

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 18 November 2025 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Councillor Bridget Ley (Chairman)

Members: Councillor Gareth Knight (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Tim Harrison, Councillor Graham Jeal, Councillor Gloria Johnson,
Councillor Max Sawyer, Councillor Lee Steptoe, Councillor Murray Turner and
Vacancy (Conservative)

Agenda

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

1. Public Speaking

The Council welcomes engagement from members of the public. To speak at this meeting please register no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting via democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Disclosure of Interests

Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.

4. Minutes from the previous meeting

(Pages 3 - 16)

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 23 September 2025.

5. **Updates from previous meeting** (Page 17)
6. **Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**
7. **Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report - Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26** (Pages 19 - 29)
To present the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2024-27 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the purview of this Committee for Quarter Two 2025/26.
8. **Turnpike Close Depot Update - November 2025** (Pages 31 - 38)
This report provides an update on the construction of the new SKDC Waste Depot at Turnpike Close, Grantham.
9. **Leisure Investment Reserve proposals** (Pages 39 - 44)
A Leisure Investment Reserve has been established and site surveys have been undertaken to allocate the funding of £500k across the four locations.
10. **General Fund Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report 2025/26** (Pages 45 - 53)
To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of September 2025 with specific regard to:
 - General Fund Revenue Budget
 - General Fund Capital Programme
11. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report 2025/26** (Pages 55 - 61)
To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of September 2025. The report covers the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme
12. **Localised Council Tax Support Scheme Proposals 2026/27** (Pages 63 - 97)
This report reviews the responses to the public consultation of the Council's proposed Local Council Tax Support scheme 2026/27.
13. **Discretionary Payment Policies 2026/27** (Pages 99 - 123)
This report provides an update on expenditure and reviews the responses to public consultation of the Discretionary Council Tax Payment (DCTP) Policy 2026/27 and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy 2026/27.
14. **Work Programme 2025/26** (Pages 125 - 127)
15. **Any other business, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstance decides is urgent**

Minutes

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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COUNCIL

Tuesday, 23 September 2025, 10.00 am

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

Committee Members present

Councillor Bridget Ley (Chairman)
Councillor Gareth Knight (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Matthew Bailey

Cabinet Members present

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

Officers

Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive, S151 Officer)
Alison Hall-Wright (Director of Housing & Projects, Deputy Monitoring Officer)
David Scott (Assistant Director of Finance, Deputy S151 Officer)
Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning and Growth)
Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place)
Gyles Teasdale (Head of Service – Property & ICT)
Debbie Roberts (Head of Corporate Projects, Performance and Climate Change)
Simon Jackson (Economic Development Inward Investment Manager)
James Welbourn (Democratic Services Manager)
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

18. Public Speaking

There were none.

19. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Harrison, Mark Whittington and Richard Cleaver.

Councillor Matt Bailey substituted for Councillor Mark Whittington.

20. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

21. Minutes from the meeting held on 24 July 2025

The minutes from the meeting held on 24 July 2025 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as an accurate record

22. Updates from previous meeting

All actions were complete.

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

The Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive joined Officers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and visited parts of Grantham. They visited the new Swinegate development, Marketplace, Larch Close and the new Depot.

The Leader of the Council apologised for the late notice of the consultations on Local Government Reorganisation. The consultation events would commence, starting in the Deepings on Wednesday, 24 September at 4pm.

The Chairman introduced the new Economic Development Inward Investment Manager, Simon Jackson to the Committee.

24. Update on Economic Development Strategy Action Plan

The Leader of the Council presented the report updating the Committee on the Council's Economic Development Strategy which had previously been adopted by the Council in October 2024.

The strategy looked at five areas of focus, where the Council is likely to influence the key challenges to economic prosperity in the district, including:

- Business growth and job creation
- Skills development
- Inclusive growth and regeneration
- Inward Investment
- Enhancing the Tourism and Visitor Economy offer

The action plan set out a number of activities that the team would carry out over the lifetime of the strategy, and these were split between short term (1 year) and activities due to be completed by years 3 and 4.

Some activities had been delayed due to a vacancy in the manager's post; however, the manager post had been filled.

A query was raised whether there were any areas of special concern regarding further delays.

The Leader of the Council confirmed the pace and deliverability of some of the aspirations. Other concerns were funding and capacity within the team.

One Member noted that several actions had been assigned to the new Economic Development Inward Investment Manager.

The Economic Development Inward Investment Manager had studied the Action Plan and provided the Committee with reassurance that in 6 months' time, projects within the Action Plan would be underway.

The Chairman requested updates where possible on all actions.

The Committee:

- 1. Noted the progress made on the Action Plan**
- 2. Agreed to receive a further update and refreshed Action Plan within the next six months**

25. Update on UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing presented the report.

The report updated the Committee on the progress made allocating the UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant for 2025-26.

The UKSPF grant and the Rural top-up grant was awarded to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority rather than the Council directly.

The Mayor's Office subsequently agreed that the funding would be distributed to each of the Council's within the Greater Lincolnshire area. This meant SKDC was awarded approximately £1.2m in UKSPF funds and a further £162,000 in Rural top-up funds.

The fund priorities have remained the same over the previous three years, and a copy of the investment plan was submitted to the Mayor's Office and was appended to the report.

It was highlighted that almost all funding had been allocated to a variety of projects across the entire District.

The report detailed those projects which were successful. Officers were working on plans to allocate the remaining £19,000.

One Member queried what figure had been allocated for the resurfacing of Dysart Park Grantham tennis courts.

The Assistant Director of Finance clarified the amount funded was £32,120 for the resurfacing of Dysart Park Grantham tennis courts.

Members congratulated Officers and Members of the UKSPF board for their hard work. Members felt the grants were much more strategic and targeted than previously.

The Committee:

1. Noted the contents of the report and agreed to receive a further update in 6 months.

26. Turnpike Depot Update - September 2025

The Leader of the Council presented the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member of Property and Public Engagement.

The Leader of the Council thanked Cabinet Members, the Chairman of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all Officers involved for attending the Depot working group.

The report covered the period up to the first week of September 2025 and included the latest financial forecast identifying risks and latest timetable.

The contractor had confirmed a three-week delay due to delays in steels being delivered and to the liquidation of the steel manufacturer. Another reason for the delay was due to fire compartmentalisation regulations.

In order to mitigate the delay, the mobilisation period has been reviewed and two weeks of the delay could be absorbed, meaning an overall one week likely delay to the original operational date.

There were currently two primary risks identified. These related to the permit application for the siting of waste materials from the Environment Agency. The other risk related to the connection of utilities.

It was clarified the permit itself only affects waste on the site and would not impede the operational date scheduled. It would mean bulky waste collections and fly

tipping would be retained in skips on the existing depot and mobilise staff between the two locations during that period.

The Council were in regular contact with the Environment Agency to ensure they were satisfied with the plans and operation deployments of the site before issuing the permit.

The operational open date of the depot was not a business critical deadline but a self-imposed date. The Council could still operate and retain the existing location.

A query was raised whether steel had been supplied from a new or alternative supplier and whether there was a cost implication of the previous steel provider going into liquidation.

A supplementary question was raised on whether the delay in the delivery of the project could have a further cost implication.

The Head of Service (Property and ICT) clarified the original supplier was used for the steelwork and the cost remained the same.

Clarification was sought that there would be no additional costs forthcoming from the project.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed there was no request for further funding on this project.

The Chairman requested a site visit once the depot was operational.

It was confirmed that Members of the Committee would be invited to the 'soft launch' of the depot.

A closure report would be brought back to the Committee in February 2026.

The Committee:

Noted the current position of the delivery of the new Waste Depot at Turnpike Close, Grantham

27. Corporate Asset Management Strategy Review

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement.

The report presented the strategy for 2025-2030. The strategy set out a framework for managing the corporate property general fund over the next 5 years and is set within the context of the Council's corporate plan, financial plan and sustainability aims.

The asset management strategy is structured in the following way:

- Strategic context
- Key asset management priorities
- Achieving the vision and key actions

There are 11 key actions in the strategy which enable the vision to be delivered over the 5 year period.

Once the strategy has been approved, an action plan will be developed to monitor the implementation of the actions

One Member noted the strategy was five years and would overlap with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It was queried whether any implications would need to be considered in the future.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed the Council were continuing business as usual and the LGR timescale would not impact the strategy at present. In regards to the strategy, the Council's assets would be assimilated into the new authority following LGR.

It was proposed, seconded and AGREED for the Asset Management Strategy (Corporate Property) for the period 2025 – 2030 to be recommended to Cabinet.

28. Corporate Property Maintenance Strategy Progress Update

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement.

The report was an update that was previously presented to the Committee in February 2025.

A maintenance strategy was approved in September 2024 which sets out the criteria for the allocation of funding to deal with the backlog of maintenance and planned maintenance.

The report set out the programme of works which had been undertaken across the property portfolio.

The works were allocated utilising the condition survey information and focused on works identified as end of life and requiring immediate attention.

Going forward, it was intended that cyclical condition surveys of around 20% per annum would take place in order to develop a planned maintenance programme.

One Member questioned whether local suppliers would be encouraged to carry out maintenance works, wherever possible.

The Deputy Chief Executive clarified that Full Council had recently approved the updated Contract Procedure Rules. It was noted individual quotations for local suppliers had increased from a £10k to £25k threshold. Cumulative spending would still be taken into consideration, and therefore using the same supplier multiple times would be monitored to ensure procurement financial thresholds are maintained.

A query was raised on when the bell turret would be repaired as part of the Guildhall Arts Centre repairs.

It was clarified the bell turret was off site and would be returned to the Guildhall Arts Centre in Spring.

The Committee:

Noted the progress being made with respect to the development and delivery of the General Fund Maintenance Programme, in accordance with the allocation criteria set out in the Maintenance Strategy

29. Leisure Investment Reserve – Allocation Criteria

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing declared he had a register of interest as a Director of LeisureSK Ltd.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed this agenda item did not conflict with LeisureSK Ltd and this was a Council driven initiative, therefore a declaration of interest was not required.

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which had been developed in response to the creation of a Leisure Investment Reserve was approved by the Governance and Audit Committee on 23 July 2025.

It was recognised that current maintenance funding was primarily focused on urgent works and limited funding was available to support the more cosmetic and decorative works.

Customer perception when using facilities can lead to negative feedback due to the limited investment in those cosmetic and decorative elements.

To enhance the customer experience and meet the objectives of the reserve, external consultants had been engaged to provide a summary of proposed investment based on the condition surveys with a clear focus on cosmetic and decorative works.

Following the consultants site survey, a specification of works would be developed to prioritise the allocation of the £500,000 reserve across the four main leisure assets.

Members were pleased to see the fund had been initiated.

A query was raised on why external consultants would provide a summary of proposed investment and not a Council employee, it was further questioned how much an external consultant would cost.

The Deputy Chief Executive clarified the external consultants were the same consultants who provided condition surveys of the assets and therefore had good understanding of each asset. The consultants would review the assets professionally and begin to allocate where the £500,000 would be prioritised across the four locations.

The cost of the external consultants was around £5-6000 and would be taken out of the property services budget.

The report outlined usage figures, it was questioned how the figures were measured.

The Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place confirmed that LeisureSK Ltd utilised a dedicated customer management system where visitors would be checked in on arrival. It was acknowledged the system would not record every visitor to the centre but would uplift figures in relation to other services. For example, a badminton court booking would record two visitors.

ACTION: For the Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place to provide an update on how attendance figures were measured at the Stadium in Grantham.

One Member noted that the majority of complaints from visitors at Stamford leisure center related to the changing areas only.

It was highlighted that several complaints received from all centers related to changing room facilities and it was hoped the £500,000 would be utilised in updating all changing rooms, following the external consultants report.

One Member noted that upgrades would relate to refurbishment rather than re-decoration.

It was likely the £500,000 may not be sufficient to upgrade all of the assets. The Committee may wish to recommend to Cabinet in future that further allocations be made to the reserve during budget setting.

The Committee:

1. Considered the proposed criteria for the allocation of the £500k from the Leisure Investment Reserve.

2. The Committee agreed to receive a further update at the meeting of the 18th November 2025 regarding the proposed work programme.

30. Finance Update Report - April to July 2025

The Leader of the Council presented the report. The report was the first budget monitoring report for the current financial year covering income expenditure between April and July 2025.

The report covered general fund, HRA, revenue and capital expenditure.

The forecast position on the general fund was currently at an underspend due to a number of different variances as outlined in table two of the report. This was a combination of forecast changes to income and expenditure and would continue to be monitored throughout the year.

There was an emerging concern regarding the expenditure position of the HRA. Work was ongoing to ensure the levels of expenditure for repairs and maintenance were regularly reviewed. The expenditure position was partly due to the focus on clearing maintenance backlog alongside new requirements as a social landlord.

In terms of capital expenditure, other variances included HRA new build, which was below budget due to delays in programme and some abortive schemes. Work continues to identify potential sites for development or acquiring new build properties where there was an identified need or the properties meet the housing demand.

It was noted the report outlined £1 million variant overspend budget for repairs. It was queried whether the Council would borrow money from another HRA fund for further repairs.

The Leader of the Council clarified there were significant reserves in the HRA budget. It was highlighted that since 2023, condition surveys had outlined significant repairs which required attention alongside the backlog of voids.

The Director of Housing and Projects outlined the Council's need to manage the number of repairs in order to reduce the budget for repairs. At present, there were 3,500 repairs that require completion in properties and around 200 new repairs were raised each week. The numbers had reduced by 600 since March 2025.

Capital funding was monitored on a monthly basis and from a decent homes perspective, the Council were achieving 99.76%. Only 14 properties were currently failing to meet decent homes standards. There were approximately 160 tenants who had refused works, which would increase the cost of repairs when the property becomes a void.

A question was raised on what the Council could do to ensure that money is spent within South Kesteven District Council and would not be spent on the new authority, following LGR.

The Leader of the Council confirmed budget preparation had started for 2026-27. The Council would be taking a prudent approach to spending public money before the new authority was established. We would hope that the Council's money would still benefit the residents within the area but this was a common concern of Council's around the country about the amalgamation of budgets into a new authority.

It was queried whether the Council were reviewing finances of other Council's which SKDC could be amalgamated with. The Council was working on baseline data across the authority to develop a model that would support its LGR submission. The data being captured was balance sheets, contract spend, staffing groupings, investment and debt levels.

A query was raised on why the Council could not evict tenants who refused essential repairs to comply with legal requirements.

The Director of Housing and Projects confirmed the Council could only take legal enforcement for gas compliance. The majority of refusals were based around replacements of kitchens or bathrooms.

It was noted the HRA capital had an £8 million underspend regarding the new build programme. Concern was raised on whether individuals on the housing register would endure a longer wait for a house. The reasons for projects being delayed were queried and whether alternative options had been considered.

The Director of Housing and Projects clarified some delays on start dates due to drainage issues. Government had recently lifted a numerical restriction on the amount of properties the Council could buy 'off plan'. It was further highlighted that discussions with potential developers are time consuming.

The Leader of the Council noted that new builds can cause resistance in terms of locations being close to existing properties.

The Committee:

1. Reviewed and noted the forecast 2025/26 outturn position for the General Fund, HRA Revenue and Capital budgets as at the end of July 2025.

31. Work Programme 2025/26

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2025/26.

The following items were agreed to be included on the Work Programme:

- Leisure Investment Reserve – Allocation Criteria proposals (18 November 2025 meeting)
- Discretionary and mandatory fees and charges (18 November 2025 meeting)
- UKSPF – (24 February 2026 meeting)
- Economic development strategy plan UKSPF – (24 February 2026 meeting)

It was highlighted that taxi licensing fees would be brought to the Committee in November. A request was made to expand the scope of the item to include all fees and charges.

The Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee were due to meet on 13 January 2026 where fees and charges would be scrutinised. It was felt that Officers may not have the draft fees and charges ready to present by November.

It was confirmed the Committee could be reminded of discretionary fees and charges alongside mandatory fees and charges that were set outside the Council's control.

32. St Martins Park Update (Verbal)

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC & PRESS

That under Section 100 (A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds that it is likely, that if they were present, there could be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

33. Any other business, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstance decides is urgent

There were none.

34. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:50.

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

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ACTION SHEET

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To provide members with an update on actions agreed at the meeting held on 23 September 2025.

Min No	Agenda Item	Action	Assigned to	Comment/Status	Deadline
29	Leisure Investment Reserve – Allocation Criteria	For the Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place to provide an update on how attendance figures were measured at the Stadium in Grantham.	Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place	Email sent to Committee Members on 10 October 2025	Complete

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SOUTH
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Finance & Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 18 November 2025

Report of Councillor Philip Knowles,
Cabinet Member for Corporate
Governance and Licensing

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

Report Author

Charles James, Policy Officer

 Charles.James@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2024-27 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the purview of this Committee for Quarter Two 2025/26.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Decision Information	
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Enabling economic opportunities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

1.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

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

Legal and Governance

1.2 Regular monitoring of service area performance is to be welcomed and represents good governance. This report is for noting and there are no significant legal or governance implications arising from the report.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The Corporate Plan 2024-2027 was adopted by Council on 25 January 2024. It was proposed actions, key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets would be developed by the relevant Member led Committees, which would retain oversight of the performance management arrangements at a strategic level.

2.2 The actions within the remit of this Committee with accompanying measures were presented to and agreed by the Committee on 20 February 2024.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 This report is the third of the reporting cycle and covers the period July to September 2025 (Quarter 2 2025/26).
- 3.2 Appendix A presents the overall performance against the fifteen actions being presented in this session. Commentary by the responsible officer is provided for each action. Performance is summarised using a RAG (red, amber, green) system as follows:
- 3.3 Twelve of the actions are rated Green. These are actions which are on or above target as planned.
- 3.4 Zero actions are rated as Amber, these are those off target by less than 10% or where milestone achievement is delayed but with resolution in place to be achieved within a reasonable timeframe.
- 3.5 Three actions are rated as Under Review. These are actions that are being considered requiring amendments.
- 3.6 The KPIs have been developed in close consultation with the relevant Officers for each service. It is expected that the KPI suite will experience a degree of evolution over the next four years. This improvement will be prompted by the needs of decision makers and the Committees, and further consideration of how to best meet those needs by Officers.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 As Council has agreed the Committees will lead monitoring performance, there are no viable alternatives. An absence of performance arrangements would mean the delivery of the Corporate Plan is unmonitored and prevent continuous improvement. A purely internal KPI suite would prevent effective and transparent scrutiny and accountability.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 This is a regular report where Members are invited to scrutinise and comment on performance.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2024-27 KPI Report: Finance & Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26

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Corporate Plan 2024-27: KPI Summary Report 2025/26 – Finance & Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee							
Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Quarterly Overall Status			
				2024/25		2025/26	
				Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
ECON1	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Deliver the Economic Development Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	On Target	On Target	Below Target	Under Review
ECON2	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Deliver initiatives to expand and deepen engagement with business.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Below Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ECON3	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Continue to distribute the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and explore opportunities to develop a legacy beyond the funding period.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ECON4	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Embed and strengthen the Local Economic Forum as a key institution for local stakeholders to shape the district's approach to skills, business support and investment.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ECON5	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Work with the Lincolnshire Growth Hub to support businesses start, succeed and grow.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ECON6	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Strategically leverage the Council's procurement spend to maximise social value.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	On Target	On Target	Below Target	On Target
ECON7	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Consider targeted interventions – planning powers and schemes, to achieve high-quality regeneration across the district and explore options to unlock stalled sites.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	On Target	On Target	Below Target	On Target
ECON8	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Bring forward a step change in the way Council-run Street markets are presented, operated, marketed and promoted.	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	On Target	On Target	Below Target	Under Review
ECON9	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Develop a long-term approach to regeneration and be prepared for investment and funding opportunities.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Below Target	Below Target	Below Target	On Track
COUN6	Effective Council	Ensure the tax collection process is always effective, efficient, timely and fair.	Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)	On Target	Below Target	Below Target for Business Rates, On track for others	On Target

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Quarterly Overall Status	Index	Priority	Action
COUN7	Effective Council	Deliver a balanced, sustainable financial plan over the medium term.	Assistant Director of Finance	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
COUN8	Effective Council	Implement and embed the new finance system.	Assistant Director of Finance	Behind Target	Behind Target	On Target	On Target
COUN9	Effective Council	Deliver the IT Roadmap, ensuring all systems meet the needs of internal and external customers, and explore opportunities for new technologies and innovation.	IT Manager	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
COUN12	Effective Council	Ensure procurement is always compliant, fair and delivers value for money.	Procurement Lead	Below Target	On Target	Below Target	Under Review
COUN14	Effective Council	Develop and deliver Planned Maintenance Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Head of Service (Property & IT)	On Target	Completed	On Track (Action Plan)	On Track (Action Plan)

Corporate Plan 2024-27: KPI Summary Report Q2 2025/26 – Finance & Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
ECON1	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Deliver the Economic Development Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Deliver 100% of the Economic Development action plan.	See commentary	Under review	The Economic Development Team Manager joined in September 2025 and is reviewing the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. The reviewed Strategy & Action will be presented to FEOSC meeting in February 2026.
ECON2	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Deliver initiatives to expand and deepen engagement with business.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Following the introduction of a customer relationship management system (CRM), introduce a 'call and care programme' for local business (targeting support for twenty businesses annually, five quarterly)	See commentary	On Target	Existing contacts are being collated between officers to populate the basic CRM.
				Increase business participation in the Local Economic Forum (LEF).			Relationships with businesses are maintained through attendance of local business clubs and other networking events, as well as social media. Officers, under direction of new Economic Development Team Manager are collating contacts to populate the basic CRM and liaising with the Comms dept to improve comms for Eco Dev, leading to creation of a newsletter and improved presence.

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
ECON3	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Continue to distribute the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and explore opportunities to develop a legacy beyond the funding period.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Total: £1,335,054 UK Shared Prosperity £1,172,951 Rural Fund £162,103	All of the funds have been allocated to projects, and these are being monitored	On Target	<p>Proposals were agreed for People & Skills building on projects last year and have started delivery. Regular monitoring is in place.</p> <p>The SK Business Growth Grant delivered by the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce on behalf of SKDC has launched, supported with two sessions which help business with grant application best practice. Interest in the grant has been high and applications will be reviewed and progressed in Q3. Funding value is being agreed for the top-up scheme to Business Lincolnshire.</p> <p>The application window for Parish and Community Assets (P&CA) and Decarbonisation (D) funding available through UKSPF closed on 1st August 25 following high interest. 31 applications were received by the deadline, but 4 were incomplete and therefore 27 submissions (19 P&CA and 8 D) were taken to the Board on 4th September where 21 applications (15 P&CA and 6 D) were endorsed. Unsuccessful applicants were sign-posted to alternative funding sources wherever possible. Officers are in contact with groups to ensure projects remain within agreed timelines. All funding available across these two categories of UKSPF is now allocated.</p>

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
ECON4	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Embed and strengthen the Local Economic Forum as a key institution for local stakeholders to shape the district's approach to skills, business support and investment.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Attend 12 events (annually) with Town Councils and local business clubs. Attend 3 events quarterly	Total business events attended YTD – 18 Events attended in Q2 - 7	On target	In Quarter 1 there were 11 events attended, including Grantham Business Club meetings and Deepings Business Club, as well as other events, such as Mission Business. In Quarter 2 there were 4 business clubs attended, 2 business Grant Tips sessions delivered and 1 awards ceremony attended.
ECON5	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Work with the Lincolnshire Growth Hub to support businesses start, succeed and grow.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	To support 60 businesses, create 100 jobs and attract 2 inward investment projects.	40 businesses and 16 individuals were supported in Q2 throughout South Kesteven.	On target	A total of 40 Businesses supported by the Growth Hub, 16 Individuals supported by NBV through Business Lincolnshire. This excludes 11 interactions the B&S Officer had supporting businesses and referring Business Lincolnshire services.
ECON6	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Strategically leverage the Council's procurement spend to maximise social value.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Introduce an SKDC Procurement Charter to exploit local employment and supply chain opportunities. Introduce a statement of principles and publish guidance for suppliers on how to do business with Council Provide the opportunity for contracts framework and supply chain opportunities by delivering 2 procurement events.	See Commentary	On Target	Development of a Social Value policy is progressing now the new Economic Development Team Manager is in post.

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
ECON7	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Consider targeted interventions – planning powers and schemes, to achieve high-quality regeneration across the district and explore options to unlock stalled sites.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Identify site constraints and opportunities to unlock sites and Develop an investment prospectus to promote the district regionally and nationally.	See Commentary	On Target	Development of an Investment Prospectus is progressing now the new Economic Development Team Manager is in post.
ECON8	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Bring forward a step change in the way Council-run Street markets are presented, operated, marketed and promoted.	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	Deliver 100% of the Operational Delivery Plan actions.	See Commentary	Under Review	The Action Plan needed to be reviewed and refreshed with the input of the Economic Development Manager. This is expected to take place in Q3 and an updated Action Plan will be available for Q4 and will be presented to Committee at the end of the year KPI review.
ECON9	Enabling Economic Opportunity	Develop a long-term approach to regeneration and be prepared for investment and funding opportunities.	Economic Development & Inward Investment Manager	Develop a regeneration plan and portfolio of sites for project opportunities	See Commentary	On Target	Development of an Regeneration Plan is progressing now the new Economic Development Team Manager is in post.
COUN6	Effective Council	Ensure the tax collection process is always effective, efficient, timely and fair.	Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)	% Council Tax collected (YTD)	55.35%	On Target	Council Tax collection is only 0.1% below target (within <1% variance), which is £188,314 (SKDC share is £16,948)
				% Business Rates collected (YTD)	55.44%	On Target	Business Rates collection is only 0.5% below target (within <1% variance), which is £228,179. There has been a reduction in the amount of retail and hospitality relief awarded which is impacting collection - as businesses are required to pay 100% of their liability (relief awarded is 40%). A review of Small Business Rates Relief has been undertaken, increasing the amount to be collected by £480k
				% SKDC Rental Income collected (YTD)	48.03%	On Target	Rent collection is only 0.6% below target (within <1% variance),, which is £200,486

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
COUN7	Effective Council	Deliver a balanced, sustainable financial plan over the medium term.	Assistant Director of Finance	Successful management of approved budget.	See Commentary	On Target	The Budget 2025/26 was approved by Council in February with a sustainable medium term forecast, however the Fair Funding Review alongside the implications of LGR could significantly impact this. Q2 financial monitoring is forecasting an £492k underspend with a 1.8% variance against net cost of service
COUN8	Effective Council	Implement and embed the new finance system.	Assistant Director of Finance	% of users accessing the system. % reports generated from the system within 5 working days of the months end.	See Commentary	On Target	Unit 4 is now live. All users have access to the system but there are some tweaks required to some roles to ensure they have access to all areas required. Reports are being issued and workspaces in place for budget holders to access financial information, but again this will need some refinement.
COUN9	Effective Council	Deliver the IT Roadmap, ensuring all systems meet the needs of internal and external customers, and explore opportunities for new technologies and innovation.	IT Manager	% of service desk tickets resolved within 1 day. (80% - Standard SLA is 5 working days) Availability of main corporate systems (council tax, housing, planning) during primary working hours. (99%) To monitor system security and ensure data is not compromised (100% availability of security software)	96.08% 100% 100%	On Target On Target On Target	This target is met consistently by the IT team. System availability was high with no issues during this latest quarter. No Cyber security issues reported in Q2. New Cyber Strategy launched.
COUN12	Effective Council	Ensure procurement is always compliant, fair and delivers value for money.	Procurement Lead	% of compliant contracts awarded with the value >25k % of spend with registered SMEs	See Commentary See Commentary	Under Review For information only	Following Go Live of the new finance system we are still in the process of developing the required reports in order to calculate this KPI. This will be in place for Q3 reporting.

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
COUN14	Effective Council	Develop and deliver Planned Maintenance Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Head of Service (Property & IT)	Develop and adopt the strategy and action plan.	See Commentary	On Track	Works have continued to deliver the planned maintenance strategy and action plan. This strategy and action plan has been signed off and actions from the plan are now underway, reporting progress to this Committee.

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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COUNCIL

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 November 2025

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

Turnpike Close Grantham Depot Update - November 2025

Report Author

Gyles Teasdale, Head of Property and ICT

g.teasdale@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the construction of the new Waste Depot at Turnpike Close, Grantham.

Recommendations

The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the current position of the delivery of the new Waste Depot at Turnpike Close, Grantham

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Effective council

Which wards are impacted? All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 Budget approval of £8.8m has been given for this project by Council 28th September 2023 (£8m) and 29th February 2024 (£800k) and the ongoing financial updates are being presented to the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Council approved a revenue contribution of £500k on 27th February 2025 in order to meet the mobilisation and fit out costs of the new facility. Therefore, the combined budget for this project is set at £9.3m. Monthly budget monitoring is undertaken and based on the current modelling; no forecast budget variances have been identified.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant governance implications arising from this report, which is a progress update for noting.

Completed by: James Welbourn - Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) has received regular progress reports on the construction of the new Waste Depot project at Turnpike Close, Grantham since commencement of the project in June 2024. This report is the eighth project update report the Committee has received.
- 2.2 Works have continued to progress on site since commencement in October 2024 and are now passing from the Construction Phase to the Mobilisation Phase. This is a critical point in the final fitting out and commissioning stages of the project.
- 2.3 Since the previous update in September, the contractor has outlined an additional 2-week delay to the completion of the Construction Phase of the project, moving back the anticipated construction completion from the 30th October 2025 to the 11th November 2025.

2.4. The overall delay has been incurred due to a combination of issues within the construction programme. However, the predominant reason for the additional delay in handover is due to the delays caused by Anglian Water with respect to the connection of the building's hydrant main to infrastructure on Turnpike Close.

2.5. These works were originally scheduled to be undertaken in October, prior to completion of the original construction phase. However, due to a gas leak on Harlaxton Road causing traffic diversion via Swingbridge Road, Anglian Water were unable to secure the necessary permit to work from LCC Highways to facilitate the works. Anglian Water did initially indicate they would be unable to reschedule these works until Late November. However, after pressure was put upon the management of Anglian Water these works have been rescheduled and commenced on 3rd November.

2.6. The mobilisation period has been reviewed following the change in the construction handover date and works have been adjusted to work in parallel to the end of the construction phase from the 3rd November with the view to facilitate a new target Go-live of week commencing 1st December. The programming of the project has however been adjusted to provide a contingency period of two weeks reporting a Go-Live on the 15th December to accommodate any possible further unforeseen delays.

2.7. An updated programme detailing the anticipated programme changes is outlined below.

Milestone	Previous Project Programme	Updated Project Programme
Cabinet Approval	16 th April 2024	16 th April 2024
Value Engineering Period	16 th April – 24 th May 2024	16 th April – 24 th May 2024
Enter into NEC4 Professional Services Contract	14 th June 2024	14 th June 2024
Progression of Stage 4 Design	17 th June – 23 rd August 2024	17 th June – 23 rd August 2024
Design Evaluation, Completion and legal preparation.	27 th August – 24 th September 2024	27 th August – 24 th September 2024
Construction Contract Award	18 th October 2024	18 th October 2024
Contractor mobilisation period	1 st October 2024 – 28 th October 2024	1 st October 2024 – 28 th October 2024

Construction Period commences	29 th October 2024	29 th October 2024
Targeted completion date	30 th October 2025	11 th November 2025
Mobilisation Period	31 st October – 28 th November 2025	11 th November – 15 th December 2025
Operational Go-live	1 st December 2025	15 th December 2025

- 2.8 Works to discharge any construction phase planning conditions prior to occupation have been undertaken with any statutory consultees and all conditions have now been discharged.
- 2.9 Recent works on site have included the completion of all construction phase works by Lindum and works are now ongoing to mobilise and occupy the site by our service areas.
- 2.10 An updated budget position is included within Appendix A - Turnpike Depot Dashboard – November 2025 which confirms there is no forecast overspend in relation to the project.

Project Risks

- 2.11 The project is currently subject to one remaining risk which could impact on the smooth transition of the mobilisation being achieved. This is in relation to the Environment Agency (EA) Permit for Waste (the waste that will be located on the site).
- 2.12 The EA has confirmed the permit application has been 'duly made' and is currently with a determining officer going through final checks, clarifications and changes so the permit can be published. However, the EA cannot confirm if the permit will be issued in time for the go live date and at the time of compiling this report no permit has been received.
- 2.13 Mitigation plans are being developed in the event that the permit will not be received in time that will require waste to be disposed of at the existing Mowbeck way site. This is an interim solution until the permit is received.

3. Key Considerations

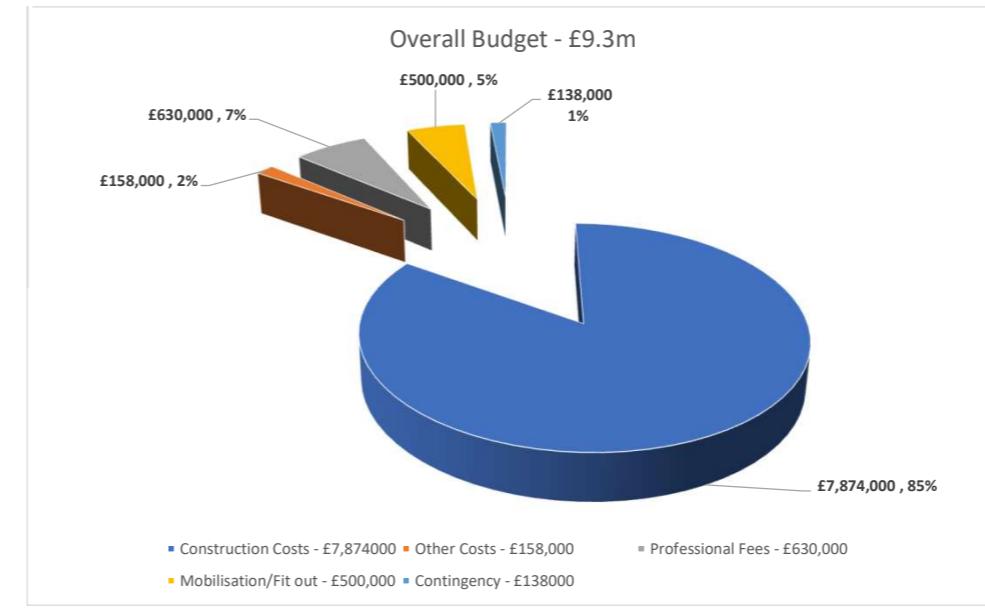
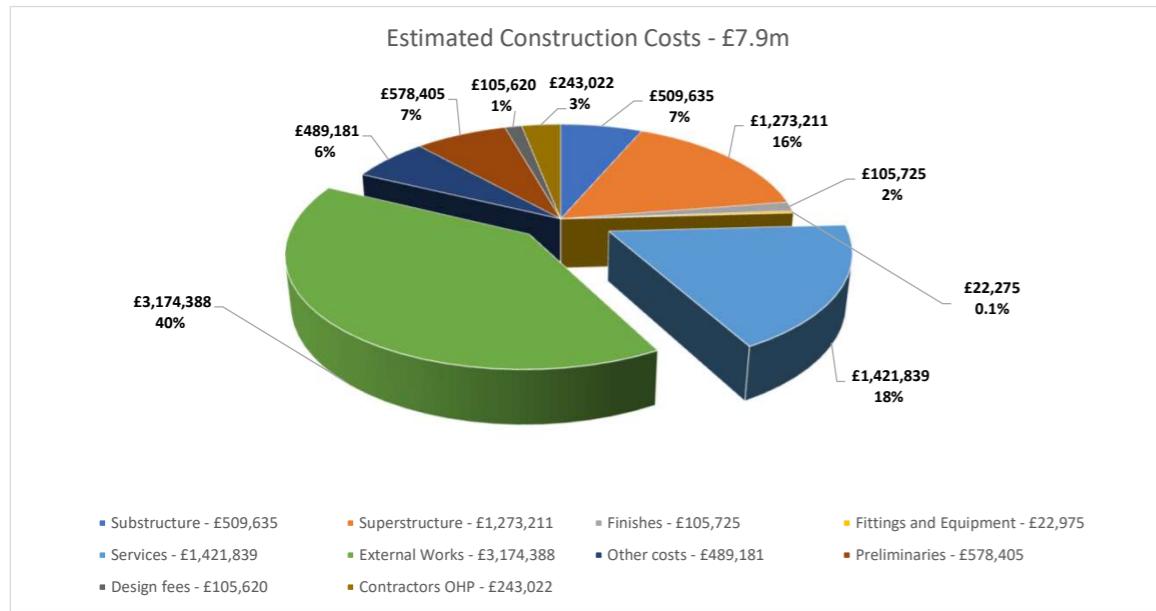
3.1 This report sets out the latest position with regards to this project and the next stages in order to deliver the overall scheme. It is important the Committee is kept updated as the scheme progresses across the construction phase.

4. Appendices

4.1 Appendix A – Turnpike Depot Dashboard – November 2025

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Project Name		New Depot	Date: Nov-25	Risk Status		Medium	TURNPIKE CLOSE GRANTHAM PROJECT DASHBOARD																							
Current Overall Project Status		Medium	Budget: £9,300,000																											
ACTIVITY		OWNER	DATE	PLAN START	PLAN DURATION	ACTUAL START (Period)	ACTUAL DURATION	PERCENTAGE COMPLETE	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	
Cabinet Approval	SKDC	16th April 2024	Apr-24	1	1	1	100%		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
Value Engineering	Lindum/SKDC	16th April - 24th May 2024	Apr-24	2	1	3	100%																							
Enter into NEC4 Professional Services Contract	Lindum/SKDC	14th June 2024	Jun-24	1	3	3	100%																							
Progression of Stage 4 Design	Lindum	17th June - 23rd August 2024	17-Jun-24	3	3	3	100%																							
Design, Evaluation, completion and legal preparation	Lindum/SKDC	27th August - 24th September 2024	27-Aug-24	2	5	2	100%																							
Construction Contract Award	SKDC	18th October 2024	18-Oct-24	1	7	1	100%																							
Contract mobilisation period	Lindum	1st October - 28th October 2024	14-Oct-24	1	7	1	100%																							
Commence on site	Lindum	29th October 2024	29-Oct-24	1	7	1	100%																							
Construction period commences	Lindum	29th October 2024	Oct-24	13	7	13	80%																							
Targeted completion date	Lindum/SKDC	11th November 2025	Oct-25	1	19	1	0%																							
Mobilisation period	SKDC	31st October - 12th December 2025	31-Oct-25	1	19	1	0%																							
Operational Go-Live	SKDC	15th December 2025	Dec-25	1	20	1	0%																							



KEY RISKS AND ISSUES		
Risk	Action/Overview	Level
Additional fees due to elongated stage 5 construction period	Fees have been confirmed to reflect the revised construction period of 50 weeks and this provided for within Professional Fees shown.	Low
New Planning Application	New Planning application would be required should more significant changes be required.	CLOSED
Planning Conditions - pre-commencement	Discharging of pre commencement activities to be progressed	CLOSED
Programme slippage	Risk of further slippage will be mitigated by identification of efficiencies in subsequent phase. Contractors programme has now been confirmed.	Low
EA Waste Transfer Permit	Awaiting outcome of permit application. Initial assessment undertaken and feedback given.	Medium
Utilities Connectivity	Works are underway to commission the utility connections to the site to enable go live. However, these works are outside the control of the Council and are dependant on the utility companies to complete.	Low
S278 works	Cable found during trial holes works carried out by contractor which were not revealed on survey of site. Compensation Event has been issued, additional fees for disconnection and diversion will be incurred no anticipated delay to works programme	CLOSED

Summary

Lindum have advised due to delays, there is further slippage to the hand over date which has moved a further week to a new date of 11 November 2025. This is due to adverse weather conditions and rescheduling of Anglian Water works to site which were out of Lindums control. The mobilisation plan has been reviewed in response to this additional delay and it is possible to accommodate the new date without compromising the overall plan. However there remains an overall risk to further delays to the go live date. These main risks relate to:

- Release of Waste Permit from the EA.
- Delays caused by Anglian Water which would prevent connectivity to the site.

The mobilisation plan has been amended taking into account these risks with a go live date of 15th December 2025.



SOUTH
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COUNCIL

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18th November 2025

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

Leisure Investment Reserve – Allocation Criteria

Report Author

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Richard.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

A Leisure Investment Reserve has been established and site surveys have been undertaken to allocate the funding of £500k across the four locations.

Recommendations

The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Support the allocation of the funding of £500k to refurbish the changing room facilities across all the Centres.
2. Recommend that Cabinet consider a further allocation of £500k to the Leisure Investment Reserve within their budget proposals for 2026/27.

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision? No

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Effective council

Which wards are impacted? All

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. This report proposes an investment programme based on the findings of external consultants who undertook an assessment based on the agreed criteria.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This report is setting out a proposed allocation of spend in respect of the Leisure Investment Reserve. Any spend of this reserve would have to be carried out in accordance with the approval routes set out within the Responsibility of Functions in Part 3 of the Constitution.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council is currently focussing significant resources in tackling a backlog of maintenance across a varied range of corporate property assets. This work commenced in 2023 and is likely to continue for the next ten years. During this period significant resources have been invested in the leisure facilities including roof and infrastructure repairs, replacement of boilers and plant, investment in external decorations, repairs to the wave machines at Bourne and Stamford and investment in carbon and energy reduction schemes.
- 2.2 As the primary focus has been on dealing with maintenance, there have been limited resources available to improve the decoration and replace worn out fixtures and fittings at the facilities. In recognition of the need to invest in these elements of the facilities, it was agreed to create a dedicated reserve to the value of £500k to enable investment in the facilities.

2.3 It was agreed that an improvement plan for each of the locations be developed focussing on those areas where there is a strong interface with the customers and where there is clear evidence of an investment requirement.

2.4 A proposed methodology has been developed that is evidence led based on information from a range of sources. This approach was presented to the Committee on 23rd September 2025 and received support as a way forward.

2.5 Following the meeting, external consultants have been appointed to visit each Centre and prioritise the proposed works focussing on the following customer experience areas:

- Changing areas
- Reception areas
- Public toilets
- Meeting rooms
- Other communal areas

2.6 These visits took place during October 2025 and the consultants were accompanied by staff from the Council and representatives from Leisure SK Ltd.

2.7 The overwhelming conclusion was that the funding should be primarily focused on the changing areas and facilities as these have the most negative impact on the customers and have not been adequately maintained for a number of years. In respect of the Meres leisure centre, this will be the changing village adjacent to the pools.

2.8 In summary the priority focus is to be:

- Fixtures and fittings
- Replacement of missing items – seats, handles etc
- Decoration improvements
- Deep cleaning
- Replacement of ceiling tiles

2.9 Bourne Leisure Centre

Item	Estimated Cost
Contractor preliminaries	£12k
Full suspended ceiling tile replacements & grid repairs	£22k
Changing Cubicle Replacements	£22.5k
Whiterock to Shower Enclosures	£9k
Flooring to lockers	£2k
Lighting	£10k
WC Cubicle repairs, Washbasins/vanities repairs	£7.5k
M&E door replacements, deep cleaning, M&E replacements & servicing, localised tile repairs etc.	£10k
Roller shutters to pool access points	£5k
	£100k

2.10 Stamford Leisure Centre

Item	Estimated Cost
Contractor preliminaries	£14.5k
Full suspended ceiling tile replacements & grid repairs	£28k
Male WC Cubicle Replacements	£1.5k
Whiterock to Shower Enclosures	£9k
Lighting	£12k
WC Cubicle repairs, Washbasins/vanities repairs	£15k
M&E door replacements, deep cleaning, M&E replacements & servicing, localised tile repairs etc.	£15k
Roller shutter to pool access point	£5k
	£100k

2.11 Grantham Meres Leisure Centre

Item	Estimated Cost
Contractor preliminaries	£24k
Full suspended ceiling replacements to changing village.	£29k
Full suspended ceiling replacements to Group changing rooms x4	£15k
Full suspended ceiling replacements to village annexed male, female & Acc. WC's	£10k
Cubicle replacements to WC's x 9, plus IPS panelling	£15k
Whiterock to Shower Enclosures	£6k
Door replacements x15	£45k
Decorations to village & annexed spaces/rooms	£11k
Lighting	£15k
Repairs & replacements to existing cubicles in changing village	£15k
Deep cleaning, M&E replacements & servicing, localised tile repairs etc.	£15k
	£200k

2.12 SK Sports Stadium

Item	Estimated Cost
Contractor preliminaries	£14k
Full suspended ceiling replacements to changing/showers and annexed toilets.	£14k
Whiterock to Shower Enclosures and annexed toilets	£22k
Decorations	£9k
Lighting	£9k
Ironmongery replacements & changing facilities furniture i.e. benches/shelving/kit hooks	£10k
Deep cleaning, M&E replacements & servicing, localised tile repairs etc.	£10k
Vinyl floor replacements to main corridors in the main stand.	£12k
	£100k

2.13 Based on preliminary costings this would allocate the funding in the following way:

- Bourne Leisure Centre £100k
- Stamford Leisure Centre £100k
- Grantham Meres Leisure Centre £200k
- SK Sports Stadium £100k

2.14 At this stage the cost allocations are indicative and will be subject to procurement which may change some of the allocated sums. Equally it may be necessary to allocate some funding to allow for movement in the indicative sums as outlined above.

2.15 The surveys concluded that further improvements are required beyond the scope of works identified and therefore the Committee may consider whether it is appropriate to seek a funding request for a further allocation once the £500k has been spent.

3. Other Options Considered

3.1 No other options have been considered as the Leisure Investment Reserve has been established with the primary objective of improving the interior of the leisure facilities.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1. If the recommendation is supported, then a programme of works will be compiled in order for the improvements to be carried out.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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COUNCIL

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 November 2025

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

General Fund Finance Update Report: April to September 2025

Report Author

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer
 Richard.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the Council's forecast 2025/26 financial position as at end of September 2025 with specific regard to:

- General Fund Revenue Budget
- General Fund Capital Programme

Recommendations

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. **Review and note the forecast 2025/26 outturn position for the General Fund Revenue and Capital budgets as at the end of September 2025.**

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

1. Implications

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

Finance

1.1 The financial implications are included throughout the report.

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

Legal and Governance

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

Completed by: *James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager*

Risk and Mitigation

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

Completed by: *Tracey Elliott, Governance and Risk Officer*

2 Background to the Report

2.1 During the current financial year, the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) is provided with regular finance reports. These monitor and forecast (expenditure and income compared with the budgets approved by Council and provide explanations for any significant variances.

3 Revenue Budget 2025/26 – General fund

3.1 The net cost of service budget set by Council on 27 February 2025 was **£24.008m**. In order to show variances against all controllable budgets, investment income received from treasury management activity has also been included in the report.

3.2 Budgets have been updated to reflect approved budget carry-forwards and in-year movements; these increase the controllable budget to **£27.618m**.

3.2 Table 1 shows the forecast outturn position as at 30 September 2025 and Table 2 shows the significant forecast variances.

Table 1 – General Fund Revenue Forecast Outturn Position

Directorate	Current Budget 2025/26 £'000	Forecast Outturn 2025/26 £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
Corporate Governance & Public Protection	4,356	4,414	58	1.3%
Finance Property & Waste Services	12,885	13,012	126	1.0%
Growth & Culture	9,125	8,808	(317)	(3.5%)
Housing & Projects	2,033	1,843	(190)	(9.3%)
Net Cost of Service	28,399	28,077	(323)	(1.1%)
Investment Income	(781)	(957)	(176)	(22.5%)
(Surplus) / Deficit	27,618	27,120	(499)	(1.8%)

Table 2 – General Fund Revenue – Significant Variances

Explanation of Significant Variance	£'000
Fuel Reduced inflation has resulted in a forecast underspend of (£180k) based on modelling at 0.3% increase per week for the remainder of 2025/26. The budget was set using a price of 141p but actual prices have been approximately 28% lower.	(180)
Utilities The council continues to financially benefit from energy prices secured via the ESPO utility procurement framework which are currently being purchased at a unit rate lower than the budgeted rate. This cost continues to be volatile and will be kept under review for the remainder of the financial year.	(250)

Cattlemarket Car Park Stamford Income The recent extension of the Cattle Market car park at Stamford has increased capacity by 146 spaces (a 53% increase). Based on projected growth in ticket sales this is expected to generate an additional (£80k) income. This projection followed the introduction of the charging which came into effect from 29 th August 2025.	(80)
Green Waste Income Additional income of (£100k) has been received with higher than budgeted take-up of the scheme. As at September over 30,900 customers subscribe to the green waste service.	(100)
Planning Fee Income Planning Fee Income has risen above budgeted levels during Quarters 1 and 2. This is partially due to the Council receiving an application for a solar farm with combined application fees of (£162k). In addition, the Government increased planning application fees in April 2025 for certain application categories, e.g. the fee for householder applications has doubled. These increases were not known at the time budgets were approved. An increase in the number of applications received in the quarter has also generated additional income.	(250)
Council Tax Administration Subsidy Grant The Local Council Tax Support Administration Subsidy Grant is no longer received separately as part of the net cost of service. This has now been rolled into Revenue Support Grant so there is no overall adverse financial impact on the Council.	195
Housing Services – Emergency Accommodation There has been a focus on reducing the spend on emergency accommodation and placing less reliance on Bed & Breakfast establishments. Using other accommodations options including SKDC facilities (winter night shelter will be used again later this year) has resulted in a forecast underspend.	(100)
Salaries A pay award in line with the national award for 2025/26 of 3.2% was endorsed by the Employment Committee and backdated to April 2025. This award was in excess of the 2% budgeted and the resulting overspend of up to £244k will be funded from the Local Priorities Reserve. Salary budgets are prepared with a 3% vacancy factor (£572k) to reflect staff turnover. As at Quarter 2 the vacancy factor is anticipated to be achieved by March 2026 but will continue to be reviewed.	527
Investment Income Higher average interest has been achieved on investments which are currently averaging 4.30% return compared to budgeted level of 3.25% budget as well as higher than anticipated investment balances.	(176)

4 Capital Budget 2025/26 – General Fund

4.1 The budget set by Council on 27 February 2025 was **£15.179m**. Budgets have been amended in line with the approved budget carry forwards and further budget approvals, increasing the 2025/26 budget to **£18.065m**.

4.2 Table 3 shows the forecast outturn position as at 30 September 2025 and Table 4 shows the significant forecast variances.

Table 3 – General Fund Capital Forecast Outturn Position

Directorate	Current Budget £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
Corporate Governance & Public Protection	1,370	1,380	10	0.73
Finance, Property and Waste Services	12,131	12,289	158	1.31
Growth and Culture	1,740	1,740	0	0
Housing and Property	2,824	2,884	60	2.11
Total	18,065	18,293	228	1.26

Table 4 – General Fund – Significant Variances

Explanation of Significant Variance	£'000
Vehicle Replacement Programme Overspend anticipated due to savings of £45K available on early purchase of freighter as opposed to delaying into 2026/27. Procurement of vehicles are staged in order to ensure the fleet turnover is manageable.	104
Financial System Upgrade There were some additional project support costs required to ensure the finance system Go Live date was achieved in August 2025. However, this project is now completed and no further spend is required.	54
Decarbonisation Scheme Project commenced on site in July 2025 and due to complete by March 2026. Removal of Combined Heat and Power units and provision of temporary generators together with increased contract cost of £24K has resulted in an overspend of £60K. This is to be financed from property maintenance reserve.	60
Total	218

5 Performance Update - Council Tax and Business Rates

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

Table 5 – Collection Rates

Target Rates	Council Tax	Business Rates
Target annual collection rate	98.33%	98.68%
Target collection rate to end of September 2025	55.52%	55.93%
Actual collection rate to end of September 2025	55.35%	55.44%
Variance compared to Target	(0.17%)	(0.49%)

5.2 Council Tax:

- At the 30 September 2025 the collection target is £61.308m against an annual debt of £110.773m. As shown in the table above, the collection rate is below target by 0.17% or £183,314 (SKDC share being £16,948).
- All 7 Districts in Lincolnshire share their collection rates monthly with 6 of the Districts also below collection.
- South Kesteven have the highest net collectable debt in the County (£110.773m), with the next Councils debt being £109.394m

5.3 Business Rates:

- At the 30 September 2025 the collection target is £25.815m against an annual debt of £46.567m. As shown in the table above, the collection rate was 0.49% or £228,179 below above target.
- All 7 District Councils in Lincolnshire share their collection rates monthly with just 2 of the Districts above their target collection.
- South Kesteven have the second highest net collectable debt in the County (£46.567m), with the highest Councils debt being £447.263m.
- South Kesteven District Council have undertaken a review of Small Business Rates Relief. Letters were issued to 1,999 properties where relief was awarded. The review resulted in 413 reliefs being removed, reducing the amount of relief awarded by £1,177,886, which now becomes payable by the ratepayer.

5.4 Single Persons Discount (SPD) Review:

- Recent review has been undertaken with 987 letters issued resulting in 196 SPDs removed which resulted in £196,259 additional total council tax income being collected.
- South Kesteven District Council will receive **£49,065** of this based on our share of the total council tax bill. This more than covers the £8,595 cost, which our share of the annual contract.
- **£7,210** has also been levied in penalties for those that have not responded to the initial letter and reminder.

5.5 Empty Homes Review

- This started in June 2025 in partnership with NEC (Northgate) where 1,209 empty properties will be written to (and visited where no response to initial letter and reminder) – empty 1 day to 2 years
- 749 letters were issued with 192 identified as occupied
- With there being no empty discount applicable we won't see an extra revenue figure for the empty council tax properties, for example if the bill was £1,700 prior to being occupied with no discount then the bill will remain the same even when occupied.

6 Reasons for the Recommendations

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

7 Consultation

7.1 Budget Monitoring reports are presented throughout the financial year to the Cabinet and FEOSC to keep members up to date regarding the projected financial outturn position.

8 Appendices

Appendix A – 2025/26 – Finance Risk Register

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Appendix A – Finance Risk Register

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Residual Risk Score	Mitigating Action
1. Capital programmes requiring borrowing in the medium term	4	3	12 Very High	Continue to undertake financial modelling to identify consequences of undertaking borrowing and align this with savings that will need to be approved before borrowing is undertaken in order to ensure ongoing affordability and financial sustainability. The capital programme can currently be financed without borrowing although this is kept under review.
2. Lack of clarity for funding levels from 2026/27 and beyond	4	3	12 Very High	The Government has recently concluded a consultation on a multi-year settlement effective from 2026/27. Initial modelling suggests that there will be a funding reduction over the three year period but it is expected that transitional funding arrangements will be in place. There remains a high degree of uncertainty as the Council will not receive specific funding confirmation until December 2025. The budget process will be undertaken within the context of a reduction in funding levels.
3. Increase in bad debts as a result of economic circumstances	3	2	6 High	The Council has pro-active debt management procedures in place.
4. Increased maintenance costs of council assets	3	2	6 High	The budget proposals for 2025/26 included additional funding to help address backlog asset maintenance issues and capacity is under review to support the delivery of several large scale General Fund property projects. The medium-term outlook is a continuation of high levels of maintenance that will require financing. There are similar pressures for the Housing Revenue Account in respect of the social housing stock – additional investment may be required to meet new government requirements for decent homes standard.
5. Fuel price volatility	1	3	3 Medium	Weekly monitoring of fuel charge and proactive interventions to ensure optimisation of fuel consumption.
6. Inflation increases beyond budgeted levels	2	2	4 Medium	Budget assumptions kept up to date with most recent projections and monthly sensitivity analysis is produced to monitor the impact of inflationary increases.
7. Fee Income volatility	2	2	4 Medium	Early monitoring of deviations and regular reporting to both budget holders and members.

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SOUTH
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COUNCIL

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 November 2025

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

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Forecast Update Report 2025/26

Report Author

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

✉ Richard.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

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

The report covers the following areas:

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

Recommendations

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. **Review and note the forecast 2025/26 outturn position for the HRA Revenue and Capital budgets as at the end of September 2025.**

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

1. Implications

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

Finance

- 1.1 The financial implications are included throughout the report. The HRA revenue expenditure is currently higher than the approved Budget Framework and therefore corrective action is necessary. This report sets out the necessary proposed actions. Members are reminded that the HRA is required to maintain a rolling 30-year HRA Financial Business Plan and the current spending levels are putting the Plan under financial strain and are not sustainable. Plans are underway to address this and proposals will be put before Council on 26 February 2026.

Completed by: Richard Wyles Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 As part of good governance, it is important members are kept updated in respect of the financial position of Council expenditure during the year. Budget Framework amendments at this level sit with Full Council and therefore Cabinet are asked to consider recommending budgetary increases to that body.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2 Background to the Report

2.1 During the current financial year, the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) is provided with regular finance reports. These monitor and forecast (expenditure and income compared with the budgets approved by Council and provide explanations for any significant variances.

3 Revenue Budget 2025/26 – HRA

3.1 The HRA revenue budget set by Council on 27 February 2025 showed a budgeted surplus of **£8.059m**. Budgets have since been updated to reflect approved budget carry forwards from 2024/25 and in-year virements. These changes have resulted in a reduction in the forecast net surplus of **£4.921m**.

3.2 Table 1 shows the forecast outturn position as at 30 September 2025.

Table 1 – HRA Revenue Forecast Outturn Position

Directorate	Current Budget £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Actuals £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
EXPENDITURE							
Repairs and maintenance	10,808	5,404	7,028	1,624	13,589	2,781	25.73
Supervision and Management - General	2,560	1,280	1,336	56	2,586	26	1.02
Supervision and Management - Special	2,261	1,131	732	(399)	2,299	38	1.68
Depreciation and Impairment of Fixed Assets	4,181	0	0	0	4,181	0	0
Accounting Adjustments	3,184	0	0	0	3,184	0	0
Total Exp	22,994	7,815	9,096	1,281	25,839	2,845	12.37
INCOME							
Dwelling Rents	(29,856)	(14,932)	(14,161)	771	(29,787)	69	0.23
Non-Dwelling Reents	(322)	(161)	(117)	44	(271)	51	15.84
Charges for Services and Facilities	(916)	(384)	(478)	(94)	(916)	0	0
Other Income	(18)	(9)	(31)	(22)	(31)	(13)	(72.22)
Total Income	(31,112)	(15,486)	(14,787)	699	(31,005)	107	0.34
Net Cost	(8,118)	(7,671)	(5,691)	1,980	(5,166)	2,952	36.36
Interest Payable	2,043	1,022	1,022	0	2,043	0	0
Investment income	(1,798)	(899)	(899)	(0)	(1,798)	0	0
Net Operating Surplus	(7,873)	(7,549)	(5,569)	1,980	(4,921)	2,952	37%

3.3 As highlighted in **Table 1** above there is a significant emerging pressure on the repairs and maintenance budget which sits within the Technical Services areas of the HRA.

3.4 This forecast pressure was first highlighted in the budget monitoring report presented to FEOSC on 23 September 2025 but since that report the forecast has increased to a projected overspend of **£2.781m**. This overspend is a result of a number of specific factors:

- Clearance of maintenance backlog
- Tackling the void turnaround times and improving performance from 79 days in March 2025 to 54 days in August 2025. The number of void properties has reduced from 103 to 68 in the same period.
- The poor condition properties are being left in by the outgoing tenant and therefore the scale of the works required before the property can be relet
- Increasing labour and material costs
- Emerging legislative responsibilities and new statutory obligations.

3.5 A preliminary breakdown of the forecast overspend attributable to these factors reveals the following:

- **£1.700m** addressing backlog voids and meeting new performance targets
- **£0.350m** inflationary and additional material costs
- **£0.850m** Regulation changes

3.6 In order to meet these unbudgeted costs, the only viable option available is to propose the use of the HRA reserves in the following way:

- **£1.000m** from the Reactive Repairs Reserve
- **£1.781m** from the HRA Priorities Reserve

3.7 In the report presented to Cabinet on 4 November 2025 it was recommended that Council approve an increase to HRA budget of **£2.781m** funded from the reserves outline above. In addition to this, Council delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development to allocate up to £250k additional funding from the HRA Priorities Reserve to meet any additional financial pressures that may arise during this financial year.

3.8 2026/27 Budget

3.8.1 Budget setting is progressing for the 2026/27 financial year and work is underway to ensure the budget for next year is set at an accurate level. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the amount needed for the repairs and maintenance work at a similar level of circa **£3.000m**. In order to meet this new level of budget required the following finance options are being considered

- Adopt the Government proposal of charging an additional **£2** per week to those dwellings where rent convergence is required. High level modelling suggests this could generate an additional **£0.500m** per annum.
- Reduce the annual contribution to the Major Repairs Reserve (MMR) by an amount equivalent to the increase in revenue cost. This would enable the annual surplus to be maintained at the forecast levels and helps maintain the sustainability of the HRA 30-year business plan.

3.8.2 However, the adverse consequence of reducing the annual MRR contribution will mean that there is reduced financing of the HRA capital programme. The programme relies on financing from the MRR to fund the capital investment works so reduced financing will result in a reduced capital investment programme. The details of this proposal are currently being.

4 Capital Budget 2025/26 – HRA

4.1 The budget set by Council on 27 February 2025 was **£31.771m**. Budgets have been amended in line with approved carry forwards which have increased the 2025/26 budget to **£31.966m**.

4.2 **Table 2** shows the forecast outturn position as at 30 September 2025 which is forecasting a potential underspend of **£8.771m** and **Table 3** shows the significant forecast variances with supporting commentary.

Table 2 – HRA Capital Forecast Outturn Position

Directorate	Current Budget £'000	YTD Budget £'000	YTD Actuals £'000	YTD Variance £'000	Forecast Outturn £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
Energy Efficiencies Initiatives	4,653	2,047	3,943	1,896	4,653	0	0
Replacement Vehicles	765	383	0	(383)	765	0	0
New Builds	15,134	7,567	6,594	(973)	7,394	(7,740)	(51.14)
Refurbishment and Improvement	11,414	5,707	4,899	(808)	10,183	(1,231)	(10.79)
Total	31,966	15,704	15,436	(268)	22,995	(8,971)	(28.06)

Table 3 – HRA Capital – Significant Variances

Explanation of Significant Variance	£'000
<p>New Builds Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swinegate development in Grantham completed in September 25 but was due to finish earlier in the year so the cashflow has been extended as a result of the delay. • A purchase order has been raised for Larch Close, Grantham, and construction commenced in September 25. The scheme is now due to complete in December 26 following a significant delays as a result of amendments to the planning permission. • Wellington Way, Market Deeping, contract was awarded for 11 units at £1.926m. It was hoped works would start in November 25 but this has slipped to the New Year due to some pre-commencement planning conditions. <p>The cashflows for each scheme are shared with finance colleagues and discussed regularly but, due to delays, this has impacted the budget position.</p>	(7,740)
<p>Refurbishment and Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A potential underspend is anticipated related to the Tunstall Lifeline and alarm system. Work is underway for the procurement of a new contract but the current expectations are that no further investment will be required this financial year. • A review of Electrical planned works is underway which require new contracts. • There are no lift or fence replacements programmed in for this year. Compliance works have been programmed in conjunction with the survey results, the expected works will produce an underspend. 	(1,231)
Total	(8,711)

5 Collection Rates - Rents

5.1 Table 4 details the current rent collection rate against target for 2025/26.

Table 4 – Rent Collection Rate

Target Rates	Rents
Target annual collection rate	96.02%
Target collection rate to end of September 2025	48.68%
Actual collection rate to end of September 2025	48.03%
Variance compared to target	(0.65%)

- 5.2 Collection of **£14.761m** as of 5 October 2025 against an annual debt of **£29.856m**. As shown in the table above, the collection rate was 0.65% below target equating to **£0.167m**.
- 5.3 Several factors affect rent collection. In previous years, there has been a reduction in collection during August and September. Universal Credit migration has reduced direct payments to the rent account because previously Housing Benefit was paid directly to the rent account; however, housing costs are now paid directly to some tenants who have migrated to Universal Credit.

6 Reasons for the Recommendations

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

7 Consultation

- 7.1 Budget Monitoring reports are presented throughout the financial year to the Cabinet and FEOSC to keep members up to date regarding the projected financial outturn position.

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SOUTH
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COUNCIL

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 November 2025

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

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

Report Author

Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)

claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report reviews the responses to the public consultation of the Council's proposed Local Council Tax Support scheme 2026/27.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the feedback from the public consultation.
2. Recommend to Cabinet a 'no change' Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication? No

What are the relevant corporate priorities? 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 actual cost of the Council Tax Support Scheme for working age and pension age residents will not be known for certain until the end of the financial year and will be dependent on the actual caseload in year as well as the levels of Council Tax set by the District Council and the major precepting authorities.
- 1.2 The estimated cost of the scheme, based on current caseload, is taken into consideration when calculating the Council's tax base for the financial year and will impact on the estimated Council Tax yield for the year.
- 1.3 Any difference in the actual cost of the discount scheme to that estimated in the tax base calculation will be accounted for within the Collection Fund and will be considered when future years surpluses or deficits are declared.
- 1.4 Should the Council wish to approve the continuation of core elements of the current scheme, the financial impact of this would be:
 - Continuation of the Care Leavers Exemption: This will be a cost of circa £27,967 (based on 17 eligible awards for 2025/26 as of 21 October 2025). This cost is shared between SKDC and the preceptors; and
 - Continuation of the Council Tax Discount for Police Special Constables, this will be a direct cost to the General Fund of circa £10,000 for awards relating to 2024/25 (if all eligible Special Constables applied for the discount).

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.5 Should the Council wish to approve any proposals which were included within the public consultation, there will be a direct cost to the General Fund and to Preceptors (Lincolnshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner). Some of these costs are currently unknown and this is detailed further within this report and Appendix 1. This appendix also provides a background of the option, impact of change if approved and impact if it is not approved.

- 1.6 The regulations for the scheme proposed to be adopted are to be collated and made available for Council in January 2026.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.7 The Council, and other preceptors, bears the risk of the cost of the Council Tax Support scheme if an increase in caseload causes costs to increase beyond predictions.
- 1.8 Any revisions to the scheme must be approved by 31 January 2026.
- 1.9 The scheme cannot be changed mid-year and therefore it is vital the correct scheme is in place.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.10 It is expected that any changes to the current scheme that reduce the current maximum award of support will have an adverse impact on specific household income. Whilst this impact would not be related to any specific protected characteristic identified in law, we are mindful of socio-economic impact and will give due regard as part of the equality impact assessment of the Scheme.
- 1.11 The proposed scheme for 2026/27 is a 'no change' proposed scheme and as such, there are no reductions in current maximum award.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

1. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to enabling economic opportunity and being an effective council. This report, and the support provided through the Council's Localised Council Tax Support Scheme, delivers these priorities.
- 2.2. The Council Tax Benefit system was abolished on 31 March 2013 and replaced by the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS). This scheme can be determined locally by the Billing Authority after due consultation with precepting authorities, key stakeholders, and residents.

2.3. The Council agreed to a LCTSS which came into effect on 1 April 2013. Our core scheme currently provides:

- 80% support for working age claimants
- 100% support for pension age claimants

2.4. There are currently **7,243** residents claiming LCTSS in the South Kesteven District. Of these, **3,133** are pensioners who are protected under the legislation and receive LCTSS as prescribed by the Government (broadly similar to the level of Council Tax Benefit). This leaves **4,110** claimants of working age; of those **3,227** are deemed vulnerable. This leaves **883** who will be affected by changes to the level of support determined by a local scheme.

2.5. A breakdown of caseload is shown in the table below:

1st of month	Working age	Pension age	Total
March 2023	4,094	3,141	7,235
June 2023	4,113	3,133	7,246
September 2023	4,001	3,115	7,116
December 2023	4,014	3,090	7,104
March 2024	4,046	3,082	7,128
June 2024	4,096	3,076	7,172
September 2024	4,038	3,076	7,114
December 2024	3,982	3,088	7,124
March 2025	4,097	3,118	7,215
July 2025	4,157	3,122	7,279
October 2025*	4,110	3,133	7,243

*As of 21 October 2025

2.6. The proposed scheme must follow prescribed stages as stated in the Local Government Finance Act 2012 before it can be adopted by this Council as a Billing Authority.

Financial cost of the current Council Tax Support Scheme

2.7. Despite the scheme being a 'local' CTS scheme, due to the nature of protection provided to pensioners and vulnerable working age customers, the Council will always incur some costs over which it has no influence.

2.8. The transfer of the remaining legacy benefit claimants to Universal Credit continues and is due to conclude by the end of 2026. Claimants are contacted by DWP and asked to move to Universal Credit. The rollout is managed by the DWP and started in April 2024. The current number of legacy customers awaiting transfer is minimal.

2.9. The cost of the scheme has increased because the rate of transfer has increased.

2.10. Current caseload can be broken down in the following table which shows any changes implemented will only apply to **12.19%** of the caseload (working age), as pensioners and vulnerable working age are protected. This is a reduction from the previous year of 1.73% (working age caseload was 14.34%).

Caseload breakdown	Caseload	% of caseload	Cost of scheme (£)
Total caseload	7,243	100%	£8,189,474
Pensioner (protected)	3,133	43.26%	£3,561,056
Working age vulnerable (protected)	3,227	44.55%	£3,933,187
Working age (local discretion)	883	12.19%	£695,232

2.11. Based on caseload as of 21 October 2025, the current cost of the scheme is £8,189,474 (increased by £550,188 from £7,639,286 at the same point in 2024). South Kesteven's share of the total cost of the scheme is £737,053 (9%) and has increased by £49,517 at the same point in 2024.

2.12. Due to the protections from changes to pensioners and vulnerable working age customers, any reduction in cost to the proposed scheme can only be applied to the 883 working age customers, or 12.19% of the caseload. This means out of the Council's current share of the cost of £737,053 – only £89,847 (12.19%) can be influenced by any change made to the current scheme. This is a reduction from 14.34% at the same point in 2024.

Current Local Council Tax Support Scheme – 2025/26

2.13. The Council's local scheme has been updated with amendments since the introduction in April 2013 to maintain the link with Housing Benefit and the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme.

2.14. The current scheme has the following restrictions for working age customers: -

- Maximum entitlement capped to 80%.

2.15. The current scheme also has the following amendments to Council Tax technical restrictions for all Council Tax payers: -

- Introduction of changes to the properties which are unoccupied and unfurnished: -
 - 100% discount for one month;
 - 25% discount for the following 5 months;
 - 100% charge thereafter;
- Introduction of additional premiums to properties empty over 2 years, plus the original charge: -
 - 100% premium – this results in a 200% charge – empty between 2 and 5 years;
 - 200% premium – this results in a 300% charge – empty between 5 and 10 years; and
 - 300% premium – this results in a 400% charge – empty over 10 years.
- Unoccupied discount of 100% for the first month
- Care leavers' Council Tax exemption – 100% for those aged between 18 and 25;
- Reduction for Special Constables who live in the district – 25% for each special constable resident in the household (up to 2 resident, equalling 50% reduction); and
- Second home premium of 100%.

Council Tax Exemption for care leavers – effective from 1 April 2019

2.16. The scheme was first approved for 2019/20, for a local discretionary Council Tax exemption of up to 100% for care leavers aged 18 to 21 years, with the exemption ending on the individual's 22nd birthday.

2.17. The scheme was amended for 2021/22 and the age limit criteria was increased to 24 years of age, with the discount ending on the individual's 25th birthday.

Special Constabulary Council Tax Discount Scheme – effective from 1 April 2022:

2.18. The scheme was first approved and introduced on 1 April 2022. The award of the discount is retrospective and therefore, the discount was awarded for the financial year 2021/22.

2.19. The retrospective discount has been awarded to one Special Constable for 2024/25 totalling £832.51. The scheme for 2025/26 will open on 1 April 2026, with applications to be received by 30 May 2026.

- 2.20. If continuation of the scheme is approved by Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) will write to all Special Constables who live within South Kesteven by 30 April 2026 to confirm they have met the hours worked criteria and will provide a link to the Council's website.
- 2.21. Each Special Constable will be required to complete the online application form and upload the letter from the PCC.
- 2.22. The award of the discount will be referenced to service during 2025/26. As a result, the eligibility for the discount will be considered, and an award made no later than the 31 May 2025 which will be applied to the Council Tax account for 2025/26.
- 2.23. In the response to the public consultation (Appendix 3), the PCC support the continuation of support for Special Constables.

Discretionary Council Tax Payment Fund - £30,000

- 2.24. A Discretionary Council Tax Payment (DCTP) is available to anyone in receipt of Council Tax Support who has a shortfall between the weekly amount awarded and their Council Tax liability.
- 2.25. The total amount of funding allocated for each year is £30,000. For 2025/26, the decision was taken to move any unspent funding from 2024/25 into the new year. As a result, in 2025/26 there was a total of £30,082 funding available.
- 2.26. To date, £8,512 has been awarded, meaning there is £21,570 remaining, to be issued up to 31 March 2026.
- 2.27. Discretionary Payments can be applied for independently but are often considered as part of the application process for Discretionary Housing Payments (support for shortfall between Housing Benefit / Universal Credit award and eligible rent). Officers are aware of the DCTP and actively encourage customers to apply where eligibility criteria are met.
- 2.28. A separate report, 'Discretionary Payment Policies' is being considered by this committee, whereby the proposed Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy 2026/27 will be discussed.

Continuation of the War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support – effective from 1 April 2024:

- 2.29. Section 134 8(a) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, allows local authorities to modify any part of the Housing Benefit scheme to provide for the disregarding of prescribed war disablement pensions or war widows' pensions.
- 2.30. South Kesteven District Council has applied a disregard of 100% through Officer Delegated decision. However, a result of the 2021/22 Housing Benefit audit, a recommendation was taken forward for the Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard to be included as part of this consultation and decision making process and was first brought to this Committee for inclusion in consultation in July 2023, for the 2024/25 scheme.

The alignment of the value of the capital tariff limit and disregard for working age claimants to the pension age claimant values

- 2.31. This was first brought to this Committee for inclusion in consultation in July 2023, for the 2024/25 scheme and was approved by Council in January 2024, to be included within the scheme from 1 April 2024.
- 2.32. The capital tariff limit and disregard for working age claimants has been aligned to that of the pension age claimant values with effect from 1 April 2024 – these being a capital tariff of £1 for every £500, and a disregard of the first £10,000 of capital.

Introduction of the Second Home premium (100%) – effective from 1 April 2025:

- 2.33. Regulations were laid before parliament on 8 October 2024 which included the mandatory exceptions to council tax premiums on second homes. These regulations came into force on 1 November 2024 and, for South Kesteven, came into effect from 1 April 2025.
- 2.34. Councils were required to give 1 year's notice of the decision to introduce the premium. Therefore, as part of the consultation and approval process for the 2024/25 LCTS scheme, Council approved the introduction of the premium from 1 April 2025 at its meeting on 25 January 2024.

Outcome of public consultation (September 2025) – proposed ‘no change’ scheme for 2026/27

2.35. A report was presented to this Committee on 24 July 2025 to consider a ‘no change scheme’ for 2026/27 for public consultation. The recommendation by this Committee was to undertake consultation for the 2026/27 Localised Council Tax support scheme and to consider the outcome of the consultation findings prior to making a recommendation to Cabinet, for the final scheme to be presented to Council in January 2026.

2.36. Public consultation began on 1 September 2025 and ran to 30 September 2025. Consultation has been undertaken with major precepting authorities, stakeholders, and residents through a variety of methods, as detailed below: -

- An online survey (support provided by the Benefits Team where the resident was unable to complete the survey themselves);
- All South Kesteven District Council Members and Parish Clerks were issued with an email advising them of the consultation;
- Partner organisations were also advised of the proposed scheme – include Citizens Advice; and
- Major preceptors – Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC).

2.37. Letters were issued to all those in receipt of Council Tax Support at the start of the consultation. This was a total of 7,243 recipients. A total of 440 individuals responded to the consultation – this is a rate of 6.07% (compared to 336 responses of 7,133 – 4.73% for the previous year). The response to questions were not mandated and as such, some questions were not responded to.

2.38. Overall, 83% of respondents agreed with the principles of the current scheme, and 84% of respondents agreed the Council had worked hard to ensure that its Council Tax Support Scheme is fair, protects pensioners and those in vulnerable groups, and responds to local concerns.

2.39. The key findings of the consultation are detailed within Appendix 1 and a summary of the responses is detailed below:

	Agreed		Disagreed		Didn't Know		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Agreed with the principles of the current scheme	364	83.1%	34	7.8%	40	9.1%	438

	Agreed		Disagreed		Didn't Know		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Thought the level of discounts and premiums for unoccupied, unfurnished and second home properties should continue	336	80.2%	22	5.2%	61	14.6%	419
Thought the exemption for young people leaving the care system should continue	349	83.5%	32	7.7%	37	8.8%	418
Thought the Special Constable Discount scheme should continue	277	66.6%	68	16.3%	71	17.1%	416
Thought the War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support should continue	321	79.8%	16	4.0%	65	16.2%	402
Thought the Capital tariff limit and disregard for working age claimants to be aligned to pension age claimant values should continue	297	74.4%	8	2.0%	94	23.6%	399
Thought the second home premium should continue in 2026/27	319	80.2%	16	4.0%	63	15.8%	398
Thought the Discretionary Payment schemes should continue for 2026/27	358	90.2%	23	5.8%	16	4.0%	397
Thought the Council had worked hard to ensure that its Council Tax Support Scheme is fair, protects pensioners and those in vulnerable groups, and responds to local concerns	333	84.1%	20	5.0%	43	10.9%	396

2.40. The consultation response from Lincolnshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner are detailed in Appendix 2 and 3.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. It is proposed there are no changes made to the scheme and the current core elements of the 2025/26 scheme, as detailed in paragraphs 2.13 to 2.34 of this report are retained and continue for 2026/27.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 All options for consultation are detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 4.2 Not undertaking any consultation, is not an option. Consultation as to the administrative and financial impact of a change/new scheme is a legal requirement. This scheme must be reviewed, consulted upon, and approved on an annual basis.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The proposed scheme must follow prescribed stages as stated in the Local Government Finance Act 2012 before it can be adopted by this Council as a Billing Authority – this is detailed as follows:

Before making a scheme, the authority must (in the following order): -

- (a) consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it;*
- (b) publish a draft scheme in such a manner as it thinks fit; and*
- (c) consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme*

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Full Council, as Billing Authority, needs to approve the scheme after consultation as outlined in paragraph 2.6.
- 6.2 The remaining consultation timetable is as follows: -
 - 15 January 2026: Cabinet – recommendation of scheme for 2026/27 to Council.
 - 29 January 2026: Council – decision required: approval of final 2026/27 scheme for implementation from 1 April 2026. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 requires a full review of the scheme by the Billing Authority. South Kesteven District Council will need to approve a new scheme after consultation by 31 January 2026.

7. Background Papers

7.1 A full report was presented to Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 July 2025 (item 11) agreeing to recommendations for consultation. The report can be accessed here: [Agenda for Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 24th July, 2025, 2.00 pm | South Kesteven District Council](#)

8. Appendices

8.1. There are four appendices to this report.

- Appendix 1: Analysis of public consultation and Council Tax Support Scheme Options for public consultation
- Appendix 2: Lincolnshire County Council consultation response
- Appendix 3: Police and Crime Commissioner consultation response
- Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment

Council Tax Support Consultation – 2026/27 Scheme

Results

October 2025

Introduction

1. South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) is required by law to provide a Local Council Tax Support Scheme. The purpose of this scheme is to help low-income households with the costs of their council tax bill.
2. The scheme is administered by the Council using rules which have been set locally. Underpinned by national legislation, support is focused on those facing financial hardship, with costs being met by SKDC and central government.
3. Introduced after the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in 2013, the scheme sets out the rules and principles that guide how discounts will be calculated and is reviewed annually. The amount of discount received is dependent on income, savings, council tax band and household circumstances, and is applied as a reduction to Council Tax bills.
4. To help the Council determine how best to allocate/distribute its Council Tax support from April 2026, respondents were asked what they thought of the key elements of the scheme. These included:
 - the principles of the Council Tax Support Scheme
 - Council Tax technical restrictions (discounts and premiums)
 - an exemption for young people leaving the care system
 - a special constable discount
 - disregards of war pension and armed forces compensation payments
 - the alignment of the value of the capital tariff limit and disregard for working age claimants to the pension age claimant values
 - a Council Tax second home premium
 - discretionary Council Tax payment schemes
5. 440 individuals responded to the annual Council Tax Support consultation, which took place from 1 to 30 September 2025.

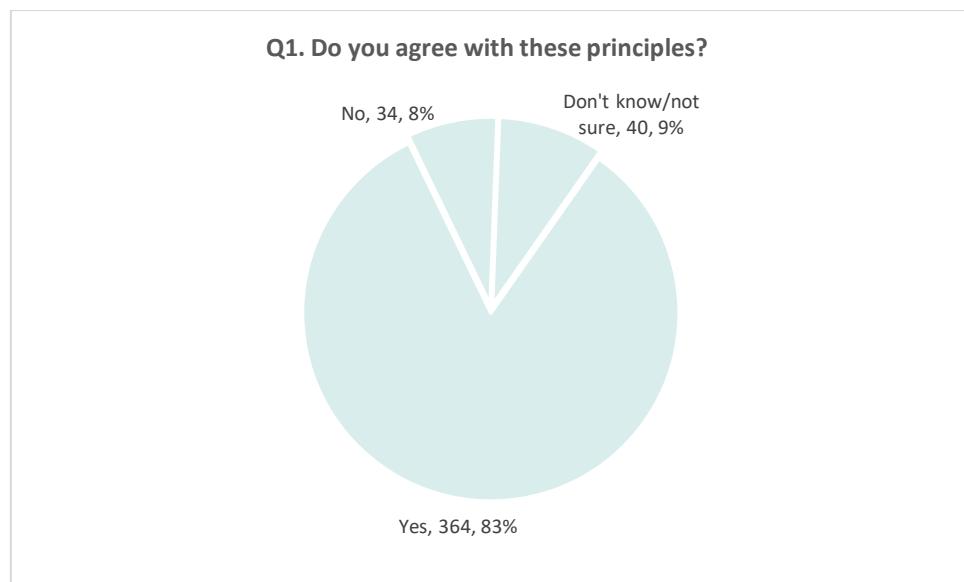
The principles of the Council Tax Support Scheme:

6. SKDC's Council Tax Support Scheme has two main principles. These are:
 - A cap of 80% on entitlement for all applicants of working age. This means anyone of working age eligible for help paying their Council Tax will be entitled to claim for help with **up to but no more than** 80% of their bill.
 - Pensioners and vulnerable persons eligible for help paying their Council Tax are protected by legislation.

7. Respondents were informed that the Council is proposing to continue to focus on these principles.

8. When asked if they agreed with these principles, eight out of ten respondents (364 or 83.1%) said that they did, as illustrated in the pie chart and table below:

	No	%
Yes, I agree with these principles	364	83.1
No, I don't agree with these principles	34	7.8
I don't know if I agree or disagree with these principles	40	9.1
	438	100



9. The second question on the survey asked respondents to detail why they didn't agree with these principles. Analysing their comments revealed that they had strong opinions about who should receive council tax support and under what circumstances. Some suggested that only pensioners, disabled individuals, or those on means-tested benefits should receive support. Respondents also commented on the percentage of council tax reduction offered, with some feeling that the proposed 80% cap is too high, or unfair. Examples of the comments made are included below and overleaf:

“No reason for those of working age to receive support.”

“It's too high. 25% would be fairer.”

““The help given should depend on people's individual situations and should be up to 100% support where necessary.”

Council Tax technical restrictions (discounts and premiums) - introduced from 1 April 2013 (and onwards)

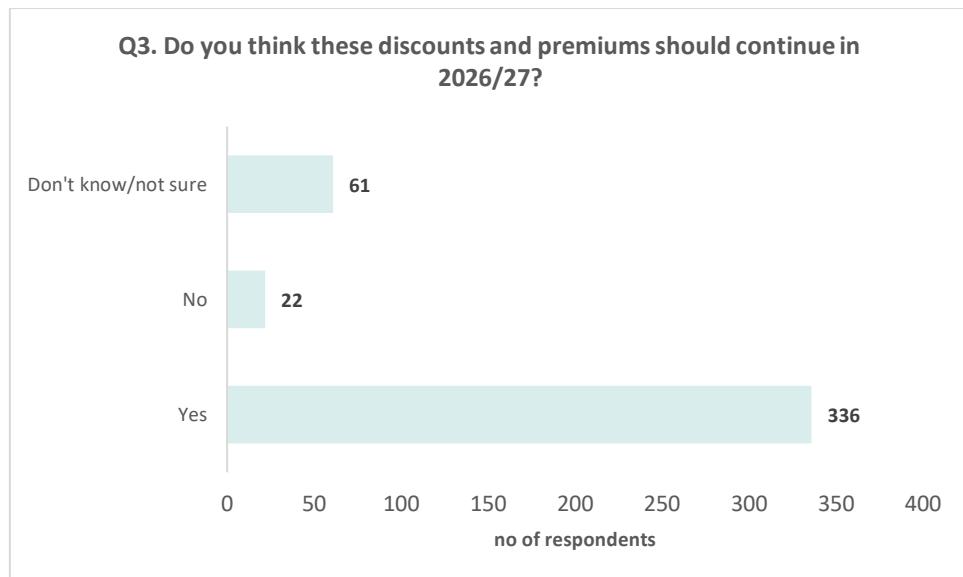
10. SKDC's scheme also has the following amendments to Council Tax technical restrictions for all Council Taxpayers. These have been made as a result of changes to legislation. They are: -

- Introduction of changes to the properties which are unoccupied and unfurnished: -
 - 100% discount for one month;
 - 25% discount for the following 5 months;
 - 100% charge thereafter.
- Introduction of additional premiums to properties empty over 2 years, plus the original charge: -
 - 200% premium – empty between 2 and 5 years.
 - 300% premium – empty between 5 and 10 years.
 - 400% premium – empty over 10 years.
- Unoccupied discount of 100% for the first month.
- Council Tax premium of 100% for a property classed as a second home (i.e. any dwelling that is furnished and is no-one's sole or main residence).

The Council is proposing to continue with these levels of discounts and premiums.

11. When asked if they thought these discounts and premiums should continue in 2026/27, eight out of ten respondents (336 or 80.2%) thought that they should, as illustrated below:

	No	%
Yes, I think the discounts and premiums should continue	336	80.2
No, I don't think the discounts and premiums should continue	22	5.2
I don't know if the discounts and premiums should continue	61	14.6
	419	100.0



12. When asked to describe why they didn't agree with the discounts and premiums, the responses tended to fall into one of two viewpoints. Some believed that the Council should not levy a charge for unoccupied property, as no services are being used. Others thought it was wrong to leave properties empty, particularly given the current housing crisis. This is illustrated in the quotes below:

“Empty houses do not use council services.”

“Premiums of 200%+ should be applied given the housing crisis as it would encourage people to rent or sell the house so it can be used.”

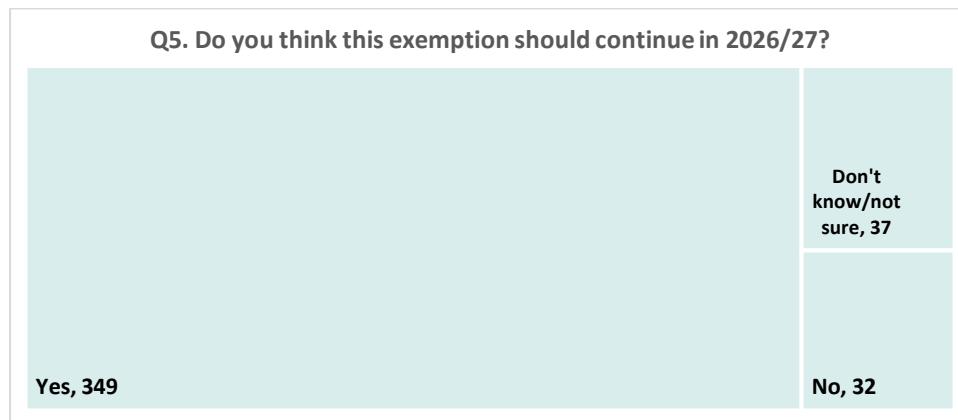
An exemption for young people leaving the care system - introduced from 1 April 2019:

13. In South Kesteven all young people leaving the care system are currently exempt from paying Council Tax in properties they rent or own, until they are 25.

14. The Council is proposing to continue to apply this exemption.

15. Just over eight out of ten respondents (349 or 83.5%) thought all young people leaving the care system should continue to be exempt from paying Council Tax for owned or rented properties, until they are 25. This is illustrated below and overleaf:

	No	%
Yes, I think the exemption should continue	349	83.5
No, I don't think the exemption should continue	32	7.7
I don't know if the exemption should continue	37	8.8
	418	100.0



16. When asked why they didn't support this exemption, most comments were centred on eligibility and whether the scheme is fair. There was debate about whether care leavers should be treated differently from other young people, and whether support should be means-tested or based on individual circumstances. The age at which support finishes was also mentioned, as illustrated here:

“Why should a young person leaving the care system be treated any differently from a young person from a low-income home....?”

“The age limit of 25 is far too high and doesn't encourage them to find a job....”

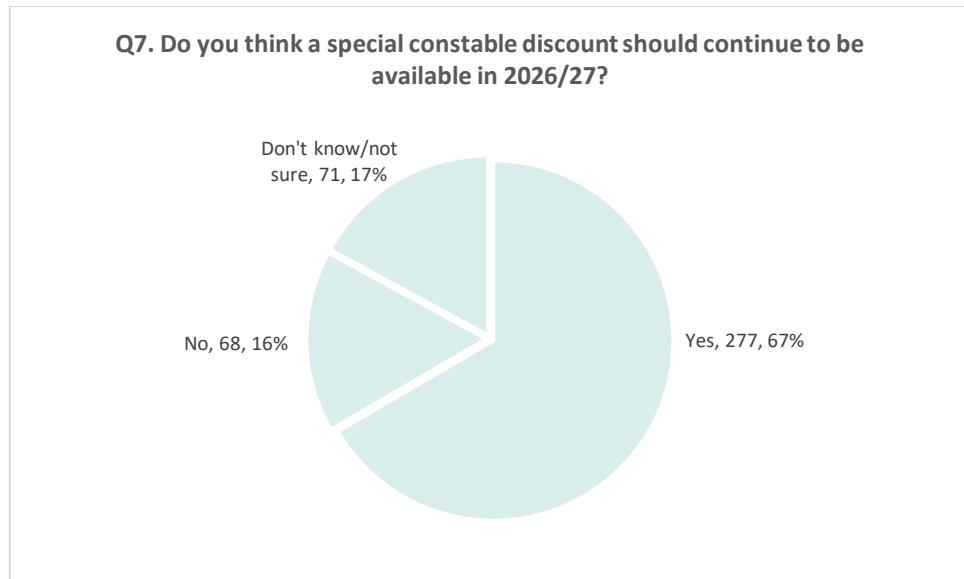
Special Constable Discount Scheme - introduced from 1 April 2022

17. In South Kesteven, Special Constables can make an application for a 25% Council Tax discount for each eligible Special Constable in the household (up to 50%).

18. The Council is proposing to continue with this discount.

19. Two thirds of respondents (277 or 66.6%) thought the Special Constable Discount Scheme should continue to operate in 2026/27, as illustrated below and overleaf:

	No	%
Yes, I think the scheme should continue to be available	277	66.6
No, I don't think the scheme should continue to be available	68	16.3
I don't know if the scheme should continue	71	17.1
	416	100.0



20. When asked why they didn't support special constables being awarded a discount on their council tax, the reasons respondents gave were varied. Some asked why Special Constables receive a council tax discount when other volunteers or key workers (such as NHS staff, military personnel, teachers, and other emergency service volunteers) do not. Others said that it was their choice to volunteer and that maybe the amounts incurred could be better used elsewhere. There appears to be a strong sentiment that the scheme is unfair and creates inequality among those who contribute to society. This is illustrated in the quotes below:

“Why should Special Constables be treated differently to any other volunteer emergency service workers (retained fire fighters, first responders etc)?”

“Rather than offering selective discounts, the funds saved by discontinuing this scheme should be redistributed to other vital local services that benefit the wider community.”

“It is their choice to volunteer.”

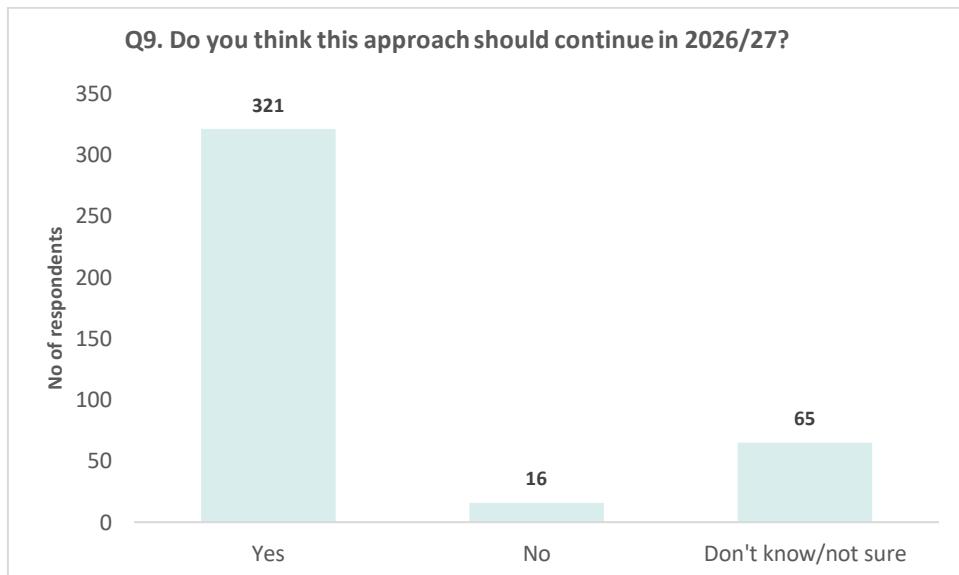
Disregards of War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation payments:

21. South Kesteven District Council does not currently include War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation within the calculation of income for Council Tax Support. It disregards these amounts in the calculations it undertakes.

22. The Council is proposing to continue to disregard this income.

23. Respondents were asked if they thought the Council should continue to disregard War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation for both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support calculations. Eight out of ten respondents thought that they should, as illustrated overleaf:

	No	%
Yes, I think the Council should continue to apply this disregard	321	79.8
No, I don't think the Council should continue to apply this disregard	16	4.0
I don't know if the Council should continue to apply the disregard or not	65	16.2
	402	100.0



24. When asked why they felt they were unable to support this approach, the comments made were similar to comments made about other elements of SKDC's Council Tax Support Scheme, citing fairness and consistency. For other respondents, it was an opportunity to state why they supported this approach. Examples of each are detailed below:

“They served our country, ergo they should be supported above all else.”

“It is still an income like a pension or savings so should be included as all other monies are.”

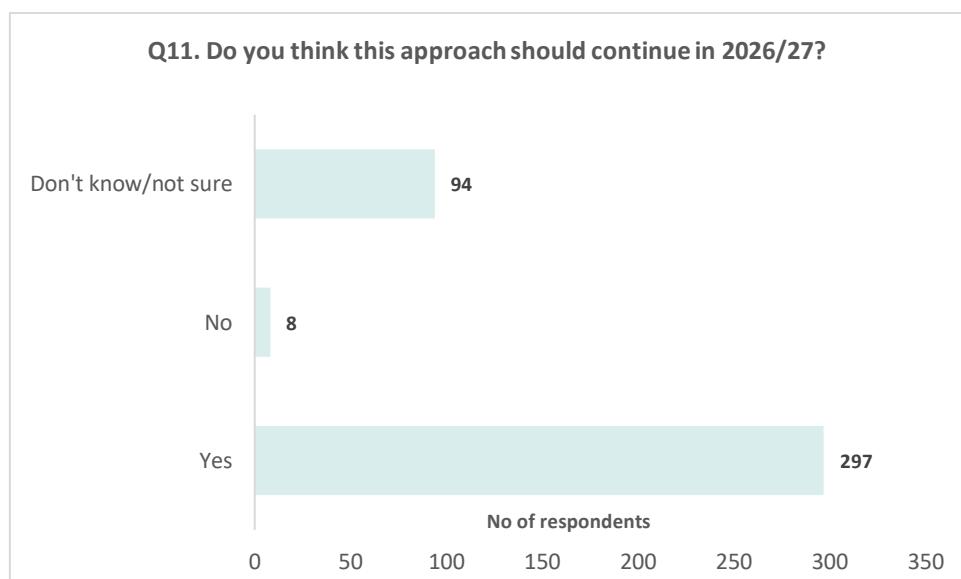
The alignment of the value of the capital tariff limit and disregard for working age claimants to the pension age claimant values - introduced from 1 April 2024:

25. South Kesteven District Council aligned the capital tariff limit and disregard of working age claimants to that of the pension age claimant values from 1 April 2024 – these being a capital tariff of £1 for every £500, and a disregard of £10,000.

26. The Council is proposing to continue to align working age capital tariffs to pension age.

27. When asked for their opinion on the alignment of the capital tariff limit and disregard for working age claimants to the pension age claimant values, and if this approach should continue in 2026/27, three quarters of respondents (297 or 74.4%) agreed. This is illustrated in the table below:

	No	%
Yes, I think this approach should continue	297	74.4
No, I don't think this approach should continue	8	2.0
I don't know if this approach should continue or not	94	23.6
	399	100.0



28. When asked to comment on this element of the scheme, and why they might not support this approach in 2026/27, there was little consistency. Some respondents thought the scheme might be too generous, others that it wasn't generous enough, others argued that working-age individuals should not be treated the same as pensioners. Some just didn't understand what it meant. Examples of each of these are shown below:

“Might this unreasonably discriminate or penalize those individuals who might have invested wisely and/or carefully planned for their retirement?”

“Pensioners already profit from the triple lock; the above provision was brought in when pensioner poverty was a real problem. It is no longer. These days, hard pressed families are worse off than pensioners.”

“I do not understand what this means.”

A Council Tax second home premium – introduced from 1 April 2025

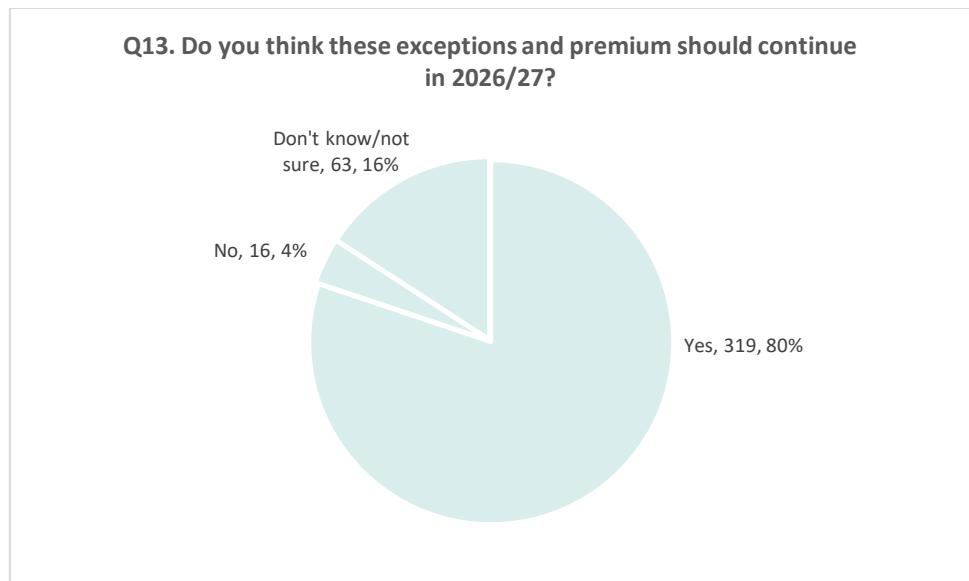
29. Respondents were then asked about the Council Tax second home premium of 100%. This applies to home owners who have a second property in South Kesteven, where the home is not classed as their main and sole residence and does not meet the mandatory exception criteria set out by central government.

30. Introduced on 1 April 2025 as a result of legislative changes, a premium of 100% is applied where a property does not meet one of the following exceptions:

- A dwelling which is or would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in job-related armed forces accommodation: or
- Annexes forming part of or being treated as part of the main dwelling: or
- Dwellings being actively marketed for sale (12-month limit); or
- Dwellings being actively marketed for let (12-month limit); or
- Unoccupied dwellings which fell within exempt Class F and where probate has recently been granted (12 months from grant of probate/ letters of administration); or
- Job-related dwellings; or
- Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings; or
- Seasonal homes where year-round permanent occupation is prohibited, specific for use as holiday accommodation or planning condition preventing occupancy for more than 28 days continuously

31. Respondents were informed that the Council is proposing to continue with these exceptions and award the 100% premium where a property does not meet the exception. When asked if the exceptions and premium should continue in 2026/27, four fifths of respondents (319 or 80.2%) supported this proposal, as illustrated in the table below and pie chart overleaf:

	No	%
Yes, I think these exceptions and premium should continue	319	80.2
No, I don't think these exceptions and premium should continue	16	4.0
I don't know if these exceptions and premium should continue or not	63	15.8
	398	100.0



32. Respondents who weren't in favour of this approach could be categorised into one of two viewpoints. Those who thought this approach was too lenient for anyone with a second home, and those who thought it was unfair. Examples of each of these points of view are illustrated here:

“Far too generous when these people can afford to have the second dwelling.”

“There should be no second homes premium....”

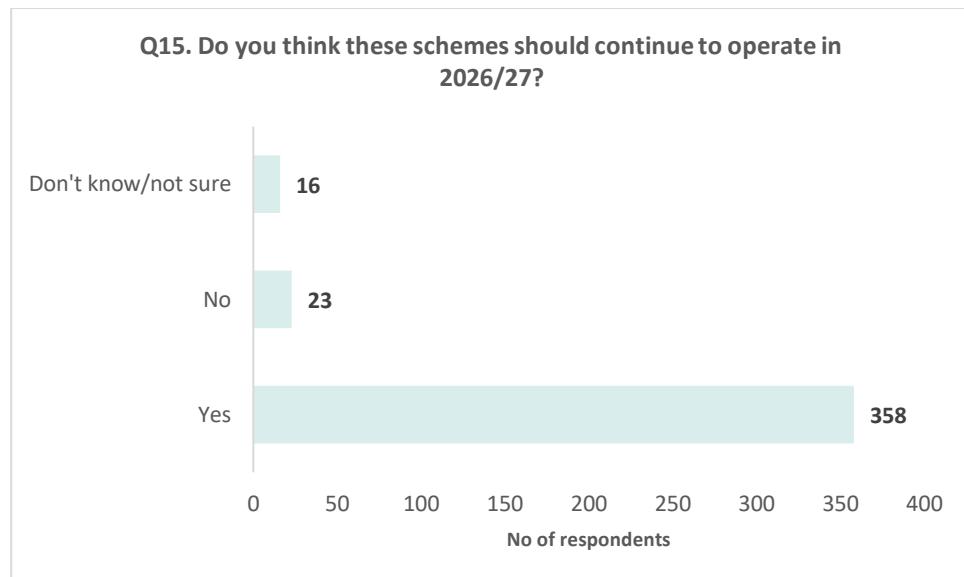
Discretionary Council Tax Payment Schemes:

33. South Kesteven District Council also operates a Discretionary Council Tax Payment Scheme and a Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme. The schemes have been designed to offer additional support to those struggling to pay their Council Tax and rent, and offer limited, short-term assistance to those in receipt of Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit and/or Universal Credit (Housing Costs) who need further help.

34. The Council is proposing that these schemes should continue to operate.

35. There was strong support for these initiatives, with 90% of those responding to the survey stating that they think the Discretionary Payment Schemes should continue to operate. This level of support is illustrated below:

	No	%
Yes, I think the Discretionary Payment Schemes should continue to operate	358	90.2
No, I don't think the Discretionary Payment Schemes should continue to operate	23	5.8
I don't know if these schemes should continue to operate or not	16	4.0
	397	100.0



36. When asked why they thought the schemes shouldn't continue, some respondents questioned whether additional council tax support is necessary, arguing that recipients already receive sufficient government benefits. Others argued that it should only be available to those in need, for a very short time as illustrated in the quotes below:

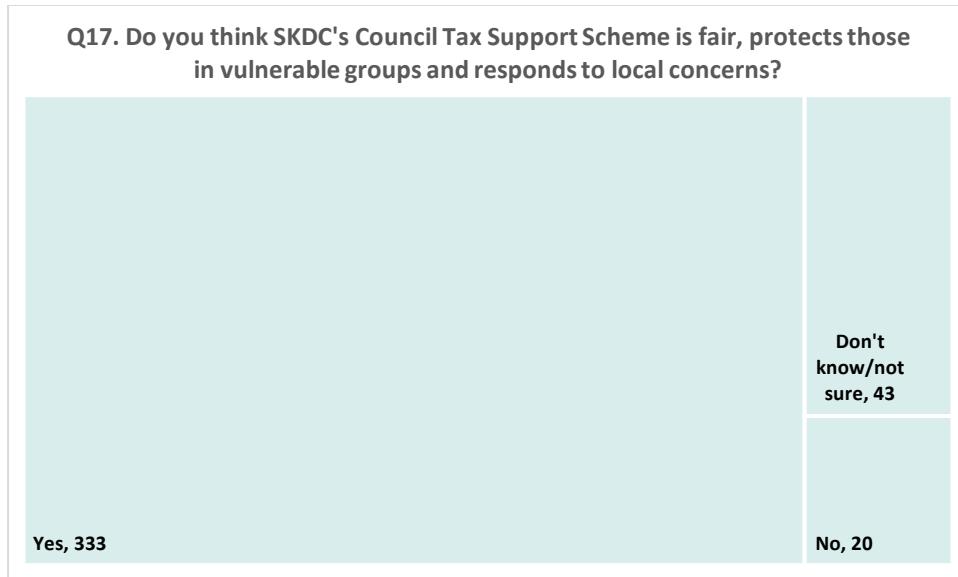
“They already receive benefits and support; they should not receive more funds because they cannot manage their finances.”

“I agree as long as it’s definitely short term and not a way of life!”

37. The next question respondents were asked was if they thought that SKDC’s Council Tax Support Scheme is fair, protects pensioners and those in vulnerable groups, and responds to local concerns.

38. When asked if they thought SKDC’s Council Tax Support Scheme is fair, protects those in vulnerable groups and responds to local concerns, 84.1% of respondents said yes, they thought it was. The distribution of responses is detailed in the table below:

	No	%
Yes, I think SKDC’s Council Tax Support Scheme is fair	333	84.1
No, I think SKDC’s Council Tax Support Scheme is unfair	20	5.0
I don’t know if SKDC’s Council Tax Support Scheme is fair or unfair	43	10.9
	396	100.0



39. When asked why they thought SKDC's Council Tax Support Scheme was unfair, some respondents said that they didn't know enough about it to answer the question. Others thought that certain elements of the scheme led to unfairness. A few raised objections on behalf of Council Taxpayers across the district. This is illustrated in the quotes below:

"I don't know enough about it to make a judgement."

"No, I do not believe the scheme is entirely fair or fully responds to local concerns. While I appreciate that the Council Tax Support Scheme aims to protect pensioners and vulnerable groups, the inclusion of selective discounts—such as the Special Constable discount—undermines fairness. It prioritizes one volunteer group over others..."

"Not fair to hard working tax payers"

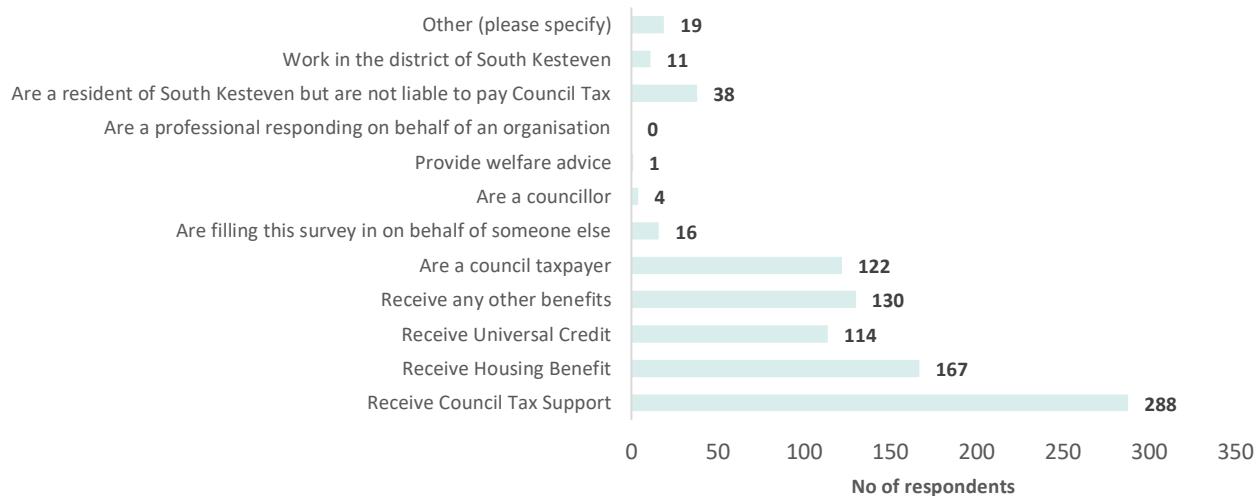
40. The penultimate question on the survey asked people to identify if they:

- Received Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit or any other benefits
- Are a Council Taxpayer
- Are filling in the survey on behalf of someone else
- Are a councillor, provide welfare advice or are a professional filling it in on behalf of an organisation
- Are a resident of South Kesteven but are not liable to pay Council tax
- Work in the district

41. The purpose of this was to establish that the views of those who might be subject to this scheme are reflected in the responses received. The table below shows the number of respondents who ticked each of these choices. Respondents could choose more than one option if they so wished:

	No	%
Receive Council Tax Support	288	74.4
Receive Housing Benefit	167	43.2
Receive Universal Credit	114	29.5
Receive any other benefits	130	33.6
Are a Council Taxpayer	122	31.5
Are filling in the survey on behalf of someone else	16	4.1
Are a councillor	4	1.0
Provide welfare advice	1	0.3
Are a professional on behalf of an organisation	0	0
Are a resident of South Kesteven but not liable to pay Council Tax	38	9.8
Work in the district	11	2.8
Other, please specify	19	4.9

Q19. SKDC is keen to ensure that the views of those who might be affected by this scheme are reflected in the responses received. It would like to know if you ...?



42. The final question asked people to state if they had responded on behalf of an organisation. Sixteen responses were received from individuals, the majority of whom were representatives from SKDC. Two responses were received from parish councils and one from a housing association.

43. The consultation closed on 30 September 2025.

Conclusion

44. This consultation illustrates support for each of the parameters of SKDC's Council Tax Support Scheme. The number and percentage of respondents agreeing with each of the constructs of the scheme ranged from two thirds of respondents (277 or 66.6%) for the Special Constable Discount Scheme to nine out of ten respondents (358 or 90.2%) in favour of the Discretionary Payment Schemes.
45. Support for the scheme overall was also strong. 333 respondents (84.1%) thought that SKDC's Council Tax Support Scheme was fair, protects those in vulnerable groups and responds to local concerns.
46. The survey was completed by individuals who are in receipt of some kind of benefit to help them pay their Council Tax or rent. Three quarters of those (288 or 74.4%) who took part in the survey were in receipt of Council Tax Support. Four out of ten respondents (167 or 43.2%) were claiming housing benefit. A third (130 or 33.6%) were in receipt of other benefits.
47. Cabinet, Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee and CMT are asked to note the contents of this report.

Report prepared by Deb Wyles

Communications

22 October 2025

Hi Claire

Thanks as ever for sharing and happy for you to attribute that the County Council is content with the "no change" proposal.

Thanks

Andrew

Andrew Crookham

Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources

Lincolnshire County Council

County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL

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Deepdale Lane, Nettleham, Lincoln LN2 2LT
Telephone (01522) 212351

E-Mail: lincolnshire-pcc@lincs.police.uk Website: www.lincolnshire-pcc.gov.uk

Date: 30th September 2025
Our Ref: JF/ch/2025-0760

Mr Richard Wyles
Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer
South Kesteven District Council
Council Offices
The Picture House
St Catherine's Road
GRANTHAM
Lincolnshire
NG31 6TT

By email only to: richard.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk

Dear Richard

Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

Thank you for your letter of 1st September 2025 in which you invite comment on South Kesteven District Council's proposed Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27.

I note the proposal to adopt a "no change" scheme for 2026/27, including the continuation of the Special Constable Discount of 25%, of which the Police & Crime Commissioner is fully supportive.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

Julie Flint
Chief Finance Officer

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Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>In January 2025, the meeting of Council approved South Kesteven District Councils Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for 2025/26</p> <p>The Council must review and approve its CTS scheme by January each year as part of its budget setting process and make any necessary changes from 1 April of the following year.</p>
3. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	All residents in receipt of Council Tax Support (circa 7,243)
4. Has there been any consultation with, or input from, customers/service users or other stakeholders? If so, with whom, how were they consulted and what did they say? If you haven't consulted yet and are intending to do so, please complete the consultation table below.	<p>Consultation regarding the proposal of a 'no change' Localised Council Tax Support Scheme took place during the period 1 September to 30 September 2025.</p> <p>Recipients of Council Tax Support were invited to provide their views on the current Localised Council Tax Support scheme 2025/26.</p> <p>Major Preceptors were invited to comment on the proposed no change scheme, this included Lincolnshire County Council and Police and Crime Commissioner.</p> <p>Consultation responses have been reviewed and analysed, with 83% of respondents agreeing with the principles of the current scheme and 84% agreeing the Council had worked hard to ensure a fair scheme which protects pensioners and those vulnerable groups, as well as responding to local concerns.</p> <p>Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FEOSC) will consider the outcome of the public consultation at its meeting on 18 November 2025.</p> <p>Cabinet will consider feedback from the consultation and recommendations from</p>



APPENDIX 4

	FEOSC in their meeting on 15 January 2026. Council will approve a final scheme on 29 January 2026.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The cost of the Council Tax Support scheme is monitored in year on a monthly basis, along with claim numbers (broken down into pensionable, vulnerable, working age – employed / other).</p> <p>The Council also has a Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy which provides additional support for those Council Tax Support recipients who have a shortfall between their CTS award and Council tax liability. Funding available for this policy is currently £30,000. The award of this fund is monitored in year, each month.</p> <p>CTS modelling is undertaken for any proposed change to the scheme. The 2026/27 scheme proposes 'no change' and as a result, modelling was not required.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact e.g. adjustment to the policy <small>(The Action Log below should be completed to provide further detail)</small>
Age	Yes	<p>Yes – working age. There could be a risk to those of working age (and not deemed as vulnerable as defined by the Secretary of State or by South Kesteven District Councils scheme).</p> <p>Pensioners are a protected group for the purposes of the Council Tax Support scheme, so will not be financially affected. Therefore the reduction in support will be borne by the remainder of those in receipt of Council Tax Support.</p>	Currently, there are no proposed changes to the scheme and as a result, there would be no negative impact to this group.
Disability	No	There is no impact as the group is deemed as	



APPENDIX 4

		<p>'vulnerable' and are protected from any changes to the scheme.</p>	
Gender Reassignment	No	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy	
Pregnancy and Maternity	No	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy	
Race	No	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy	
Religion or Belief	No	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy	
Sex	No	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy	
Sexual Orientation	No	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy	
Other Factors requiring consideration			
Socio-Economic Impacts	No	<p>People with a mental health condition or a learning disability may be particularly vulnerable to changes in council tax support. National evidence shows that these two groups are less likely to be employed and may not see help for financial difficulties.</p> <p>The scheme recognises these difficulties and protects them from any changes.</p>	<p>There is no impact as the group is deemed as 'vulnerable' and are protected from any changes to the scheme.</p>
Carers (those who provide unpaid care to a family member, friend or partner)	No	This does not have any effect on the decisions made under this policy	



Consultation

Negative impacts identified will require the responsible officer to consult with the affected group/s to determine all practicable and proportionate mitigations. Add more rows as required.

Group/Organisation	Date	Response

Proposed Mitigation: Action Log

To be completed when barriers, negative impact or discrimination are found as part of this process – to show actions taken to remove or mitigate. Any mitigations identified throughout the EIA process should be meaningful and timely. Add more rows as required.

Negative Impact	Action	Timeline	Outcome	Status

Evaluation Decision

Once consultation and practicable and proportionate mitigation has been put in place, the responsible officer should evaluate whether any negative impact remains and, if so, provide justification for any decision to proceed.

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		
Final Decision	Tick	Include any explanation/justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed	X	Evidence confirms that the possibility of negative impact has been mitigated and all opportunities to promote equality BY South Kesteven District Council have been taken
2. Stop the policy or practice because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. Adapt or change the policy in a way that will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified , however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people		



APPENDIX 4

less than others, providing justification for this decision		
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Did you consult with an Equality Ally prior to carrying out this assessment? Yes

Sign off

Name and job title of person completing this EIA	Claire Moses – Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)
Officer Responsible for implementing the policy/function etc	Claire Moses – Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)
Date Completed	21 October 2025
Line Manager	Richard Wyles
Date Agreed (by line manager)	28 October 2025
Date of Review (if required)	Completed Annually

Completed EIAs should be included as an appendix to the relevant report going to a Cabinet, Committee or Council meeting and a copy sent to equalities@southkesteven.gov.uk.

Completed EIAs will be published along with the relevant report through Modern.Gov before any decision is made and also on the Council's website.

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 18 November 2025

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

Discretionary Payment Policies 2026/27

Report Author

Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)

claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To update on expenditure and review responses to public consultation on the Discretionary Council Tax Payment (DCTP) Policy 2026/27 and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy 2026/27.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the feedback from the public consultation.
2. Recommend to Cabinet the Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy for 2026/27 with a change to limit the amount of household capital (claimant and/or partner) to £4,000
3. Recommend to Cabinet a 'no change' Discretionary Housing Benefit Policy for 2026/27.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	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 Funding for Discretionary Council Tax Payment is determined as part of the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme decision making process. The Scheme will be considered by Council on 29th January 2026.
- 1.2 Funding for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is determined by the Department for Work and Pensions on an annual basis, which, at time of writing has not been confirmed for 2026/27.
- 1.3 Given the demands on the General Fund it is not recommended that any significant expenditure above the DHP grant allocation is made. When HRA tenants apply for and are successful in their application for DHP grant this is beneficial for the HRA as the payment of the grant towards housing costs.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.4 The Council's practices, in relation to the allocation of Discretionary Council Tax Payments, are in line with its legal duty as part of the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme which is currently going through the relevant decision making process. The Council's practices, in relation to the allocation of Discretionary Housing Payments, are in line with its legal duties. The Council is not obliged to contribute any additional funding from its own resources.
- 1.5 As the proposed policies for 2026/27 do not contain any material amendments, there are no legal implications. However, the Council is adhering to best practice by reviewing the policies and keeping them up-to-date.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027 has a clear commitment to healthy and strong communities and being a high performing council. The Discretionary Payment Policies are designed to support delivery of these priorities.

Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy

2.2. Each year, as part of the Council Tax Support Scheme consultation, the Council has previously agreed to provide £30,000 funding for this scheme. this will be a direct cost to the General Fund.

2.3. The continuation of this funding is currently being considered as part of the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme decision process, with approval of a final scheme to be in place by January 2026.

2.4. If funding is approved, the Discretionary Council Tax Payment (DCTP) policy for 2026/27 will be put into place to ensure effective financial support is provided to eligible recipients.

2.5. The DCTP scheme provides additional funding to help those with a council tax liability who are experiencing exceptional hardship in situations where Council Tax Support does not cover all of their council tax liability. To qualify for consideration for assistance under this scheme the customer must already be in receipt of some Council Tax Support.

2.6. Awards of DCTP may be made where a tax payer has a short term financial difficulty that means they are unable to pay their Council Tax. Awards will normally be for a defined period and have the effect of reducing the monthly contribution a tax payer has to make towards their bill.

2.7. Consideration will be given as to whether all other discounts and sources of help have been exhausted. Where appropriate, decisions will be deferred until other avenues have been explored.

DCTP Expenditure

2.8. The total amount of funding allocated for each year is £30,000. For 2025/26, the decision was taken to move any unspent funding from 2024/25 into the new year. As a result, in 2025/26 there was total funding of £30,082.

2.9. The table below shows the amount of funding agreed in recent years, and the total expenditure. The remaining amount for 2025/26 is as up to 30 September 2025:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
SKDC Contribution	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
Rolled over from previous years	£17,610	£582	£82
Total funding	£47,610	£30,582	£30,082
Expenditure	£13,936	£30,500	£8,512
Remaining	£33,674	£82	£21,570

- 2.10. DCTP can be applied for independently but are often considered as part of the application process for Discretionary Housing Payments (support for shortfall between Housing Benefit / Universal Credit award and eligible rent). Officers are aware of the DCTP and actively encourage customers to apply where eligibility criteria is met.
- 2.11. South Kesteven's Welfare and Financial Advice Team are aware of the funding. They consider this as part of the financial needs and support assessment which is undertaken when supporting any resident referred them who are impacted by ongoing financial pressures.
- 2.12. In addition to this, residents are also being supported by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team as a result of the Household Support Fund (HSF) grant.

Proposed Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27

- 2.13. There is a need for proactive work and support due to the ongoing impacts of financial pressures residents are facing. However, it is important DCTP is recognised as support for those in short-term crisis. Where longer term support is required, this is achieved through identification of additional longer term financial support – such as income top-ups, referrals to the Councils Welfare and Financial Advice Team, referrals to external support agencies such as Citizens Advice and Money and Pensions Service. For all residents with a Council Tax liability, our Revenues Enforcement Team are able to provide a holistic approach to advice and
- 2.14. The administration and payment of DCTP is at the discretion of each Local Authority. South Kesteven District Council has a DCT Policy which sets out eligibility for the scheme and the application process. The proposed policy for 2026/27 is outlined in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.15. The current policy has been reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose and achieves the aim to enable our most vulnerable residents, who cannot access any other income, to sustain their home and health.
- 2.16. It is proposed to make one change to the policy in paragraph, 5.5, to bring the eligibility criteria in line with the Discretionary Housing Payment policy. This is to limit the amount of household capital (claimant and/or partner) to £4,000.

2.17. The proposed 2026/27 policy was included within the Localised Council Tax Support consultation process where the specific question was asked "Do you think these schemes should continue in 2026/27". A total of 90.18% of respondents felt the schemes should continue (358 of 397 responses).

Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

2.18. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provides extra funding to Local Authorities (LA) to provide claimants in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC) further financial assistance with their housing costs in cases where there is a shortfall between the HB entitlement and the rent payable.

2.19. The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (SI 2001/1167) as amended by the Discretionary Financial Assistance (Amendment) Regulations 2008 SI 2008/637 provide a statutory framework for the administration of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). However, these regulations provide very broad discretion in respect of how these payments should be administered. Further, local authorities have a duty to act fairly, reasonably and consistently. Each case must be considered on its own merits, and the decision making should be consistent throughout the financial year.

2.20. The amount of DHP that a council can provide in a financial year is cash limited by the Secretary of State. Each council receives a grant from the Government to fund part of this amount but also has the option to pay over and above this amount, up to a maximum of two and a half times the grant allocation. However, any additional funding on this basis would have to be made from the Council's own finances.

2.21. The administration and payment of DHP is at the discretion of each LA. South Kesteven District Council have a DHP Policy which sets out eligibility and the application process. This is detailed further in the 'Discretionary Housing Payments Policy' section of this report in paragraphs 2.30 to 2.37

2.22. Since 2011/2012, additional DHP government contribution funding has been made available to LAs to provide transitional support to claimants as they adjusted to the Housing Benefits (HB) Welfare Reforms.

2.23. The likelihood of an increased demand on DHPs to assist households affected by welfare reform changes made to the National Benefits System, which began in 2013, was recognised by the Government. As a result, there was a significant increase in DHP allocations from 2013/14 onwards.

2.24. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are intended to help people with housing costs, providing financial assistance in situations where the Council considers that additional help is required. This may include situations where a claimant is affected by one or more of the welfare reform measures (such as the benefit cap, removed of the spare room subsidy in the social rented sector and those affected by Local

Housing Allowance Rates). In these circumstances it is possible the benefits the claimant receives are insufficient to cover their housing costs even after Housing Benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit have been awarded.

DHP Expenditure

- 2.25. DHP funding for 2025/26 was confirmed at a national level of £100 million per year. The DWP has stated this is consistent with the total funding provided to LAs in previous years (since 2022/23). As a result of this decision, in 2025/26 South Kesteven will receive the same allocation level as received in 2024/25 – this being £155,861.
- 2.26. The Government has previously made it clear that DHPs are not intended to replace lost benefits but instead to provide extra resources that local authorities can use to assist those most affected by the changes to adjust to a long term, sustainable and affordable approach.
- 2.27. The table below shows: the amount of government contribution received in recent years; the total permitted spend (top-up limit) that the Council could make in each year; and the actual level of expenditure. The 'remaining' figure in the table is the difference between the government contribution and the expenditure. The remaining amount for 2025/26 is as at 30 September 2025.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Government Contribution	£155,861	£155,861	£155,861
Top-up limit	£389,653	£389,653	£389,653
Expenditure	£153,874	£155,861	£57,409
Remaining	£1,987	£0	£98,452

- 2.28. A total of 256 applications have been received so far for 2025/26, with 83 of these resulting in a DHP award. The breakdown of DHP awarded against tenure type is as follows:
 - Housing Association – 8
 - Private – 28
 - South Kesteven Tenants – 47
- 2.29. Any underspend in DHP below the level of government contribution received is known to have an adverse effect on the allocation of future grants. It is, therefore, essential to carefully balance the risk of underspending the grant allocation versus any overspend that results in a contribution from the Council's own funds. Rigorous monthly budget monitoring is crucial to managing the risks involved.

Proposed Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2026/27

- 2.30. The administration and payment of DHP is at the discretion of each LA. South Kesteven District Council has a DHP Policy which sets out eligibility for the scheme and the application process.
- 2.31. Awards of Discretionary Housing Payments may be made where a resident has a short-term financial difficulty or has continuing and unavoidable needs that mean they are unable to pay their rent. Awards will normally be for a defined period.
- 2.32. Consideration will be given to whether all other discounts and sources of help have been exhausted. Where appropriate, decisions will be deferred until other avenues have been explored.
- 2.33. There is a need for proactive work and support due to the ongoing financial pressures residents are facing. Whilst the effects of Welfare Reform have impacted a significant number of people and increased the need for DHP, it is important to note that DHP is also payable to people who require further financial assistance that have not been impacted by these changes. The ongoing reduction in DHP funding will inevitably have an impact on the level and duration of DHP awards. However, it is intended that, by working with customers in line with the policy, these impacts can be managed and mitigated with longer term sustainable solutions.
- 2.34. It is important DHP is recognised as support for people with short-term crisis. Where longer term support is required, this is achieved through identification of additional longer term financial support – such as income top-ups, referrals to the Councils Welfare and Financial Advice Team, referrals to external support agencies such as Citizens Advice and Money and Pensions Service. For South Kesteven tenants, liaison with our Housing Team is important to ensure a holistic approach to prevent homelessness and ensure the resident is supported through our Tenancy Support Team.
- 2.35. The current policy has been reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose and achieves the aim to enable our most vulnerable residents, who cannot access any other income, to sustain their home and health.
- 2.36. There are no proposals to make any changes to the policy. The proposed policy for 2026/27 is included within **Appendix 2** to this report.
- 2.37. The proposed 2026/27 policy was included within the Localised Council Tax Support consultation process where the specific question was asked "Do you think these schemes should continue in 2026/27". A total of 90.18% of respondents felt the schemes should continue (358 of 397 responses).

3. Key Considerations

3.1. The Council's current policies have been in place for some time and have been updated annually in line with delegated powers. It is appreciated these are important policies, which provides detail of additional financial support available to our residents. Therefore, it is important these policies are reviewed on an annual basis, not only to ensure the policies are fit for purpose, but to be reactive to any issues our residents are facing.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 Removal of the DCTP fund, which would have a negative impact on those recipients of the fund and could impact collection of Council Tax due.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1 The recommendations are in line with Council's practices and legal duty to review the financial allocation and eligibility of each policy.

5.2 As the proposed policies for 2026/27 do not contain any material amendments, there are no legal implications. However, the Council is adhering to best practice by reviewing the policies and keeping them up-to-date.

6. Consultation

6.1. These policies will be consulted upon with this Committee on an annual basis.

6.2. The policies were also included within the wider Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 consultation which took place from 1 September to 30 September 2025.

6.3. The remaining consultation timetable is as follows: -

- 2 December 2025: Cabinet – decision required approval of final 2026/27 scheme for implementation from 1 April 2026.

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix 1: Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27

7.2. Appendix 2: Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2026/27



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Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.1

Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy

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2026/27



Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.1

Version Control:

Current Version	Created by	Date changes made	Changes By	Approved By	New Version
1.0	Revenues and Benefits Technical Team	22 October 2024	Claire Moses – Head of Service	Cabinet – 3 December 2024	1.1
1.1	Revenues and Benefits Technical Team	21 October 2025	Claire Moses – Head of Service		

Table of Contents		Page number
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Statement of Objectives	3
3.	Conditions for entitlement	3
4.	Qualifying Criteria	3 to 4
5.	Awards	4 to 5
6.	Application Process	5
7.	Decision	6
8.	Payments	6
9.	Change of circumstances	6
10.	Refusals, reconsiderations, reviews and Appeals	6 to 7
11.	Managing the risk of Fraud	7
12.	Policy Review	7 to 8



Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.1

1. Introduction

1.1 The Discretionary Council Tax Payment (DP) scheme provides additional funding to help those experiencing exceptional hardship in situations where Council Tax Support does not cover all of their council tax. To qualify for consideration for assistance under this scheme the customer must already be getting some Council Tax Support.

2. Statement of Objectives

2.1 The aim of the policy is to enable our most vulnerable residents additional support, who cannot access any other income, who need further help towards their Council Tax charge.

2.2 Awards of Discretionary Payments may be made where a resident has a short-term financial difficulty or has continuing and unavoidable needs that mean they are unable to pay their Council Tax. Awards will normally be for a defined period.

2.3 Consideration will be given as to whether all other discounts and sources of help have been exhausted. Where appropriate, decisions will be deferred until other avenues have been explored.

3. Conditions for entitlement

3.1 The person must:

- be entitled to Council Tax Support; and
- appear to South Kesteven District Council to require some further financial assistance (in addition to the council tax support to which they are entitled) in order to meet their Council Tax charge.

4. Qualifying Criteria

4.1 Each application will be treated on its own merits having regard to relevant legislation and our Local Council Tax Support Scheme



Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.1

4.2 Should the conditions for entitlement above be met, as per section 3, assessments are then approached in two ways:

1. Using a true financial assessment of income and essential outgoings, to establish if there is need for additional financial support, or
2. A health and welfare assessment based on a person's ability to cope with day-to-day matters.

5. Awards

5.1 Normally awards will be made towards the current Council Tax charge rather than past debts. It is not expected that a significant award will be made towards past periods and tax payers should make applications for assistance within a reasonable time of their knowing that they will not be able to meet their monthly instalments.

5.2 Consideration will be given in particular to residents who have been clearly making an effort to pay their Council Tax, who have been engaging with us and are taking steps to resolving their financial difficulties. A higher priority will be given to those with short term difficulties; and a lower priority to people whose financial commitments are unsustainable and likely to remain so.

5.3 In making decisions on discretionary payments, the Council will also be mindful of national objectives to promote an individual's responsible behaviour, for example in the choice of a home or engagement in activities to address worklessness, debt or problematic behaviour.

5.4 The Council recognises that there may be circumstances in which Discretionary Council Tax Payments will be made other than as set out above.

Where awards cannot be made:

5.5 Discretionary Payments cannot be awarded towards any of the following:

- any period of charge still payable when the council tax payer is no longer resident
- if you are not named as liable for the property



Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.1

- for council tax included within your rent charge
- increases in council tax to cover arrears
- for periods of liability in which no Council Tax Support was awarded
- The claimant and/or partner have over £4,000 in capital.

- 5.6 Where a request for a discretionary payment has been refused, repeat requests will not be considered unless the resident can demonstrate that the situation has worsened significantly or a substantial period of time has elapsed.
- 5.7 All awards are at the discretion of South Kesteven District Council.
- 5.8 Where a request for a Discretionary Council Tax Payment has been refused, repeat requests will not be considered unless the resident can demonstrate that the situation has worsened significantly, or a substantial period of time has elapsed.
- 5.9 The Council recognises that there may be circumstances in which Discretionary Payments will be made other than as set out above.

6. Application Process

- 6.1 Applications should be made using the online application form on the council's website here: <https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/housing/social-housing/extrasupport-discretionary-housing-payment>
- 6.2 Should someone not have the required skill or capacity to apply using this method the council will provide an alternative method of making an application that meet the person's needs.
- 6.3 Wherever possible, the council will link in with other council departments and trusted partners, who can signpost applicants to the scheme or make applications and recommendations on a person's behalf.
- 6.4 The council may request any reasonable evidence in support of the application. The customer should provide the information within one month.



Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.1

- 6.5 Evidence and information provided to decide any Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support or Universal Credit claim may also be considered.
- 6.6 If the customer does not provide the requested evidence, the council may still consider the application, however it may disregard any unsubstantiated statements or draw its own conclusions from other evidence available.
- 6.7 The council may in any circumstances verify any information or evidence provided by the claimant by contacting third parties, other organisations and the customer.

7. Decisions

- 7.1 All decisions made will be recorded on the Discretionary Payment spreadsheet and input on the operating system. Decision letters will be sent to the tax payer either in writing or electronically. This will set out whether an award has been made, and if so, the amount and duration of the award.

8. Payments

- 8.1 Discretionary Council Tax Payments will always be made directly onto the appropriate Council Tax account. South Kesteven District Council will recover any overpaid awards by adjusting the award on the appropriate Council Tax bill where a tax payers circumstances change.

9. Change of circumstances

- 9.1 A tax payer receiving a Discretionary Council Tax Payment must notify the council of any change which may be relevant to their award. Any change in circumstances or income may mean the level of Discretionary Council Tax Payment is amended.



Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.1

10. Refusal, Reconsiderations, Reviews and Appeals

- 10.1 Where a customer believes that a decision is incorrect they can ask for it to be looked at again only on the basis that the decision maker has not correctly applied this policy Where an applicant is aggrieved by a decision, but the basis of the disagreement is not that the policy was incorrectly applied, there is no right of appeal through the Valuation Tribunal Service for discretionary decisions however a legal challenge may be made if there is an allegation of maladministration.
- 10.2 In the interest of fairness, the Council will operate the following internal procedure.
 - Reconsideration: Ask for the original decision to be looked at again if they have additional information that was omitted on the original application, or they believe the information was overlooked or misunderstood.
 - Review: If the applicant believes that the decision maker has not correctly applied this policy, a second officer will look at the reasons for the decision, whether it complies with this policy and decide if any changes should be made to the decision.

11. Managing the Risk of Fraud

- 11.1 The Council and the Government will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any business or person caught falsifying their records or the information submitted to gain an award will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to clawback, as may relief paid in error.
- 11.2 The Council also reserves the right to use any details submitted by person(s) to check against national records and databases to highlight any potentially fraudulent activity.



Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.1

12. Policy Review

12.1 This policy has been written in line with Government guidance and Local Priorities. Delegated powers of authority are in place, which allow for the policy to be reviewed annually, and recommended changes considered and through the Councils committee process. This is to ensure support is provided to residents efficiently and effectively.

South Kesteven District Council – contact details:

South Kesteven District Council
Council Offices
The Picture House
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 6TT
Tel: 01476 40 60 80
www.southkesteven.gov.uk



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Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.0

Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

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2026/27



Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.0

Version Control:

Current Version	Created by	Date changes made	Changes By	Approved By	New Version
1.0	Revenues and Benefits Technical Team	21 October 2025	Claire Moses – Head of Service		

Legislative information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/discretionary-housing-payments-guidance-manual>

Table of Contents		Page number
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Statement of Objectives	3
3.	Conditions for entitlement	3 to 4
4.	Qualifying Criteria	4
5.	Awards	4 to 6
6.	Application Process	6
7.	Decision	7
8.	Payments and overpayments	7
9.	Change of circumstances	7
10.	Refusals, reconsiderations, reviews and Appeals	7 to 8
11.	Managing the risk of Fraud	8
12.	Policy Review	8



Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.0

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) scheme provides additional funding to help those experiencing exceptional hardship in situations where Housing Benefit / Universal Credit Housing Element does not cover all of the rent. To qualify for consideration for assistance under this scheme the customer must already be getting some Housing Benefit / Universal Credit Housing Element.
- 1.2 Please note that while the housing costs of the UC award notification may refer to support for mortgage interest payments, owner-occupiers are not eligible to receive DHPs.

2. Statement of Objectives

- 2.1 The aim of the policy is to enable our most vulnerable residents, who cannot access any other income, to sustain their home, health, family, and security.
- 2.2 Awards of Discretionary Housing Payments may be made where a resident has a short-term financial difficulty or has continuing and unavoidable needs that mean they are unable to pay their rent. Awards will normally be for a defined period.
- 2.3 Consideration will be given as to whether all other discounts and sources of help have been exhausted. Where appropriate, decisions will be deferred until other avenues have been explored.

3. Conditions for entitlement

- 3.1 The person must:
 - be a resident of a property within the South Kesteven district; and
 - have a liability to pay housing costs; and
 - be entitled to Housing Benefit; or
 - be entitled to Universal Credit that includes the housing element and the end of the first assessment period of Universal Credit has passed



4. Qualifying Criteria

- 4.1 Each application will be treated on its own merits having regard to relevant legislation and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) guidance.
- 4.2 Should the conditions for entitlement above be met, as per section 3, assessments are then approached in two ways:
 1. Using a true financial assessment of income and essential outgoings, to establish if there is need for additional financial support, or
 2. A health and welfare assessment based on a person's ability to cope with day-to-day matters.

5. Awards

- 5.1 Normally awards will be made towards the current rental liabilities rather than past debts. It is not expected that a significant award will be made towards past periods and customers should make applications for assistance within a reasonable time of their knowing that they will not be able to pay their rent.
- 5.2 Awards of Discretionary Housing Payments should focus on enabling people to secure or retain a sustainable tenancy. Consideration will be given in particular to residents who have been clearly making an effort to pay their rent, who have been engaging with us and are taking steps to resolving their financial difficulties. A higher priority will be given to those with short term difficulties; and a lower priority to people whose financial commitments are unsustainable and likely to remain so.
- 5.3 Many people have difficulty paying their rent. Among these are:
 - those whose benefit is restricted because their rent is considered too high;
 - those whose benefit is restricted because their home is considered too large under the government's size criteria
 - those whose benefit is reduced by deductions for non-dependants who may not contribute adequately to cover those deductions;
 - those whose benefit is reduced by the taper for excess income;
 - those who have general difficulty managing the income they have, including those subject to the household benefit cap;



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- those who are returning to work after a long period of unemployment who have difficulty in managing finances during the transition from benefit to a stable in-work income.

5.4 In making decisions on discretionary housing payments, the Council will also be mindful of national objectives to promote an individuals responsible behaviour, for example in the choice of a home or engagement in activities to address worklessness, debt or problematic behaviour.

5.5 The Council therefore expects payments to be made in unusual circumstances where additional help with current rent will have a significant effect in alleviating hardship, reducing the risk of homelessness or alleviating difficulties that may be experienced in the transition from long term benefit dependence into work.

5.6 With regard to awards towards deposits or rent in advance, supporting evidence must be provided and they will be limited to the equivalent of

- 5 weeks rent for deposit; and
- 4 weeks rent for rent in advance for weekly rent charges
- 1 month rent for rent in advance for monthly rent charged

5.7 Help towards removals if they are accompanied by valid supporting evidence.

Where awards cannot be made:

5.8 Discretionary Housing Payments cannot be awarded towards any of the following:

- service or support charges that are ineligible for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Housing Element, including the provision and costs of white goods
- furnishing, decorating or flooring costs
- any charges for water, sewerage or allied environmental services
- any notice period
- rent on two homes (overlapping tenancies), in most situations
- any council tax liability
- increases in rent to cover rent arrears
- reductions in any benefit due to the recovery of an overpayment of Housing Benefit/Universal Credit, or to sanctions relating to jobseekers, child support or benefit offences
- shortfalls caused by overpayment recovery
- HB that is suspended;



Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.0

- The claimant and/or partner have over £4,000 in capital.
- Failure to follow recommendations the council have made on a previous Discretionary Housing Payment award.

- 5.9 All awards are at the discretion of South Kesteven District Council.
- 5.10 Where a request for a discretionary housing payment has been refused, repeat requests will not be considered unless the resident can demonstrate that the situation has worsened significantly, or a substantial period of time has elapsed.
- 5.11 The Council recognises that there may be circumstances in which Discretionary Housing Payments will be made other than as set out above.

6. Application Process

- 6.1 Applications should be made using the online application form on the council's website here: <https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/housing/social-housing/extra-support-discretionary-housing-payments>

Should someone not have the required skill or capacity to apply using this method the council will provide an alternative method of making an application that meet the persons needs.

- 6.2 Wherever possible, the council will link in with other council departments and trusted partners, who can signpost applicants to the scheme or make applications and recommendations on a person's behalf.
- 6.3 The council may request any reasonable evidence in support of the application. The customer should provide the information within one month.
- 6.4 Evidence and information provided to decide the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claim may also be considered.
- 6.5 If the customer does not provide the requested evidence, the council may still consider the application, however it may disregard any unsubstantiated statements or draw its own conclusions from other evidence available.
- 6.6 The council may in any circumstances verify any information or evidence provided by the claimant by contacting third parties, other organisations and the customer.



7. Decisions

7.1 All decisions made will be recorded on the Discretionary Housing Payment spreadsheet and input on the operating system. Decision letters will be sent to the customer either in writing or electronically (and landlord if they are being paid the Discretionary Housing Payment). The letter will set out whether an award has been made, and if so, the amount and duration of the award.

8. Payment and overpayments

8.1 Discretionary Housing Payments will be paid directly to the customer; however it may be paid to an agent, an appointee or a landlord if it is deemed appropriate. There will be instances of overpaid Discretionary Housing Payments and the council will seek ways to recover this where the overpayment is a result of a misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact by the claimant, or an error was made when the application was determined.

9. Change of circumstances

9.1 A customer receiving a Discretionary Housing Payment must notify the council of any change which may be relevant to their application or award. A change in circumstances may mean the level of Discretionary Housing Payment is amended.

10. Refusal, Reconsiderations, Reviews and Appeals

10.1 Where an applicant believes that a decision is incorrect, they can ask for it to be looked at again only on the basis that the decision maker has not correctly applied this policy. Where an applicant is aggrieved by a decision, but the basis of the disagreement is not that the policy was incorrectly applied, there is no right of appeal through the Social Security Tribunal for discretionary decisions



Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.0

however the route of judicial review is available if there is an allegation of maladministration.

10.2 In the interest of fairness, the Council will operate the following internal procedure.

- Reconsideration: Ask for the original decision to be looked at again if they have additional information that was omitted on the original application, or they believe the information was overlooked or misunderstood.
- Review: If the applicant believes that the decision maker has not correctly applied this policy, a second officer will look at the reasons for the decision, whether it complies with this policy and decide if any changes should be made to the decision.

11. Managing the Risk of Fraud

11.1 The Council and the Government will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any business or person caught falsifying their records or the information submitted to gain an award will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to clawback, as may relief paid in error.

11.2 The Council also reserves the right to use any details submitted by person(s) to check against national records and databases to highlight any potentially fraudulent activity.

12. Policy Review

12.1 This policy has been written in line with Government guidance and Local Priorities. Delegated powers of authority are in place, which allow for the policy to be reviewed annually, and recommended changes considered and approved by the Council's committee process. This is to ensure support is provided to residents efficiently and effectively.

South Kesteven District Council – contact details:

South Kesteven District Council
Council Offices



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2026/27 – Version 1.0

The Picture House
Grantham
Lincolnshire
NG31 6TT
Tel: 01476 40 60 80
www.southkesteven.gov.uk

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Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2025-2026

REPORT TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED
18 NOVEMBER 2025			
Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report - Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26	Lead Officer: Charles James (Policy Officer)		
Turnpike Close Grantham Depot Update	Lead Officer: Gyles Teasdale (Head of Service – Property and ICT)	To provide the Committee with an update.	Standing item
Leisure Investment Reserve proposals	Lead Officer: Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive)	To establish criteria for allocation of funding from the Leisure Investment Reserve.	
General Fund Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report 2025/26	Lead Officer: Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive)	To present the Council's year end forecast for the financial year 2025/26 as at the end of September 2025.	Quarterly reporting
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring Report 2025/26	Lead Officer: Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive)		
Local Council Tax Support Scheme Proposals 2026/27	Lead Officer: Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community))	Outcome of consultation and recommendation to Council	Update from public consultation and FEOSC request on 24 July 2025
Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy 2026/27	Lead Officer: Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community))	Outcome of consultation and recommendation to Cabinet	Update from public consultation and FEOSC request on 24 July 2025
Discretionary Housing Payment Policy 2026/27	Lead Officer: Claire Moses (Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer and Community))	Outcome of consultation and recommendation to Cabinet	Update from public consultation and FEOSC request on 24 July 2025

24 FEBRUARY 2026			
Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report	Lead Officer: Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive)	To present the Council's year end forecast for the financial year 2025/26 as at the end of September 2025.	Quarterly reporting
Turnpike Depot Update – Closure Report	Lead Officer: Gyles Teasdale (Head of Service – Property and ICT)	To provide the Committee with a final update.	Standing item
UKSPF 25/26 allocation update	Lead Officer: Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning and Growth)	To provide the Committee with the latest update.	6 monthly update
Economic Development Strategy 2024-28 Update	Lead Officer: Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning & Growth)	To provide the Committee with the latest update.	6 monthly update
Car Parking charges	Lead Officer: Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive)	To provide the Committee with an update.	Standing item
7 MAY 2026			

126

Unscheduled Items

Budget Monitoring Q3 Forecast	Lead Officer: Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive)	To provide the Committee with the latest update.	Standing item
Six monthly update on Marketplace Footfall	Lead Officer: Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning and Growth)	To update Members on footfall of the marketplace and Grantham Town Centre.	Agreed for a 6-month update to be taken to Committee in July 2025.

The Committee's Remit

The remit of the Finance and Economic 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, but not limited to:

- Budget monitoring
- Budget setting
- Business rate relief
- Business trade and licensing (Policy)
- Business transformation
- Charitable rate relief
- Council-owned property, assets, and maintenance (non-council house)
- Customer access strategy
- Data protection reporting
- Economic development
- Fees and charges
- Large-scale development projects
- Medium term financial planning and national funding proposals
- Procurement
- Review of outturn
- Town centre developments and partnerships

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