft Strategy continues to align to the Council's Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 which will enhance the strength, wellbeing, security and capacity of all our communities to enable a thriving and cohesive society that all our residents are proud to belong to.
- 2.5. The draft Strategy is structured around four key pillars which are identified below but also identifies key priorities. An action plan has been developed to accompany the draft Strategy which will help to shape the direction of the work Officers undertake over the next five years. The four pillars are:
- Active Society
 - Active Place
 - Active People
 - Active System
- 2.6. New Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) have also been developed and embedded into the Strategy to provide a clear framework for measuring progress, impact and success. The KPI's identified will enable the Council and its partners to assess whether interventions are achieving the intended outcomes and identify areas for improvement.

3. Key Considerations

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

4. Other Options Considered

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

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The current Strategy has been in place since 2021 and is due to expire in 2026.
- 5.2 The draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will provide a basis for the Council to deliver on its ambition to increase health and wellbeing outcomes across South Kesteven.

6 Background Papers

- 6.1 [South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan - 2024 to 2027](#)
- 6.2 [Sport England - Uniting the Movement 2021 - 2031](#)
- 6.3 [Active Lives data](#)
- 6.4 [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)
- 6.5 [Local authority health profile - Fingertips](#)
- 6.6 [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) - Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub](#)
- 6.7 [Get Active: A Strategy for the future of sport and physical activity](#)
- 6.8 [NHS England - Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England](#)
- 6.9 [Millions more moving - The Richmond Group of Charities](#)
- 6.10 [Horizon Scanning: Future Trends in Sport and Physical Activity - May 2025](#)
- 6.11 [NHS England - Harnessing the benefits of physical activity](#)
- 6.12 [DCMS Youth Strategy](#)

7 Appendices

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

Sport & Physical Activity Strategy

2026-2031



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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Contents

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

Our vision for South Kesteven

Vision:

Inspiring everyone to live a more active life

Mission:

Providing opportunities for people to be more active, more often



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

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

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

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

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

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



Cllr Ashley Baxter

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



Cllr Paul Stokes

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



The Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity

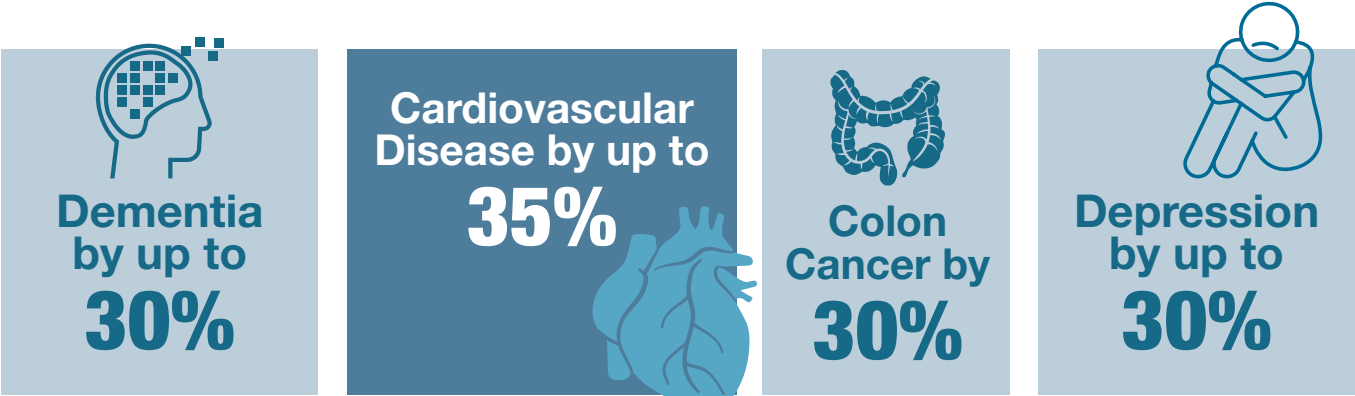
There is a need for physical activity, sport and wellbeing opportunities which play a major role in shaping the health of the nation. Being active means different things to different people and it's about finding what works for the individual.

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

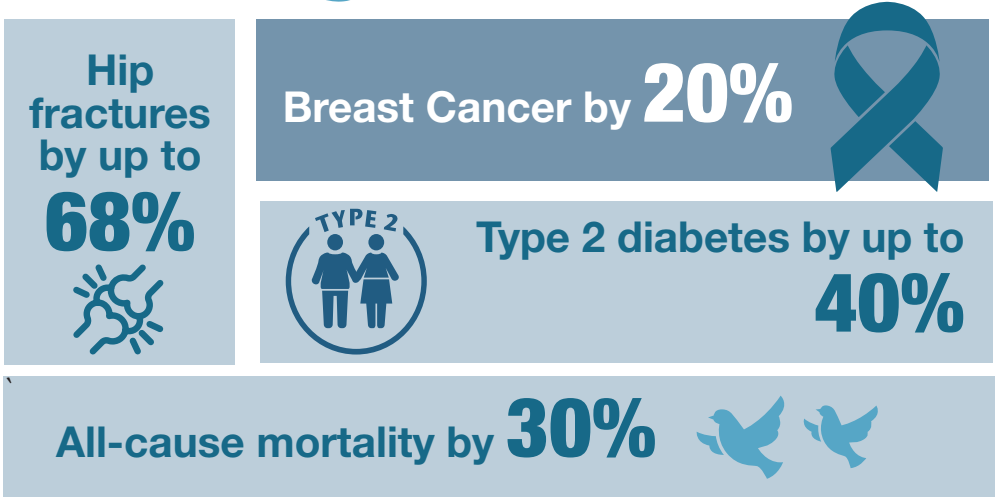
helping to support individuals to maintain a healthier weight. Active lifestyles prevent 900,000 cases of diabetes, 93,000 cases of dementia delivering a combined saving of £7.1 billion to the UK economy.

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

Children	Adults	Older Adults
Bone health Cognitive function Cardiovascular fitness Muscle fitness Weight status Depression 	All-cause mortality Stroke and heart disease Hypertension Type 2 diabetes 8 cancers Depression Cognitive function Dementia Quality of life Sleep Anxiety/depression Weight status	Falls Frailty Physical Function 



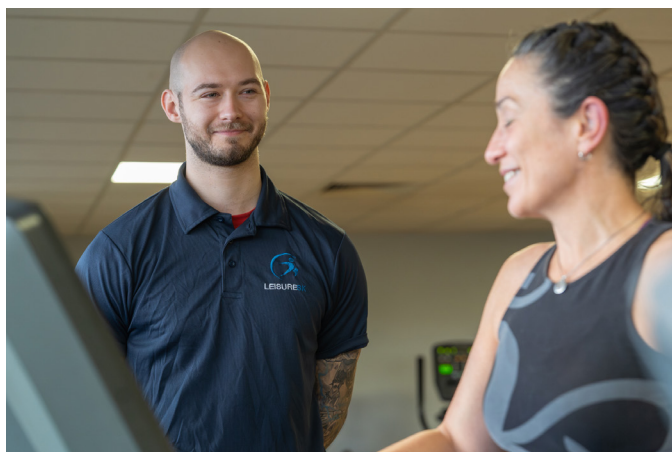
**Regular
physical
activity
reduces
your
risk of:**



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

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

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



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

SPORT ENGLAND



Guidance, Evidence and Partnership Working

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

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

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

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines

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

Adults (19 TO 64 YEARS)

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

Older Adults (65+ YEARS)

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

Children and young people (5 TO 18 YEARS)

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

Disabled adults

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

District Health Profile and Physical Activity Levels

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

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

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

■ Life expectancy for both men and women: 79.94 – males, 83.71 - females

■ Percentage of adults who are physically active: 22.2%

■ Percentage of children who are physically active: 50.5% (2022/2023 data)

■ Percentage of adults who are considered overweight or obese: 59.63% (2022/2023 data)

■ Percentage of children who are considered overweight or obese:

- Reception – 20.62% 2022/2023
- Year 6 - 35.92% 2022/2023

■ Percentage of diabetes prevalence (17 years+):

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

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

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

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

In the UK:

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

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

■ Physical activity is essential for people to live better with long-term conditions.

■ The greatest health and economic gains can be made by supporting those who are physically inactive to participate in some physical activity. physical activity helps to delay the onset and progression of diseases for as long as possible, it also helps people to recover from surgery more quickly and it is beneficial for mental health.

These health challenges place increasing demand on healthcare services and highlight the need for preventative, physical activity led solutions.

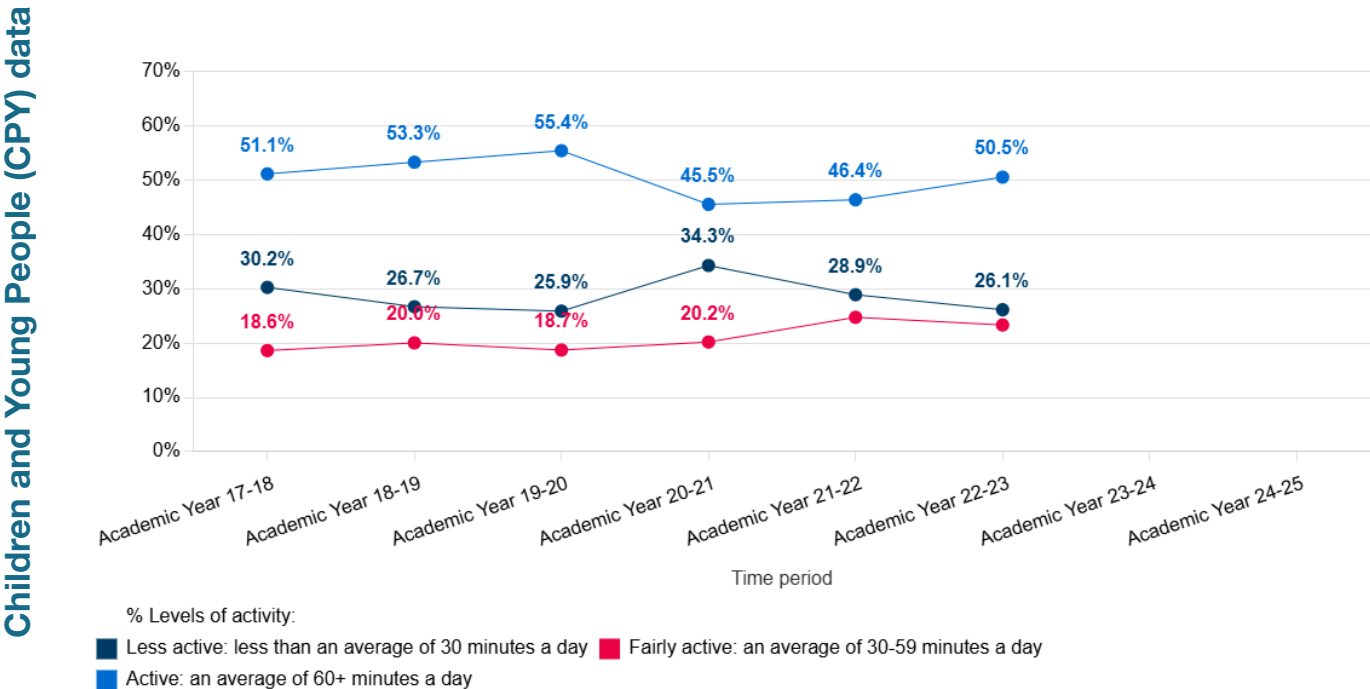
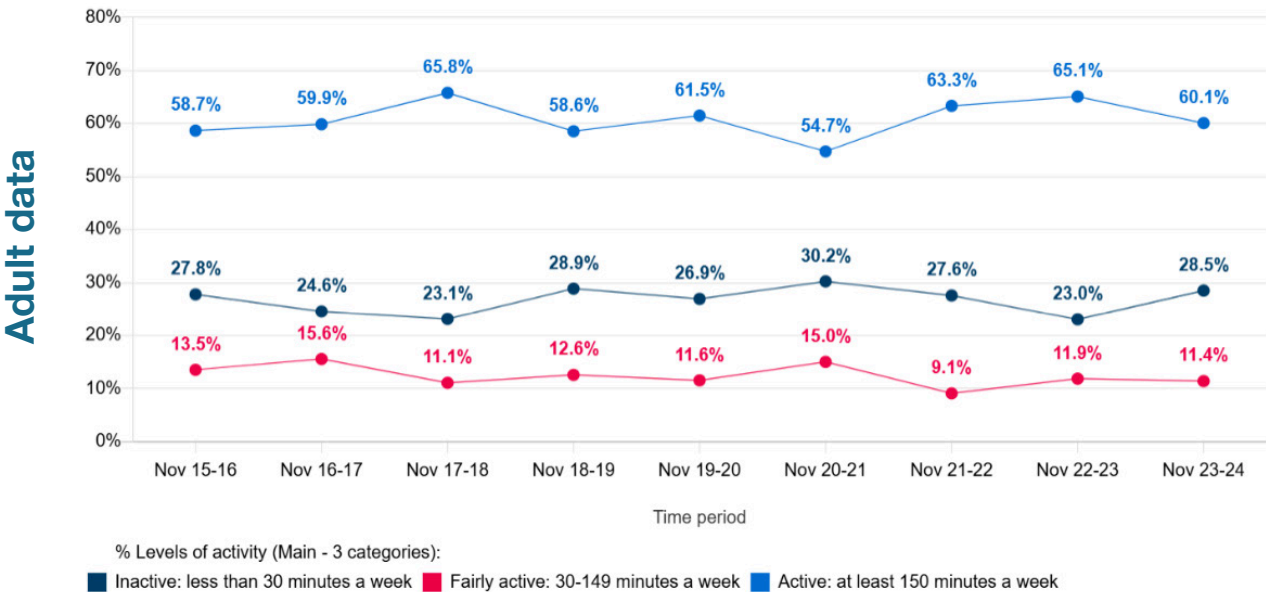
Physical Activity Levels

The below data set is sourced from The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, and includes gardening activity, in accordance with CMO recommendations. This data is based on those aged 19 and over.

- Percentage of physically active children and young people – 50.5% in 2022/2023
- Percentage of physically active adults – 68.2%
- Percentage of physically inactive adults – 22.2%

Sport England publishes a similar Physical Activity indicator using Active Lives Adult Survey data, however, excludes gardening activity. This data classifies adults as 16 and over. This data can be found in the graphs below.

To support local monitoring of performance against the CMO guidance for the appropriate ages, it is necessary to provide estimates with a different definition to those figures produced by Sport England.



Please note, some data is unavailable for children and young people due to a small sample size.

Delivering a Healthier South Kesteven: Action Plan

South Kesteven's ambition is to deliver a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy that brings partners together with shared objectives, to grow and promote opportunities for sport and physical activity, helping to build a healthier district.

The four pillars, priority outcomes and actions can be found below to underpin the initiatives that we aspire to deliver, that support the outcomes of this strategy.

Pillar	Priority outcomes	Action	Why is this important
Active Society Creating a social movement to reduce inactivity, drive participation and understand the benefits of physical activity for all ages and abilities	Improve the health of residents and visitors by encouraging and providing opportunities to be active following the UK Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines, as found in section 3 Improve the understanding of the benefits of physical activity and deliver a positive customer experience for everyone who uses the Council's leisure facilities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure participation is affordable and accessible to the whole community ■ Encourage physical activity as a holistic approach to wellbeing, including a focus on mental health ■ Provide enhanced information around physical activity, diet and lifestyle as part of our core services using communications and social media channels ■ Showcase ways of integrating physical activity and movement into the lifestyles of residents and part of everyday life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Obesity and illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease are prevalent in our society but often preventable which incurs a significant cost to the NHS ■ Regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle is proven to reduce the risk of certain illnesses ■ Educating people on the benefits of physical activity is more likely to result in behaviour change ■ Delivering a positive customer experience will result in repeat visits and increased participation

<p>Active Place</p> <p>Creating safe, accessible environments for people, of all ages, to take part in regular physical activity</p>	<p>Deliver and facilitate high quality leisure facilities and community spaces to deliver positive and affordable opportunities for people to improve their health</p> <p>Recognise that our leisure services serve as a community health hub and are a core part of Neighbourhood Health</p> <p>Physical activity refers to all movement including during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person's work or domestic activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Invest in the Council's leisure facilities to ensure that they are high quality and meet the needs of customers ■ Use local leisure in a holistic and innovative manner ■ Lead with a place-based approach using local data ■ Continue to invest in the Council's leisure facilities to contribute towards the Council's carbon reduction goals ■ Explore opportunities to use parks and open spaces within the district to encourage the use for physical activity, informal play and structured sport ■ Support the active travel agenda working with partners to encourage walking, wheeling or cycling ■ Invest in the Council's play areas, parks and open spaces to provide high quality facilities meeting the needs of our residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Providing safe places for people to be active encourages participation ■ Positive and affordable opportunities ensure our services are available to all and encourage return ■ Active travel offers extensive personal, environmental, community and economic benefits to the district ■ Green spaces provide opportunities to exercise and spending time in nature can improve our quality of life mentally, physically and socially
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Active People

Creating opportunities across all settings to help all people and communities to take part in regular physical activity

Tackle inactivity in priority groups and areas whilst increasing the numbers of people taking part in physical activity across the district, including:

- Rural and deprived areas
- Young people
- Older adults
- Women and girls
- Men's health
- People with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions

Understand the types of activities that residents would like to see more of in their communities

■ Support and offer a broad range of sport and physical activity opportunities that reflect the interests and needs of the community and visitors to the district

■ Work with the Council's leisure provider and partners to run health intervention programmes that result in improving health and wellbeing residents

■ Deliver outreach activities in communities for those in rural areas, with disabilities and/or living with long term health conditions

■ Consult with residents about the types of activities they would like to see in their communities for all ages, abilities and families

■ Work with partners to develop maps that can be used to promote and enable physical activity

■ Focus on positive experiences as the foundations for a long and healthy life

■ South Kesteven has many rural communities that may not have access to traditional leisure facilities

■ South Kesteven is an ageing population and physical activity is increasingly recognised as a cost-effective preventative approach to reducing chronic conditions

■ The rate of obesity and diabetes is increasing in young people.

■ Physical activity has a major role to play in the prevention, management, treatment and rehabilitation of many long-term conditions.

■ Participation in physical activity is lower for people with a disability and/or a long-term health condition

■ The Council needs to understand the needs and demands of residents and users of leisure facilities

<p>Active System</p> <p>Coordinated leadership, partnerships and workforce capability to reduce sedentary behaviour</p>	<p>Foster strong, meaningful cross-sector partnerships to expand activity opportunities, strengthen collaborative working, and enhance community cohesion</p> <p>Embed movement into healthcare and signpost to available NHS and partner tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recognise that physical activity is much more than participation in sport and includes activities such as walking, gardening and dancing ■ Facilitate partnerships and collaboration between authorities, organisations, communities and groups to empower those who can make change ■ Work with partners from all sectors to tackle health and other inequalities in areas of highest need ■ Ensure opportunities attract funding and collaboration on innovative projects ■ Work with businesses and organisations to ensure workplace wellbeing initiatives, including physical activity, are considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working in collaboration with other partners, we can pool our resources, utilise our communication channels and achieve so much more ■ Sport and physical activity provide opportunities for socialising and brings communities together ■ Community cohesion and anti-social behaviour can be reduced by providing opportunities to be active, particularly for young people ■ 72% of people say the NHS is the most trusted source of advice on physical activity
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Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are included within the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy to provide a clear framework for measuring progress, impact and success. They enable the Council and partners to assess whether interventions are achieving the intended outcomes and will identify areas for improvement.

Pillar	KPI number and description
Active Society Creating a social movement to reduce inactivity and enhance understanding and value the benefits of physical activity for all ages and abilities.	1.1 Percentage of Inactive Adults and Children in South Kesteven.
	1.2 Total number of members visiting each South Kesteven owned leisure facility increasing 2% YoY
	1.3 Participation levels in healthy weight programmes
	1.4 Number of individuals undertaking apprenticeships in Sport and Physical Activity
Active Place Creating safe, accessible environments for people, of all ages, to take part in regular physical activity	2.1 Annual Sport and Physical Activity events such as Health & Wellness Days, Get SK Moving, Great Big Green Week etc
	2.2 Annual promotion and engagement with National Fitness Day
	2.3 Working with partners to deliver a minimum of 1 Wellbeing Walk in each market town
	2.4 Achieve a 2% YoY increase in the levels of customer satisfaction at each leisure facility.



<p>Active People</p> <p>Providing opportunities and programmes across many settings to help all people and communities to take part in regular physical activity</p>	<p>3.1 Throughput/usage at South Kesteven owned leisure facilities by breakdown of users (CYP, adults, older adults, women/girls)</p> <p>3.2 Number of Exercise Referral Scheme participants through South Kesteven owned leisure facilities</p> <p>3.3 Percentage of Adults and Children who are considered overweight or obese</p>
<p>Active Society</p> <p>Coordinated leadership, partnerships and workforce capability to reduce sedentary behaviour</p>	<p>4.1 Social value of Sport and Physical Activity in South Kesteven owned leisure facilities.</p> <p>4.2 QUEST plus accreditation to a minimum rating of 'very good' in all South Kesteven owned leisure facilities</p> <p>4.3 Number of GP practices registered as a RCGP Active Practice</p>



Our Facilities

www.southkesteven.gov.uk/arts-leisure-and-culture/sports-and-leisure

Grantham Meres Leisure Centre

Bourne Leisure Centre

Stamford Leisure Pool

Links to Key Documents - References

[South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan - 2024 to 2027](#)

[Sport England - Uniting the Movement 2021 - 2031](#)

[UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)

[Active Lives data](#)

[Local authority health profile - Fingertips](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) - Lincolnshire Health Intelligence Hub](#)

[Get Active: A Strategy for the future of sport and physical activity](#)

[DCMS Youth Strategy](#)

[NHS England - Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England](#)

[Millions more moving - The Richmond Group of Charities](#)

[Horizon Scanning: Future Trends in Sport and Physical Activity - May 2025](#)

[NHS England - Harnessing the benefits of physical activity](#)

[Let's Move Lincolnshire Strategy - Active Lincolnshire](#)



Contact Details

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

South Kesteven District Council
01476 406080

 www.southkesteven.gov.uk

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SOUTH
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**SOUTH
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COUNCIL**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 3 February 2026

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

Leisure investment across the District

Report Author

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

 michael.chester@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide Members of the Committee with an update of the work being undertaken as part of the leisure investment programme at each of the leisure centres, as well as details of the support the Council has provided to community organisations to improve the overall leisure offering in the district.

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 Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 A Leisure Investment Reserve was established as part of the 2024/25 financial year closedown and £500k was set aside to provide investment into the leisure facilities. Members of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee have endorsed the allocation criteria at a meeting at their meeting held on 18 November 2025. This has identified improvements to the changing room areas of the three leisure facilities and the Stadium as a priority. Work is now underway to finalise the scope and specification of works with a view to the tender opportunity going live in February 2026.
- 1.2 Following a request from Deeping Sports and Social Club, Members of the Cabinet approved a £200k contribution towards the development of a 3G pitch facility in the Deepings, funded from both the Leisure and Community reserve and the Local Priorities Reserve.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 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 key priorities for the Council and its leisure service. Providing and investing in high-quality leisure facilities helps to support the Council's corporate ambitions and provides opportunities for improved health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities.
- 2.2. At a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 December 2025, Members of the Committee agreed for a report be brought to a future meeting outlining the work being undertaken to improve not only the Council's leisure facilities, but also to improve the overall leisure offering within the district.

2.3. Therefore, this report will be split into two subsets for ease of reading as follows:

- A. An overview of the £500k Leisure Investment Works
- B. An overview of the Support to Community Organisations

(A) £500k Leisure Investment Programme

- 2.4. Members of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously received a report on 18 November 2025 and approved the allocation criteria of the £500k leisure investment reserve. It was agreed that the priority would be to improve the changing room facilities across all three leisure centres and the South Kesteven Sports Stadium (the Stadium) (see **Background Papers**).
- 2.5. The following indicative costings were identified to undertake the identified necessary improvement works, although the final costs would be subject to procurement:
- Bourne Leisure Centre £100k
 - Stamford Leisure Pool £100k
 - Grantham Meres Leisure Centre £200k
 - South Kesteven Sports Stadium £100k
- 2.6. Future reports regarding progress with the works identified and the associated spend will continue to be reported to the Council's Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required and in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference. The information contained in this report is being presented to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee for noting purposes only.
- 2.7. Since November 2025 Officers from the Council's Leisure Team have been exploring the procurement options available with the Council's Procurement Lead, ensuring compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 2.8. Whilst there are several routes to market, it has been decided the works will be procured as a single package through an Open Tender process. This opens the opportunity up to local suppliers and avoids incurring framework commission fees, thus demonstrating value for money.
- 2.9. Welland Procurement has been instructed to support the project, and it is envisaged that from the point of publishing the tender it will take up to eight weeks to get to contract start, this is subject to Cabinet approval in April 2026. The draft timeline can be found in **Table One** below:

Table One: Draft timeline for Leisure Improvement Works to refurbish changing facilities at each leisure centre

Task	Start Date	Completion Date
Develop specification and pricing schedule for tender	12/01/2026	06/02/2026
Tender live	09/02/2026	06/03/2026
Notify preferred supplier of intention of award subject to internal approval	17/03/2026	24/03/2026
Cabinet meeting for contract award	07/04/2026	07/04/2026
Contract commencement	27/04/2026	TBC

- 2.10. The external consultants who initially supported the Council with identifying and prioritising the agreed works have since been further commissioned to prepare and produce a schedule of works for each centre and to prepare pre-construction information documents. This will ensure that project is progressed swiftly and the works undertaken across each Centre will be delivered to a high standard.
- 2.11. As part of the budget proposals presented to Cabinet on 15 January 2026 (see **Background Papers**), a proposed general fund reserve movement of £500k to the Leisure Investment Reserve for financial year 2026/27 has been included which will enable further improvement works to be undertaken. This is due to be considered by Full Council on 26 February 2026.

(B) Support to Community Organisations

- 2.12. At a meeting of the Cabinet on 2 December 2025, Members considered a request from the Deeping Sports and Social Club for a £200k contribution to support a bid to the Football Foundation to provide a 3G pitch in the Deepings (see **Background Papers**).
- 2.13. Currently there is no all-weather training provision in the Deepings. Previously an all-weather pitch was located on the Linchfield Road Playing Fields and was well used by local teams. However, this facility was closed in January 2020 due to the age and deterioration of the pitch, and the resulting health and safety concerns. The lack of facilities was exacerbated in July 2021 with the closure of Deepings Leisure Centre.
- 2.14. The Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) for South Kesteven, developed by the Football Foundation with support from partners including the County Football Association and Sport England, was refreshed during the summer of 2025. This identified the Deepings as the top priority area for investment into a 3G pitch facility.
- 2.15. Members of the Cabinet therefore approved the request which would be funded equally from both the Leisure and Community Reserve, and the Local Priorities Reserve, subject to three associated conditions having been met. An application

has since been submitted and is due for consideration by the Football Foundation panel in March 2026.

- 2.16. The Council have previously supported Harrowby United Football Club through the provision of a new 25-year lease for the pitches at Harrowby Lane Playing Fields which commenced in June 2023, and the Pavillion which commenced in January 2025. In addition, the Club have been awarded funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which has facilitated improvements to the car parking and the changing pavilion.
- 2.17. Council Officers are also aware of aspirations by other community organisations in the district to develop football facilities in their localities which include Stamford Welland Academy and Harrowby United Football Club.
- 2.18. Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee have previously requested information around the level of support provided by the Council to different sporting organisations across the district through leasehold arrangements.
- 2.19. The Council currently has leasehold arrangements with the following sporting organisations across the district:
 - Grantham Amateur Boxing Club
 - Vaculug Bowls Club
 - Grantham Lawn Tennis Club
 - Grantham Tennis Club
 - Harrowby United Football Club
 - Grantham Angling Association
 - Grantham Town Football Club
 - Stamford Bridge Club
 - Stamford Indoor Bowls
 - Wyndham Park Bowls Club

The details of each of these arrangements vary in line with the terms and conditions agreed at the time. Due to commercial sensitivities and the complex nature of each of the arrangements, it is not possible to include details in relation to these leases within this report.

- 2.20. A concern was raised around the impact that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) may have on each of the lease arrangements the Council has with sporting organisations. Should the Council cease to exist in the future each lease would novate across to the new authority and remain in place.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. This report provides Members with an update on both the leisure investment works across planned across the leisure assets along with wider updates on support being provided to community organisations within the district. It offers Members the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to either of these.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The option to 'do nothing' has been discounted as the Leisure Investment Reserve was established with the primary objective to improve the customer facing areas of each of the leisure centres.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. This report is for noting and to provide Members with an oversight of leisure investment works taking place across the district.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1. *Leisure Investment Reserve – Allocation Criteria* – Report to Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published 10 November 2025, available online at:
<http://moderngovsvr/documents/s48572/Leisure%20Investment%20Reserve%20proposals.pdf>
- 6.2. *3G Pitch Funding – Matched Funding Contribution* – Report to Cabinet, published 25 November 2025, available online at:
<http://moderngovsvr/documents/s48874/3G%20Pitch%20Funding%20Contribution.pdf>
- 6.3. *Budget Proposals for 2026/27 and Indicative Budgets for 2027/28 and 2028/29 – General Fund* – Report to Cabinet, published 7 January 2026, available online at:
<http://moderngovsvr/documents/s49272/Budget%20Report%20for%2020262027%20including%20Indicative%20Budgets%20for%2020272028%20and%2020282029%20-%20General%20Fund.pdf>



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 3 February 2026

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

Proposed Events Programme 2026/27 (Subject to Budget Approval)

Report Author

Jade Porter, Arts and Cultural Services Manager

✉ jade.porter@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present a proposed programme of cultural events, subject to budget approval, outlining indicative expenditure, strategic alignment, and distribution across the district.

Recommendations

The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the proposed events calendar and consider making any further suggestions or amendments.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting Communities Enabling Economic Opportunities 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 programme of events is subject to approval of the budget proposals for 2026/27 which include an allocation for an Events Officer and an associated revenue budget. If these proposals are not approved or the amount is less than indicated, changes will need to be made to the plan, so it stays within the allocated budget.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no direct governance implications arising from this report. Any future delivery of events will be subject to budget approval, the appropriate procurement processes and the Council's established policies and procedures.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Health and Safety

- 1.3 The delivery of events will involve detailed planning to mitigate the operational risks associated with public events. This will include the development of appropriate risk assessments and method statements, staff training, and obtaining the appropriate permissions or licences. Where required events will also be subject to review at Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meetings

Completed by: Philip Swinton, Head of Health, Safety, Compliance and Emergency Planning

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.4 Delivery of events will involve the usual operational risks associated with public events. Risks will be assessed through appropriate risk assessments, method statements, licensing where required. The Council has its own public liability insurance for events that are run by the Council and where events are delivered in

partnership with third parties, they must also have their own adequate public liability insurance.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 The proposed programme supports the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by seeking to increase access to cultural activity across the district, particularly in areas of lower provision and where residents in rural areas are unable to travel. Activity is designed to be affordable and accessible.

Completed by: Jade Porter, Arts and Cultural Services Manager

Community Safety

- 1.6 For any outdoor or large-scale events, Public Protection and CCTV Officers are notified as part of the Event Management Plan. Security and safety staff will be employed where required as part of the risk assessment process.

Completed by: Ayeisha Kirlham. Head of Service- Public Protection

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. South Kesteven District Council's Cultural Strategy sets out the Council's ambition to enable arts and culture to thrive across the district, supporting wellbeing, placemaking and community cohesion.
- 2.2. Members have previously expressed a desire to see a greater proportion of activity delivered outside of the arts venues, particularly through external, place-based events that are visible, accessible and free to attend.
- 2.3. It is recognised that the current cultural offer delivered directly by the Council provides limited activity in Bourne, the Deepings, and surrounding rural areas when compared to Grantham and Stamford. Addressing this imbalance, while remaining within available resources, is a key consideration in the development of the draft events programme for 2026/27.
- 2.4. During 2024 the Council commenced consultation with residents and arts practitioners in Bourne and the Deepings to better understand existing participation, barriers to engagement, and aspirations for future provision. The consultation identified a strong appetite for more locally delivered cultural activity, with distance, travel costs, and lack of awareness cited as key barriers to participation.

- 2.5. Respondents also expressed interest in a broad range of activities, including live theatre, cinema, creative workshops and family-focused events. The findings reinforced the need for flexible, outreach-based approaches rather than reliance solely on established arts venues.
- 2.6. The Council has also been able to test alternative approaches to cultural delivery through previous funding programmes. A programme of events was trialled in Grantham Market Place funded by the Future High Street Fund. This has provided valuable learning points and further demonstrated the impact and potential for outdoor and town-centre-based events. Feedback from participants, audiences and businesses was positive and has helped to shape the proposed programme of events for 2026/27.
- 2.7. The Council's Arts team has a track record of delivering successful externally funded cultural projects. During 2025 this included work such as 'The Whale', which was delivered using the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and demonstrated residents' appreciation and for high-quality cultural experiences in non-traditional settings.
- 2.8. The Council's outreach budget of £4,000 has supported district-wide initiatives including an Easter Egg trail in 2024. More recently, this funding supported 'Nature Makers' family days in Bourne and the Deepings, each attracting over 150 participants. These free events offered hands-on arts and crafts activities and demonstrated clear demand for inclusive, family-friendly cultural activity delivered locally.
- 2.9. Arts and cultural activity is widely recognised as having a positive impact on mental health, emotional wellbeing, and social connection. National research, including the UK HEartS Survey and analysis published by Culture Case, shows that participation in arts and cultural activity is associated with improved wellbeing, increased social connectedness and reduced experiences of loneliness. These benefits are particularly relevant where activity is accessible, local and inclusive, and where opportunities exist for people to come together through shared cultural experiences.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The aim of the proposed programme is not only to deliver high-quality cultural activity, but also to adopt delivery models that support longer-term sustainability and community ownership. For certain events, this will include working in a similar format to 'Thatcher Fest', where the Council plays an enabling and supporting role alongside local partners, community groups and volunteers. This approach will allow events to evolve over time into community-led initiatives, with the Council retaining a "seat at the table" rather than being the sole organiser.

- 3.2. The proposed budget is therefore intended to support legacy and development, enabling learning, testing, and the establishment of events and programmes that have the potential to continue beyond direct Council delivery.
- 3.3. Subject to future budget approvals, this approach would also allow flexibility in the programme, ensuring that planned activity can respond to community need and opportunity, rather than creating an expectation that the same events are delivered year on year. This will support a more resilient and diverse cultural offer across the district over the longer term.
- 3.4. Whilst some events are being replicated across towns and villages, this is not the case with the entire programme. Delivery of 'The Whale' project, identified that residents were not averse to travel to be able to participate in the experience. So, whilst events and activities have been spread evenly across the district, it is proposed these are varied and take account of what already exists in the surrounding area.
- 3.5. Whilst some events are being replicated across towns and villages, this is not the case with the entire programme. Delivery of 'The Whale' project, identified that residents were not averse to travel to be able to participate in the experience. So, whilst events and activities have been spread evenly across the district, it is proposed these are varied and take account of what already exists in the surrounding area.
- 3.6. Previously a budget of £30,000 was created for the remainder of the 2025/2026 financial year. The sum of £20,000 has already been committed and it is proposed, subject to approval, to carry forward the remaining £10,000 to financial year 2026/2027. The table below provides information on the events which have already taken place or are planned for the remainder of this financial year.
- 3.7. An interim officer has been employed and is responsible for delivering the events programmed in 2025/26.

Events for financial year 2025/26

Event	Location	When	Predicted Spend (inc. VAT)		
Wassail Lantern Workshop	Stamford	3 rd January 2026	Workshop	£, 1,000	£1,100
			Marketing	£ 100	
Skate Skillz & BMX Display	Skate Parks: Bourne Grantham Stamford Deepings BMX Track: Market Deeping	16 th to 21 st February 2026	Art Workshops x5	£ 3,900	£8,000
			Skateboard Workshops	£ 960	
			BMX Stunt Show	£ 2,088	
			Marketing	£ 441	
			Venue Hire	£ 143	
			Portaloo Hire	£ 468	
Covid Remembrance	Grantham Stamford Bourne Deepings	8 th March 2026	Creation & Installation of 'wishing trees'	£ 10,000	£ 10,400
			Marketing	£ 400	

3.8. Stamford Wassail Date: 3 January 2026

Location: Stamford Community Orchard

The Stamford Wassail is an established, community-led event that has been delivered by the Stamford Community Orchard group for several years. The event is rooted in traditional winter customs and includes singing, dancing, readings and a procession into the orchard to bless the trees, raising funds and awareness to support the ongoing care of the orchard. Attendance at the event has grown steadily in recent years, reflecting wider national interest in traditional wassailing events.

For the January 2026 event, SKDC supported the existing programme by commissioning an additional one-off participatory element designed to enhance the audience experience and attract new audiences. This took the form of a lantern-making workshop and lantern procession delivered by Art Pop UK. The workshop element was fully booked, with 40 participants, and overall attendance at the Wassail was approximately 180 people, which is double the attendance of the previous year.

Promotion was supported through a combination of printed posters in locations close to the orchard, and digital marketing via the Stamford Arts Centre website and social media channels. This activity helped the Community Orchard group reach new audiences while retaining the community-led nature of the event.

3.9. Skate Skillz & BMX Display

Dates: 16–21 February 2026

Locations:

16 February – Deeping St James Skate Park
17 February – Stamford Skate Park
18 February – Bourne Skate Park
19 February – Grantham Skate Park
21 February – Market Deeping BMX Track

This district-wide programme was designed to celebrate the opening of a new skate park in Grantham and to recognise the increased interest in skateboarding and BMX as a result of these being included in the Olympics. The events will combine professional skate skills tuition, street art workshops, and a BMX display, celebrating skate parks as important outdoor community spaces while encouraging safe and inclusive use of the facilities.

The programme is aimed to reach new audiences for the Council’s cultural offer, particularly young people, while providing structured tuition to support new skaters and riders. Identical events are to be delivered at skate parks across the district, ensuring that residents in different locations have the opportunity to attend activity close to where they live.

Events will run between 11:00am and 2:00pm, with multiple skateboarding workshops available on a book-on-arrival basis throughout the day. The programme concludes with a BMX display event at Market Deeping, extending the reach of the programme to the south of the district.

3.10. National Covid Day of Reflection – Community Reflection Trees

Date: From 8 March 2026

Locations: District towns

This project supports a national initiative and involves the creation of permanent “wishing” or “clootie” trees in towns across the district, providing dedicated spaces for reflection and remembrance in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Each tree will be made from fabricated metal designed for outdoor installation, where members of the public will be invited to tie ribbons or strips of fabric to the branches in memory of loved ones based on folklore tradition.

The trees are intended to be installed in advance of 8 March 2026, with local stakeholders and community groups invited to host moments of reflection in each location. Once installed, the trees will remain available for use by community groups and residents and are designed to be reusable year on year and adaptable for other moments of collective reflection.

Artists from the Union Gallery in Grantham, who have experience in fabricating durable outdoor artworks, have been commissioned to design and produce the trees. At the time of writing, this initiative positions SKDC as the first local authority in Lincolnshire to establish permanent public memorials recognising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Future Events Programme

3.11. The table below provides an indicative events programme for 2026/27. It is important to note that due to time restrictions and to allow a programme of events to be delivered from the commencement of the financial year, planning has already commenced for the Walking Festival and Car Shows planned for April and May 2026. This is due to the extensive planning and lead in time required to facilitate events.

Event	Location	When	Predicted Spend (inc. VAT)		
Walking Festival	All	April	Marketing	£ 500	£ 4,000 From 25-26 budget carried over
			Programmed Walks	£ 3,500	
Car Show	Grantham for Main Car Show	May	'Ride' Car Dance Show	£ 4,145	£ 4,645 25/26 budget
			Marketing	£ 500	
Sending Curated 'Rhubarb Theatre' Piece to 5 other locations as well as the 'Grantham' Car show.	Bourne (events Team), The Deepings (Frognall), Stamford (Round Table), Castle Bytham, Corby Glenn (Sheep Fair)	Throughout the year	Curation and 6 performances of new interactive family show.	£ 13,440	£13,440 26/27 Budget
Pop-Up Cinema x6	Villages & Deepings	Across the year	Marketing	£ 600	£ 12,700
			Cinema Hire	£ 10,000	
			Venue Hire	£ 1,200	
			Film Licenses	£ 900	
Village Art Club x5 'Remembering 100 Years' reflecting on the Queen's 100 th Birthday	Villages	Throughout the year	Workshops	£ 7,800	£ 8,300
			Marketing	£ 500	

Bike Night	Grantham	July/August	Stage	£ 6,000	£ 12,500
			Acts	£ 2,000	
			Marketing	£ 500	
			Security	£ 2,000	
			Road Closure	£ 2,000	
Outdoor Cinema x2	Bourne	August	Cinema Hire	£ 5,000	£ 8,500
			Entertainment	£ 3,000	
			Marketing	£ 500	
Silent Summer Disco	Bourne or Deepings	June/July	Entertainment	£ 2,000	£ 3,500
			Facilities	£ 1,000	
			Marketing	£ 500	
Folk Dance Festival	Stamford	August	Stage & Sound	£ 6,000	£ 9,000
			Entertainment	£ 2,500	
			Marketing	£ 500	
Lincolnshire Day	All	October	Programmed Activities	£ 8,610	£ 7,850
			Marketing	£ 500	
Newton & Cup Chess Tournament	All	September	Marketing	£ 200	£ 2,000
			Venues and infrastructure	£1,800	
'Have a Go' Skills Weekend	All	February/ March	Workshops	£ 5,000	£ 5,500
			Marketing	£ 500	
Silent Winter Disco	Bourne or Deepings	November/ December	Entertainment	£ 2,360	£ 4,100
			Facilities	£ 1,000	
			Marketing	£ 500	
Spooks & Ghosts Trails	All	October	Marketing	£ 600	£ 5,000
			Entertainment	£ 3,000	
			Creation of Spooks	£ 1,400	
				TOTAL	£ 92, 390
				26/27	

Event Information

3.12. Walking Festival

– Saturday 11th - Sunday 26th April

A series of walks running over two weeks (three weekends), including one week of the Easter holidays, and one week during term time.

The festival will feature a mix of walks run by community groups and local organisations, alongside artistic and theatrical walks programmed by the Council. This will include a promenade outdoor theatre performance of 'The Tempest' and 'Robin Hoodie'.

Invitations to run walks will be sent out to community groups who will complete a detailed application, which will be reviewed to create a safe, diverse, and inclusive programme. It is hoped to engage organisations such as local ramblers groups, history groups, artists, the Woodland Trust, and other established groups to put on

activity over this period. The festival will have a combination of free, and chargeable activity.

The aim is that the Walking Festival becomes a yearly, repeatable festival, whereby other organisers involved will want to continue participating. This framework is similar to how Thatcher Fest worked with community buy in, ownership and by developing a programme of events that doesn't solely rely on SKDC delivering them.

Target Audience: Non-users of SKDC venues, Family groups, Residents in rural locations

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increased participation in culture
 - *Programming cultural activities in more accessible settings to reduce perceived barriers*
 - *Providing free of charge activity giving access to those on lower incomes*
- Reaching new and diverse audiences & increasing audiences from under-represented groups
 - *Providing free of charge activity giving access to those on lower incomes*
 - *Working collaboratively with community groups to reach under-represented groups*
- Enabling strong links, collaborations, and partnerships
 - *Building a strong network of community partners to deliver activity during the festival*
- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages of South Kesteven
 - *Working collaboratively with community groups to offer activities in locations across the district*
- Increasing awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of culture in terms of reducing isolation, combatting mental health issues and promoting positive activity and enjoyment
 - *Creating opportunities for community connection*
 - *Working with mental health and wellbeing support groups to programme walks with this focus*

3.13. Car Show

– Saturday 16th May 2026 – Grantham, Wyndham Park

Research has shown that most major towns, and many villages, already have existing annual car shows. Grantham was the only place identified where a large car show was not currently an existing offer.

The proposal is to run a car show in Grantham, in collaboration with Grantham Car Club, with additional entertainment to widen the audience and appeal. May has

been identified as the optimum time for this to be scheduled to avoid competing with existing shows and to hopefully draw in a wider audience.

Entertainment will include 'RIDE Dance Show' by ZoieLogic Dance, with the aim of introducing a different audience to dance. A new interactive family piece from Rhubarb Theatre Company is also being commissioned to complement the event. This will involve children being invited to put on a 1930s vintage car costume, and take a 'driving test', following a slightly eccentric driving instructor around a specially designed test track!

The Rhubarb Theatre activity will then be offered to other car shows within the district as listed below to complement the existing activity. This will be funded from the events budget.

- Bourne event in June 2026 – Run by the Bourne Town Events Team, this is a community focused event taking place in Wellhead Park and the grounds of the Red House.
- The Deepings event in May – Arranged by The Goat at Frognall and situated in the large pub car park.
- Stamford event in August – Run by the Stamford Round Table, this event is held on Stamford Meadows.
- Castle Bytham – 20th & 21st June – Displays of classic cars form part of the very busy midsummer festival which runs through the village.
- Corby Glen – 5th October – A small display of classic cars forms part of the Sheep Fair event which runs through the centre of the village.

Target Audience: Non-users of the Council's arts and cultural venues, families, residents, visitors and members of local car clubs.

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increasing participation in culture
- *Adding arts/culture activities to existing car shows adding to the audience experience*
- Reaching new and diverse audiences
- *Reaching existing car show audiences by providing supplementary activity*
- Increasing audiences from under-represented groups
- *Providing free activity in locations across the district*
- *Appeals to a male demographic which is often underrepresented in arts audiences*
- Enabling strong links, collaborations, and partnerships
- *Building partnerships with car clubs and community events across the district*
- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages of South Kesteven

- *Adding arts/culture activities to existing car shows in towns and villages across the district*

3.14. **Pop-Up Cinema and Outdoor Cinema**

– Throughout the year, dates to be confirmed

When reviewing the arts participation survey completed by residents from Bourne and the Deepings, there was a clear desire for a cinema offer in rural locations across the district.

It is proposed the Pop-Up Cinema will be set up in community settings and provide 6 screenings, working with churches, heritage venues, libraries, and other community venues.

The 2 outdoor screenings would be held in Bourne utilising an outdoor space across two days in the Summer Holidays. The suggestion is to utilise earlier screenings for family audiences, whilst later screenings are targeted towards adults.

The outdoor screenings will also have additional wrap around activities for the family screenings, including interactive workshops or crafts sessions, themed around the film being shown.

A small number of caterers will be invited to attend the outdoor film screenings to provide snacks and refreshments. To remain accessible, audiences will also be allowed to bring their own refreshments to the screenings.

Each screening will be ticketed at a small fee to gain commitment from attendees, with the ticket income, minus admin fee, being given to the venue to cover their operating costs. The events budget will cover the costs of equipment hire and film licensing. For the larger outdoors events there is a budget set aside for venue hire if required, and in this instance SKDC will keep any revenue from ticket sales to offset this cost.

After the events it is proposed that conversations are developed with the community venues involved about starting a longer-term community cinema project, using the data and experience gathered from the pop-up event to provide proof of concept, and potentially provide support for funding applications to purchase or hire equipment to continue delivery.

Target Audience: Residents in rural locations – Bourne & the Deepings, Non-users of the arts venues

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increasing participation in cultural activity
- *Providing low-cost cinema offers in rural areas*
- Increasing audiences from under-represented groups
- *Providing low-cost cinema offers in rural areas*
- Enabling strong links, collaborations, and partnerships
- *Working closely with community venues to support long-term activity*
- Providing value for money
- *Planning in place to support venues to continue activities*

- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages across the district
- *Providing low-cost cinema offers in rural areas*
- *Working outside of the existing venues*

3.15. **Village Art Club – Celebrating the last 100 years in memory of Queen Elizabeth II** **– Dates to be confirmed**

It is proposed that art workshops will be provided in villages across the district where participants will create pieces that can be displayed in windows or front gardens to create an art trail. This event provides opportunity for participants to physically create art and builds a sense of community pride through the display of artworks.

The workshops will be inspired by the 100th Birthday of Elizabeth II with artworks created being a reflection on the past 100 years.

The workshops will be open to people of all ages and abilities, with the focus being more on adult audiences. The resulting art trails will be marketed across the district to encourage people to visit rural locations.

Lumo Workshop (An artistic community project organisation) will be commissioned to run the village art clubs in Ancaster, the Deepings, Long Bennington, Folkingham, and Castle Bytham.

Target Audience: Residents in rural locations, non-users of the arts venues

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increased participation in cultural activity
- *Bringing hands on artistic experiences to residents in village locations*
- Improving the cultural and visitor economy
- *Bringing people to the villages through the promotion of the resulting arts trails*
- *Reaching new and diverse audiences*
- *Directing offers at residents who might not be able to reach the visitor venues*
- Increasing audiences from under-represented groups
- *Working with parish councils and community groups to target offer to under-represented groups*
- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages across the district
- *Working in villages across the district*
- Providing value for money
- *Addition of the art trail made up of works from Village Art Club members to encourage visitors to the villages*
- Increasing awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of culture in terms of reducing isolation, combatting mental health issues and promoting positive activity and enjoyment

- *Working with parish councils and community groups to target the offer to under-represented groups*
- *Creating a feeling of community with people working towards a shared public exhibition*

3.16. **Bike Night**

– July/August, Date to be confirmed

Following on from the success of the Grantham Bike night in August 2025 it is proposed to host a similar event at the start of the school holidays. The event would be delivered in partnership with Chris Walker Motorcycles once again. The event will be held in Grantham in the marketplace and will require a road closure and security, which is where the majority of the budget will be required. A stage and appropriate live music will also be provided to enhance the overall experience.

The aim is to work with existing businesses in Grantham Marketplace to provide catering for the event, with the bars and take-aways being encouraged to remain open to meet the needs of all attendees.

Working with local partners and businesses means this event could in future, be something organised by the Town Team or local Motorcycle businesses with support from the Council, rather than the Council being solely responsible for its provision.

Target Audience: Grantham residents, non-users of the arts venues

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increasing participation in cultural activity
- *Reaching lower income audiences with free programming*
- *Holding arts events in easy to reach locations*
- Reaching new and diverse audiences
- *Reaching lower income audiences with free programming*
- *Booking live music from local artists*
- Increasing audiences from under-represented groups
- *Reaching lower income audiences with free programming*
- *Appealing to a male demographic which is often underrepresented in arts audiences*
- Enabling strong links, collaborations, and partnerships
- *Working closely with locally businesses to cater the event*
- *Partnership working with local retail and hospitality providers*

3.17. **Silent Discos (Summer Outdoor and Winter Indoor)**

– dates to be confirmed

These events would be in two parts, one in summer in an outdoor location, the other during winter in an indoor location.

They will be aimed at young people (18 – 35), with a DJ, and music selected to appeal to this age group.

The aim is to deliver these events in areas where there currently is minimal provision for young audiences, mainly within rural areas.

Alongside the disco there will be food/drink stalls and, if required, at the chosen location, toilet facilities.

Target Audience: Young people

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increasing participation in cultural activity
 - *Targeting activity at young audiences*
 - *Keeping tickets at an affordable price*
- Reaching new and diverse audiences
 - *Targeting activity at young audiences*
 - *Programming music that is not normally suitable for the visitor venues*
- Increasing audiences from under-represented groups
 - *Targeting younger audiences who are often underrepresented*
- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages across the district
 - Providing opportunities outside of the arts venues
 - Taking this opportunity to a rural location
- Increasing awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of culture in terms of reducing isolation, combatting mental health issues and promoting positive activity and enjoyment
 - *Creating opportunities for people to come together*
 - *Targeting audiences in semi-rural and rural areas aiming to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness which impact mental health*
 - *Targeting young people who are at risk of social isolation leaning into data published by the Youth Futures Foundation, 2023*

3.18. Folk Dance Festival

- August, dates to be confirmed

It is proposed to showcase folk dance from a diverse mix of cultures over a summer holiday weekend in Stamford, this will include indoor and outdoor performances all of which will be free for audiences to enjoy. Alongside performances, participatory workshops will be hosted for people to try a new style of dance. These sessions will be led by local dance groups and can be utilised by them to recruit new dancers. Larger participatory dances, including ceilidhs and social dances, will be programmed using the events budget.

Other venues in the town will be encouraged to host music sessions or book musical acts working in collaboration with the event and widening its reach.

Target Audience: Families, residents from a wide range of cultures

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increasing participation in cultural activity
 - *Creating low cost and free opportunities to enjoy the arts*
 - *Collaborate with community groups from a broad range of cultures*
- Improving the cultural and visitor economy
 - *Encouraging visitors from the wider region*
 - Reaching new and diverse audiences and increasing audiences from under-represented groups
 - *Representing the broad range of cultures within South Kesteven*
- Enabling strong links, collaborations, and partnerships
 - *Collaborating with community groups from a broad range of cultures*
- Increasing awareness of the health and wellbeing benefits of culture in terms of reducing isolation, combatting mental health issues and promoting positive activity and enjoyment
 - *Reducing isolation by creating a space for diverse communities to come together*
- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages of South Kesteven
 - *Providing cultural activities outside the arts venues*
 - *Creating low-cost opportunities to enjoy the arts*

3.19. Lincolnshire Day

- October

A collaborative programme of activities is proposed to commence on Lincolnshire Day (1st October) and culminate the following weekend (4th October). This celebration will take a partnership approach where community groups and local venues will be encouraged to run activities across the district.

Activities to include:

- Lincolnshire themed markets across the district working with the SKDC Markets Team
- Banner making workshops with schools in the Deepings culminating in a procession over the weekend
- *'Henry VIII Used to Hate Us'* – a Lincolnshire history theatre show to be performed in Bourne
- Rhubarb Theatre Bourne History Walk
- Talks and walks – run by civic societies or other community groups
- Art shows from community art groups
- Music from local performers – encouraging pubs and venues to book bands as well as open mic events across the district

Target Audience: Families in Bourne & the Deepings, schools in the Deepings, residents from across the district.

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increasing participation in cultural activity
 - *Providing a diverse mix of activities across the district*
 - *Reaching low-income audiences through the provision of free or low-cost activities*
- Reaching new and diverse audiences
 - *Working alongside community groups to programme activities*
 - *Reaching low-income audiences through the provision of free or low-cost activities*
- Increasing audiences from under-represented groups
 - *Working with community groups who are working with under-represented groups*
- Improving the cultural and visitor economy
 - *Supporting venues across the district*
 - *Supporting artists across the district*
 - *Creating events which will bring people into the district*
 - *Promotion of the district*
- Enabling strong links, collaborations, and partnerships
 - *Working alongside community groups to programme activities*
 - *Supporting venues and artists across the district*
- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages across the district
 - *Programming activities in locations across the district*

3.20. Spooks and Ghosts Trail
- 24th October to 1st November

It is proposed to commission artists across the district to create Halloween creatures which will be displayed in shop windows in each of the towns (Bourne, Market Deeping, Stamford, Grantham) across the district during the October half term.

During the week of the trail, family activities will be hosted in each town to wrap around the Halloween trail. The activities provided will include themed crafts and face painting, which has previously been well received in previous years with the Nature Days and Egg Trails.

Target Audience: Families across the district

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increasing participation in cultural activity
 - *Providing activities outside of the SKDC arts venues*
 - *Creating access for low-income audiences by providing free activities*
- Reaching new and diverse audiences
 - *Creating access for low-income audiences by providing free activities*
- Increasing audiences from under-represented groups
 - *Marketing to family support groups working with under-represented groups*
- Enabling strong links, collaborations, and partnerships

- *Collaborating with artists and businesses across the district to create an exciting trail*
- Improving the cultural and visitor economy
- *Creating reasons to visit towns across the district*
- *Promotion of businesses across the district*
- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages across the district
- *Activities across the district for local residents to access*
- *Creating access for low-income audiences by providing free activities*

3.21. **Newton 300 Commemoration and Chess Tournament**

Meetings started in early February 2025 with interested community groups, educational establishments and other parties to set up a stakeholder group to mark the 300th year of Newton's death. This will work in a similar way to 'Thatcher Fest' whereby events and activities are brought together to create a festival feel but is likely to be on somewhat of a larger scale. The Guildhall Arts Centre will be programming a series of science related workshops across the summer holidays in 2027, with a science schools show in late July 2027. There will also be a lecture, speaker, or relevant theatre piece in the theatre in September of that year.

The events budget will fund the provision of a 'Newton Chess Tournament' that will have final played in early 2027 in the Newton Hall at the King's School. Conversations have begun with the English Chess Federation to potentially facilitate and provide the infrastructure for a district wide event, with an initial heat held in each town.

Alongside the tournament, the aim is to invite a chess master to play a simultaneous match with several young people from across the district.

Target Audience: Young people, schools, people who don't normally attend traditional theatre events

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increasing participation in cultural activity
- *Working with schools to increase youth participation in the 2027 chess tournament*
- Reaching new and diverse audiences
- *Working with schools to increase youth participation in the 2027 chess tournament*

3.22. **'Have a Go' Weekend - September 2026**

It is proposed to invite artists and makers from across the district to run workshops for their local communities by way of introductory sessions, providing the opportunity to learn new skills. Some of these workshops will be funded by the events budget and be offered free of charge for participants, reducing the barrier to entry for lower income audiences. Other workshops might be run entirely by local businesses or community groups, which are likely to have a charge.

This series of workshops will give residents the chance to try new crafts/learn new skills from local experts, while showcasing talented individuals from across the district. They will be aimed primarily at adult audiences with events being held across a weekend in September, allowing a back to school feel to the marketing. The goal is to introduce residents to new skills and hobbies, whilst also potentially encouraging artists to start up permanent classes in new areas with support from the Council.

Suggested crafts/skills might include: wood working, print making, miniature painting, willow weaving, knitting/crochet, sewing, book binding, jewellery making, poetry and chess.

Target Audience: Adults with an interest in arts/crafts, People with lower incomes who might not typically be able to engage in these activities.

Cultural Strategy Links:

- Increased participation in cultural activity
 - *Providing opportunities to take part in the arts*
- Reaching new and diverse audiences
 - *Reaching low-income audiences by providing a good range of free or low-cost activities in locations which are easy to access without the need for public transport or driving*
 - *Putting on a wide variety of activities which would appeal to a range of audiences*
- Increasing audiences from under-represented groups
 - *Providing a good range of free or low-cost activities in locations which are easy to access without the need for public transport or driving*
- Enabling strong links, collaborations, and partnerships
 - *Building relationships with local artists, makers, businesses, and venues across the district*
- Increasing opportunities for people to take part in and experience arts and cultural activity in the towns and villages across the district
 - *Providing activities across the district, including rural areas*

General Considerations

- 3.23. Participants in all the events will be asked to complete evaluations, as well as the artists and companies that are engaged as part of the delivery. This is important to be able to build on events in subsequent years and to diversify the programme offered, ensuring the needs and aspirations of our residents are met.
- 3.24. By engaging with local community groups, the aim is that responsibility for some events can be taken on at a local level, giving the events a legacy. This will allow any future events budget to concentrate on bringing new ideas and concepts to the district and increase the availability of cultural activity.

- 3.25. Where required, the event budget includes the costs associated with security, additional staffing, road closures, and first aid.
- 3.26. The proposed programme of events ensures a spread across the district balancing financial commitments per town/rural locations.
- 3.27. Marketing for events will be undertaken through a variety of methods including press releases, radio, Arts Centre websites, printed posters displayed in local areas and community hubs, banners, Arts Centre and Council social media pages, and flyers.
- 3.28. Event information will also be passed to community groups, relevant Parish and Town Councils for support in promoting to residents.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The proposed events programme is dependent on the budget being approved for financial year 2026/27 to support the recruitment of an Events Officer and an associated expenditure budget. Should this not be agreed Officers will continue to look for funding opportunities to deliver outreach activity and events across the district.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The events programme has been developed based on research undertaken by Officers to identify and address current gaps in cultural provision across the district, alongside feedback gathered through consultation with residents and practitioners in Bourne and the Deepings.
- 5.2. The proposed programme also builds on learning and evidence from previously delivered events and initiatives.
- 5.3. The programme offers a diverse range of cultural activity delivered across a wide geographic area, helping to improve access to arts and cultural events and balance provision within the district. The proposed programme is aligned with the objectives and priorities set out in the Council's Cultural Strategy and has been curated to complement and support its aims, while enabling learning, partnership working and future development.

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2025/26

WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/ PRIORITY
3 February 2026				
Draft refreshed Sport & Physical Activity Strategy	Lead Officer: Beth Goodman (Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead)	To present a draft refreshed Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2026 – 2031). The Strategy will include a suite of key performance indicators upon which to measure success.		
Leisure investment works across the District	Lead Officer: Michael Chester (Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)	To provide an update to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the ongoing schemes of work across the leisure asset base in the district.		
Events across South Kesteven	Lead Officer: Jade Porter (Arts and Cultural Services Manager)	To provide an indicative plan for Events for financial year 2026/27 subject to the budget being approved for an Events Officer and associated revenue budget.		

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/ PRIORITY
13 May 2026				
Visit from Grantham Town FC	Lead Officer: Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director for Leisure, Culture and Place)	A presentation from Grantham Town Football Club on their aspirations for the club and developing community engagement, (Visit to take place once the lease negotiations have been concluded)	Agreed by the Chairman at the meeting of CLOSC held on 14 October 2025	
Sports and Physical Activity Update	Lead Officer: Beth Goodman (Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead)	Final review of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2021 – 2026)		
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
LeisureSK Ltd Financial Outturn Position	Lead Officer: David Scott (Director for LeisureSK Ltd)	To present the budget outturn for financial year 2025/26		
21 July 2026 (Provisional)				

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/ PRIORITY
13 October 2026 (Provisional)				
FUTURE ITEMS				
Play Area Strategy Action Plan – September/October 2026				

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