

Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Monday, 10 November 2025, 10.00
am**



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Committee Members present

Councillor Elvis Stooke (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Baker (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Nikki Manterfield

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Philip Knowles

Other Members present

Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Tim Harrison

Officers

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance
Kay Boasman, Head of Waste Management and Market Services
Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager
Louise Case, Sustainability Project Support Officer
Andrew Igoea, Tree Project Officer
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer

24. Public Speaking

There were none.

25. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor Sarah Trotter, substituted by Councillor Nikki Manterfield.

26. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

27. Minutes from the meeting held on 23 September 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2025 was proposed, seconded, and AGREED as an accurate record.

28. Updates from the previous meeting

The actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

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

There were none.

30. Leisure Energy Update on Grantham Meres Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

The representatives from Alliance Leisure and Leisure Energy presented the Leisure Energy update on the Grantham Meres Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

The presentation outlined the background to the Grantham Meres Leisure Centre project, including the steps taken to receive grant award funding for the project of £3,587,500. Following this, South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) appointed Alliance Leisure Services as the delivery partner, with Leisure Energy as the Principal Designer and Contractor.

Other works undertaken included the upgrade to LED lighting/floodlighting, and the installation of pool covers as key, energy-saving measures.

The proposed imposition of a tri pack CO2 air source heat pump was said to be a groundbreaking project. Post-decarbonisation the projected reduction in running costs was a significant saving of £173,035 per annum.

Building on this, the presentation outlined the Social Value Plan to prioritise the following, and there was a monitoring plan in place:

- Support sustainability goals.
- Enhance community wellbeing.
- Strengthen local partnerships.
- Boost local economy.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- It was confirmed that a minimum of 12% match funding had been required of SKDC.
- To reassure Members regarding the efficiency of the solar panels, it was confirmed that the panels came with a 15-year warranty and were

one to become faulty then this could be identified prior to failure without risk to the rest of the system due to technical indicators.

- The ethical procurement of the panels was queried, particularly regarding polysilicon. The representative acknowledged the general difficulty of this around the industry but reassured Members that this procurement had been done on the basis of Sheffield Hallam University's research around ethical procurement of particular providers within the industry. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste acknowledged the concern but noted that this was an issue amongst all electrics, not just solar panels and extensive discussions about this had been undertaken.
- It was confirmed that much of the components for the air source heat pump and supporting upgrades had been sourced from the UK or France and all manufacturing was UK based.
- It was confirmed that the proposed air source heat pump system was hoping to be operational by March 2026.
- The performance of the heat pumps was reiterated, stating that they were more effective in pools than in the domestic setting due to lower operating temperatures, and similar systems had been successfully rolled out by chains such as Tesco and Sainsburys.
- Responding to a visiting Member's query, reassurance was given that there were no technical constraints to on-site electricity supply in order to facilitate saunas and steam rooms were they sought.
- It was confirmed that the projected savings had been independently verified via a technical assessment from the grant provider Salix.
- Were these projected savings not to be reached, it was queried who carried these financial risks. The representative confirmed that ultimately it was the local authority via LeisureSK, however, there was a service contract in place outlining the availability model which codified a manufacturers warranty and a performance warranty. Furthermore, there was also a collateral warranty under a separate JCT contract.
- The only delivery risk identified by the representative was that utility tariffs for electricity were out of their control.

The Leisure Energy Update on Grantham Meres Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme was noted by the Committee.

31. Review of Tree Management Policies

Prior to the commencement of the item, the meeting adjourned at 11am and resumed at 11.15.

Given his employment, Councillor Green disclosed an interest in the item and left the room.

The Review of Tree Management Policies report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste.

The Cabinet member clarified that these policies determined the approach to tree management and was not intended as a financial account.

The new policies were intended to replace the existing 'Tree Guidelines' document adopted in 2019.

A revenue budget was being prepared for the 2026/27 financial year onwards requesting an increase to the existing budget for maintenance of SKDC trees in General Fund Open Spaces from £37,800 to a total of £103,950 (175% increase).

The survey protocols proposed in the Tree Management Policies sought to help better differentiate between safety critical and general management recommendations, which would help to prioritise work to trees and manage according to the available budget across the year. Consequently, even if the budget bid referenced above did not proceed, the Tree Management Policies would give a stronger footing to prioritise the most safety-critical work using the available budget and also demonstrate the Council was implementing a survey strategy which accords with industry guidelines.

An updated draft of the proposed Tree Management Policies was included as appendix one within the report.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- The Tree Officer confirmed that only trees recorded during surveys would be on the data base.
- It was confirmed that some funds had been set aside in special expense areas due to the understanding that Grantham Town Council would likely take these on going forward.
- It was queried whether these policies would affect biodiversity net gain and climate targets. The Tree Officer confirmed that the policies had been written with climate resilience in mind, but that there was no direct link to climate action plan. In addition, whilst some policies were relevant to biodiversity targets, such as policies around dealing with dead wood, there was no direct link to biodiversity net gain which was UK planning policy approach that ensured new developments left the natural environment in a measurably better state than before.
- It was confirmed that inspections of zone three trees would be undertaken both by SKDC officers and through outsourcing. SKDC engaged with tenants to encourage the ongoing reporting of obvious tree hazards.
- It was noted that service level agreement response times for tree work would be set during a procurement process for an arboricultural contractor.

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to recommend that Cabinet approve the adoption of the updated Tree Management Policies.

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

Councillor Green returned to the Chamber.

The Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report - Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26 report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance & Licensing.

This report was the third of the reporting cycle and covered the period July to September 2025 (Quarter 2 2025/26).

Eight of the actions were rated Green. These were actions which were on or above target as planned.

Three actions were rated as Amber, these were off target by less than 10% or where milestone achievement was delayed but with resolution in place to be achieved within a reasonable timeframe.

Zero actions were rated as Red. These were actions that were significantly below target.

One action was classed as N/A. These were actions for which the reporting cycle was yet to commence e.g. being sequenced on the completion of other items, or where data was unavailable.

A detailed breakdown of the actions and Officer responsible was included within appendix one of the report.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged that ENVIRO9 was below target but extensive work had been done to bring the action up to target.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- It was queried whether the delivery of the new depot was on target. It was confirmed the previous delay had since been rectified and recovered to be on target.
- Given that the manager commentary for ENVIRO15 suggested that the programme was not mobilised until October 2025 onwards, it was queried whether the 'on target' status of the action was accurate. It was confirmed that the 'on target' status reflected the progress made during the procurement process prior to the rollout of the property upgrades. The Sustainability and Climate Change Officer agreed to share

information with the committee about the purpose and delivery of the scheme. **ACTION**

- It was queried why use of electric vehicle charge points had fallen at Stamford. It was noted that use of electric vehicle charge points fluctuated throughout the year and the usage levels at the Stamford site remained above industry standard.
- The suggestion was made for Officers to revisit the measurements used to monitor electric vehicle charge point usage given that the overall proportion of utilisation would decrease as the number of charge points increased.
- A Member raised that fly tipping enforcement was below target. The Head of Service (Public Protection) responded that the duration of investigations would often span quarters which could distort the figures. However, they noted that they would welcome greater resource.
- Members sought clarification about the level of information for which fly tipping prosecutions could be made. It was noted that cases were usually built on the foundation of witness statements accompanied with footage.
- Clarification was sought about SKDC's preparations for the upcoming food waste rollout. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste confirmed that SKDC had been engaging with the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, procurement of caddies had been completed, the Communications Team were taking steps to raise public awareness, and the purchase orders of SKDC vehicles had been undertaken. Confirmation was given that SKDC was on track for its operational 'go-live' date in April 2026.
- It was confirmed that there was no anticipated impact on SKDC of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) pausing some of their waste projects.

The Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report - Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26 was noted by the Committee.

33. Green Fleet Action Plan Update

The Green Fleet Action Plan update was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

The current fleet was made up of over 150 vehicles which were used across multiple service areas including Housing, Waste and Street Scene. The vehicles varied in size and type and cover everything from basic cars through to refuse collection vehicles.

The strategy focussed on the following areas:

- Adopting cleaner technologies and fuels,
- Encouraging efficient vehicle use
- Managing demand

- Improving supporting infrastructure

The presentation of the strategy consisted of the following:

1. Vision and Key Objectives – this section set out the high-level vision of the Council and highlighted the agreed key objectives, which remained the same throughout the period of the Strategy. They formed the basis of this Strategy and were essential for building a solid foundation for a change of culture around fleet management.

2. Action Plans – this would be a living document. It would be reviewed and updated annually, to reflect any changes in strategic direction, policy or legislation. The action plans would be monitored to identify strengths and weaknesses. These would help guide decisions made at the annual review. The key KPI's would be monitored through the Corporate Plan performance management process.

3. Policy Statements – these sections set out key changes to the Council's procurement policy and travel policies. These changes, whilst they would take time to implement, were key to the long-term success of the green fleet aspiration.

The full Green Fleet Action Plan was included within Appendix One of the report.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- A Member expressed that the report did not outlined the negative aspects of the usage of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). It was their believe that an alternative innovative fuel source should be utilised. The Cabinet Member confirmed this to be a successful market innovation which had been utilised by other local authorities.
- The Cabinet Member also acknowledged that the price of HVO was higher than traditional alternatives and this had been considered within the trade-offs. The financial figures for this had been interrogated by the Chief Finance Officer.
- It was confirmed that any HVO used would to be sourced from a certified supplier.

The Green Fleet Action Plan Update was noted by the Committee.

Councillor Green left the meeting at 12.13 and did not return.

34. Draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven

The Draft Climate Action Plan was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

Following SKDC's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, the Council confirmed the ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by a least 30% by 2030. The latest report covering the 2024/25 period reported a total carbon emissions reduction of 29.24%.

The Council published its first Climate Action Strategy, endorsed by Cabinet in November 2023. The strategy set out eight key themes which became the framework for the draft action plan presented within appendix one of the report.

The action plan consisted of 64 ongoing, short or medium term actions. Each of the outlined actions included a lead officer who was responsible for the implementation or ongoing delivery of the project. The draft Climate Action Plan also included a framework for delivery that set out the remit of the action.

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

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- It was queried whether sensor streetlights were used across the district. This was previously trialled but the savings from the project were not deemed sufficient.
- The impact on fuel poverty referenced within the plan was in the context of measures taken to reduce expenditure on water and utilities.
- The suggestion was made for more emphasis on supporting private properties.
- It was confirmed that delivery of the scheme was not at the expense of other projects.

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to recommend the adoption of the final Climate Action Plan to Cabinet.

35. Biodiversity Action Plan for South Kesteven

The Biodiversity Action Plan for South Kesteven was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

The Environment Act 2021, under Section 102, subsequently amended Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to strengthen this 'biodiversity duty' which now placed a legal obligation on public authorities to:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity

- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

The vision of the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan was to firstly conserve and enhance habitats that created better and more interconnected places for wildlife across South Kesteven. The Council also sought to increase awareness of biodiversity and encourage more people to connect with nature and by doing so take positive action that benefited biodiversity in South Kesteven.

The proposed Biodiversity Action Plan set out the strategic approach the Council would take to help reverse biodiversity loss and make space for nature, incorporating three core themes:

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

The South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan was included as Appendix B of the report.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- A Member speculated that some developers could abuse the requirement to provide a minimum of 10% measurable net gain in biodiversity by reducing the quality of the land prior to the application. The Cabinet member acknowledged the loophole.
- The request was made to expand the 'Big Green Week' to become an annual event.
- The suggestion was made for a transparent framework to be published demonstrating how environmental projects were prioritised.

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to recommend the adoption of the finalised South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan to Cabinet.

36. Work Programme 2025 - 2026

It was AGREED for the following items to be added to the Work Programme:

- An investigation into energy efficiency savings in SKDC venues (particularly Bourne Corn Exchange and the Stamford Arts Centre).
- The provision of drinking water stations across SKDC.
- LED streetlight rollout update.
- Climate audit review update.
- Skip project scoping discussion.

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

There was none.

The meeting concluded at 13.05.