

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Monday, 10 November 2025 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House,
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Members: Councillor Elvis Stooke (Chairman)
Councillor Emma Baker (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor James Denniston, Councillor Barry Dobson, Councillor Ben Green,
Councillor Gloria Johnson, Councillor Paul Martin, Councillor Max Sawyer and
Councillor Sarah Trotter

Agenda

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

- 1. Public Speaking**
The Council welcomes engagement from members of the public.
To speak at this meeting please register no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting via
democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Disclosure of Interests**
Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 4. Minutes from the meeting held on 23 September 2025** (Pages 3 - 10)
- 5. Updates from the previous meeting** (Pages 11 - 12)

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Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
www.southkesteven.gov.uk

To consider actions agreed at the meeting held on 23 September 2025.

6. **Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**
7. **Leisure Energy Update on Grantham Meres Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme** (Pages 13 - 26)
8. **Review of Tree Management Policies** (Pages 27 - 80)
To present the results of analysis and modelling on the potential costs associated with changing the Council's approach to managing tree related risk.
9. **Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report - Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26** (Pages 81 - 89)
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.
10. **Green Fleet Action Plan Update** (Pages 91 - 99)
To update on implementation of the actions of the Green Fleet Strategy
11. **Draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven** (Pages 101 - 124)
To update the committee on the draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven.
12. **Biodiversity Action Plan for South Kesteven** (Pages 125 - 157)
The South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed to report on the actions South Kesteven District Council will take to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the district as part of the Council's Biodiversity Duty.
13. **Work Programme 2025 - 2026** (Pages 159 - 161)
To consider the Committee's Work Programme for 2025 – 2026.
14. **Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 23 September 2025, 2.00
pm



SOUTH
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COUNCIL

Committee Members present	Cabinet Members present
Councillor Elvis Stooke (Chairman)	Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Emma Baker (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Barry Dobson	Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Gloria Johnson	Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Paul Martin	
Councillor Max Sawyer	
Councillor Nikki Manterfield	

Officers

Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Tom Amblin-Lightowler, Environmental Health Manager – Environmental Protection & Private Sector Housing
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
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer

12. Public Speaking

There were none.

13. Apologies for absence

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

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Ben Green.

14. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

15. Minutes of the meeting held 10 June 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2025 were proposed, seconded, and AGREED as an accurate record.

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

The Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste, and the Vice-Chairman expressed their congratulations following the Waste Team's award for 'Best Service Team for Waste, Recycling and Street Scene' at the Association for Public Service Excellence Conference.

The Leader of the Council also drew attention to the Local Government Reorganisation engagement survey which had commenced.

17. Update on South Kesteven District Council carbon emissions for 2024/25

The Update on South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) carbon emissions for 2024/25 was presented by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

The report provided an overview of SKDC's carbon emissions for the period covering April 2024 – March 2025 to monitor the progress made against SKDC's targets of a 30% reduction in operational carbon emissions by 2030 and net zero carbon as soon as viable by 2050.

The overall reduction in carbon emissions for the 2024/25 financial year was 29.24%. Since the baseline year (2018/19), there had been reductions in the following areas:

Overall electricity usage – 55.09% reduction
Overall gas usage – 15.43% reduction
Leisure Centre emissions (leased assets) – 46.75% reduction
Waste emissions – 74.57% reduction
Business travel emissions – 35.8% reduction.

Since the baseline year, there had been increases in the following areas:

Overall water usage – 33.74% increase (SKDC acknowledged a low confidence in the data supplied for water consumption of its buildings).
Vehicle fleet emissions – 2.04% increase
Refrigerants emissions – 3806.5% increase (attributed to several refrigerant gas leaks from equipment over the course of the current reporting period).

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- How data was collected; it was confirmed data was collected via breakdown of utility charges, solar generation, fleet fuel usage, and further analysis of all operational assets. A carbon emission factor was then applied to convert activity data, such as energy consumption, into a measure of greenhouse gas emissions.
- The request was made for financial data to be applied, indicating the financial cost or saving of each carbon saving. The Sustainability Project Support Officer agreed to provide this analysis to the Member following the meeting. **ACTION**
- The carbon impact of the recently updated bin collection routes was queried, incorporating the mandated food waste collections that were shortly due to commence. Acknowledging that the 12 additional vehicles introduced for food waste collections would have a carbon impact, the Cabinet Member addressed that the route restructures had been an imperfect solution as this meant that food waste that was previously collected every other week would now be collected weekly. This would minimise the duration that rotting food waste would release methane pollution, and could subsequently utilize this energy when incinerated in the plant.

The Update on South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) carbon emissions for 2024/25 was noted by the Committee.

18. Food Waste Update

The Food Waste Update was presented by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

Following reforms to the Environment Act 2021, new recycling requirements were to be introduced from 31st March 2026.

The new default requirements included four containers for:

1. Residual (non-recyclable) waste,
2. Food waste,
3. Paper and card,
4. All other dry recyclable materials (plastic, metal and glass).

It was confirmed that SKDC would introduce the service from Monday 13th April 2026, a date selected as part of a staggered rollout across Lincolnshire to ensure disposal facilities were not overwhelmed. The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) wrote to DEFRA in September 2025 to confirm this arrangement.

The capital purchases were split into two forms – vehicles and caddies. The Council received £ 1,371,150 in capital funding from central Government to establish the food waste collections. The total cost of capital purchases (vehicles + caddies) was £1,543,000; this was around £171,850 more than the

£1,371,150 payment from DEFRA. The shortfall was covered by an agreement at Full Council on 18 September 2025.

The total estimated revenue costs were £542,195 for year 1 (2025/26). Although the service didn't start until April 2026, there were costs associated with introducing the service (vehicle costs, staff recruitment, communications, caddy delivery etc). The transitional revenue funding provided by Government covered £400,125.45 of these costs, meaning a further £142,069.55 of funding was required to establish the service. The shortfall was covered by an agreement at Full Council on 18 September 2025.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- The Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste apologized that Full Council had sight of the report prior to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- Attention was drawn to the additional staff revenue costs in Table 1 of the report. The Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste confirmed the majority of these costs were funded by a ringfenced grant.
- It was queried whether it was necessary for the additional staff to be recruited in November 2025 if the 'go live' date was not until April 2026. The Cabinet Member confirmed this was necessary to ensure full training and preparations.
- The costs in Table 1 of the report were calculated on a pro-rata basis.
- It was queried whether new staff were limited to food waste rounds. It was confirmed that this would depend if the individuals had a HGV licence which was not necessarily required for the 7.5 ton lorries used for the food waste collection.
- The suggestion was made for education of residents to prevent unnecessary food waste. It was suggested collaboration with supermarkets would be vital for this. The Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste confirmed SKDC had been engaging with a third-party company called 'WRAP' which had been lobbying central government and offering resources on this matter.

Councillor Selby entered the Chamber.

- The Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste sought to address anxiety about the cleanliness of food waste bins by highlighting that the incoming measures would result in food waste being collected twice as often compared to the current general waste. Furthermore, it was confirmed that the 23litre caddy was complete with a self-locking lid, in which normal liners could not only be used, but were preferable to the so-called biodegradable liners that would not biodegrade in the conditions met at the plant. The Cabinet Member agreed to raise the matter with the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership in order to promote instructions on how to clean the bins.

The Food Waste update was noted by the Committee.

19. Air Quality Annual Update

Given a technical issue, the appendices for the report were not dispatched until the day prior to the meeting. To enable sufficient time for Members to consider and scrutinise these materials, the proposal was made to defer the item to the next meeting, 10 November 2025.

This proposal was seconded and, following a vote, it was AGREED to defer the item to the next meeting on 10 November 2025.

20. Corporate Enforcement Policy

The Corporate Enforcement Policy was presented by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing.

The full revision of the 2017 Policy covered enforcement activities across all the Council's Regulatory Services, setting out what regulated businesses and individuals could expect from the Council in terms of regulation. The Policy was targeted only at cases where action was needed and was based on the guiding principles of consistency, transparency, proportionality, and accountability.

The Policy applied to functions carried out within the following Regulatory Services:

- Public Protection (this includes Environmental Health, Environmental Protection, Private Sector Housing, Community Safety (Neighbourhoods) and Licensing)
- Development Management
- Building Control
- Finance
- Tenancy Services

The updated Corporate Enforcement Policy sought to incorporate the following to create an overarching document covering all enforcement functions undertaken by SKDC:

- Environmental Crime and Antisocial Behaviour – Fixed Penalty Notices
- Environmental Health Approach to Investigation and Enforcement
- Private Sector Housing Approach to Investigation and Enforcement.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- With reference to the fly tipping aspect of the policy, a Member urged the approach of effective deterrents and rapid, but proportional sanctions.

- It was queried why the report suggested that in some instances of fly tipping, the report suggested a reduction in the fine pursued. It was confirmed this was an attempt to prevent low level offences going to court.
- The suggestion was made for SKDC communications to be published demonstrating genuine fly tipping licences to avoid the public falling victim to scams.
- It was confirmed that the relevant links would be inserted to the policy for the Development Management Enforcement Policy (Planning Control) and the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Enforcement Policy.

The Corporate Enforcement Policy was noted by the Committee.

21. Update on Tree Planting Proposals for Winter 2025 Onwards

The Update on Tree Planting Proposals for Winter 2025 Onwards was presented by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

Tree-planting initiatives were strategically focused on land owned or managed by the council. This approach provided a clear and manageable starting point. Alternative delivery methods would be explored, such as partnerships with private landowners or community groups, as the initial planting program matured.

The draft annual planting targets and the projected costs were as follows:

Year	New trees per year	Tree Planting Costs	Aftercare and Maintenance Costs	TOTAL
2025/26	100	£29,870	£8,685	£38,555
2026/27	65	£19,998	£23,387	£43,385
2027/28	65	£20,598	£32,257	£52,855

The three-year projected distribution for amenity trees was as follows:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL
Grantham	28	21	21	70
Bourne	12	8	8	29
Stamford	20	8	9	37
The Deepings	9	6	7	22
Villages – North	0	16	8	24
Villages – Central	14	6	4	24
Villages – South	16	0	8	24
Villages (Combined)	30	22	20	72
TOTAL	100	65	65	230

The planting sites for 2025/26 were as follows:

Location	No. of Trees
Princess Drive, Grantham	23
Trent Road Play Area, Earlsfield, Grantham	5
Wingate Way, Bourne	5
Ash Grove, Bourne	8
Kesteven Road, Stamford	8
Stamford Leisure Pool	7
St. Martins Graveyard, Stamford	5
Burnhall Close, Deeping St. James	7
Broadgate Lane, Deeping St. James	2
Langtoft Recreation Ground	16
Throughton Park Play Area, South Witham	14
TOTAL	100

In addition to planting individual amenity trees, the Council also proposed two larger schemes in the Grantham area (Blessed Hugh Moore and Brittain Drive) and a small hedge planting proposal in Witham on the Hill.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- It was queried where responsibility sat for SKDC hedges. It was confirmed that responsibility sat with the Street Scene team. It was acknowledged that there were substantial amounts of tree and hedge work outstanding. The Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste noted that he had been pushing for additional staffing and wider resources during the budget setting process. It was agreed that the correct contact details for the Street Scene team would be dispatched to Members. **ACTION**
- The suggestion was made to involve local schools in the planting of SKDC trees. This was supported by the Cabinet Member.
- It was queried whether the proposed planting location on Princess Drive, Grantham, was a suitable distance away from the road. It was confirmed this exact location had been selected due to the restrictions caused by underground utilities.

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to endorse the Tree Planting Proposals for Winter 2025 onwards.

22. Work Programme 2025 - 2026

It was AGREED for the deferred Air Quality Annual Update to be presented in the 10 November 2025 meeting.

It was AGREED for the Update on recently published Section 19 reports to be presented at the 10 November 2025 meeting. Following this it could be

determined whether Members felt the Flooding Working Group was necessary.

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

There was none.

The Chairman concluded the meeting at 15.43.

Action Sheet

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Actions from meeting of 23 September 2025

Min no	Agenda item	Action	Assigned to	Comments/Status	Deadline
17	Update on South Kesteven District Council carbon emissions for 2024/25	<p>The request was made for financial data to be applied, indicating the financial cost or saving of each carbon saving.</p> <p>The Sustainability Project Support Officer agreed to provide this analysis to the Member following the meeting.</p>	The Sustainability Project Support Officer	COMPLETED	
21	UPDATE ON TREE PLANTING PROPOSALS FOR WINTER 2025 ONWARDS	<p>It was queried where responsibility sat for SKDC hedges. It was confirmed that responsibility sat between the Tree Officer and Street Scene team. It was acknowledged that there was substantial amounts of tree and hedge work outstanding following the backlog caused by the disbandment of EnvironmentSK. However, the Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste noted that he had been pushing for additional staffing and wider resources during the budget</p>	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	COMPLETED	

Min no	Agenda item	Action	Assigned to	Comments/Status	Deadline
		setting process. It was agreed that the correct contact details for the Street Scene team would be dispatched to Members.			



alliance **leisure**

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LeisureEnergy

Sustainable savings

Grantham Meres Leisure Centre
Transitioning to net zero

10th November 2025

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**SOUTH
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Agenda Item 7

Introduction



alliance **leisure**

Sean Nolan, Regional Director
Development Partner





allianceleisure

Alliance Leisure is the UK's leading leisure development partner, supporting local authorities that want to improve or expand the leisure facilities and services provided to their local communities.



We develop leisure facilities ranging from £40m+ new builds and large-scale refurbishments, through to outdoor play pitches and play facilities.

Our mission is to make public leisure sustainable and to build healthier communities.

What makes us different is the breadth of our support – we work alongside our clients from RIBA 0, Strategic Definition, right through to RIBA 7, Use and Beyond.

Every project is assigned a team of experts focussing on every element of a development including procurement, finance, legal, construction, marketing, communications and operations.

Acting as an honest and supportive critical friend, we are dedicated to embedding ourselves in your community to understand its requirements, and we have the knowledge and experience to provide for those needs in unique and innovative ways.



280+
projects delivered

25+

Years in business



£450m

Invested in local authority leisure



allianceleisure

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Our specialties.

Our range of developments across 25 years of business has included all types of leisure facility, from the large-scale transformation of leisure portfolios through to playgrounds and 3G pitches. Our extensive repertoire also expands to cultural and heritage sites. With leisure centres, theatres, restaurants, woodland cafes, spas, bowling alleys, wellbeing hubs and more featuring in our repertoire.

Leisure	Sport	Heritage & Culture	Health & Wellbeing
New build	Refurbish	Renew	
Leisure centres	Soft play	Swimming pools	Museums
3G pitches	Theatre spaces	Wellbeing hubs	Playgrounds
			Adventure centres

Introduction



Mike Worsnop, Director
Principal Designer and Contractor

Purpose

To provide members of the Environment and Overview Scrutiny Committee with an update and overview of the Grantham Meres Leisure Centre Project; specifically,

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- The impact and environmental benefit of the Solar PV,
- The impact and environmental benefit of decarbonising the leisure centre; and,
- The Social Value Plan.



Grantham Meres Leisure Centre – Background

- In March 2023, Leisure SK commissioned Leisure Energy to complete Energy & Sustainability Reports for three leisure centres; which also identified and included options for decarbonisation and the transition to net zero.
- Leisure Energy supported the successful Sport England application which has secured £399K of funding for Grantham Meres too for Solar PV and are delivered the project as principal contractor.
- In October 2023, Leisure Energy supported South Kesteven District Council to prepare and write a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme application and provide technical support and expertise as part of the Salix evaluation process.
- South Kesteven District Council were successfully awarded a grant of **£3,587,500** for Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.
- The Council appointed Alliance Leisure Services as your delivery partner through the UK Leisure Framework.
- Alliance Leisure Services are managing the delivery of the decarbonisation project.
- Leisure Energy was appointed as Principal Designer and Contractor.



Grantham Meres Leisure Centre – Other Works

- Planned upgrade of pool pump circulation equipment to be completed by early 2026
- Upgrade of lighting to LED in main and small sports halls
- Upgrade of floodlighting to LED for 3G and stadium pitches
- Installation of pool covers using portion of the Sport England funding

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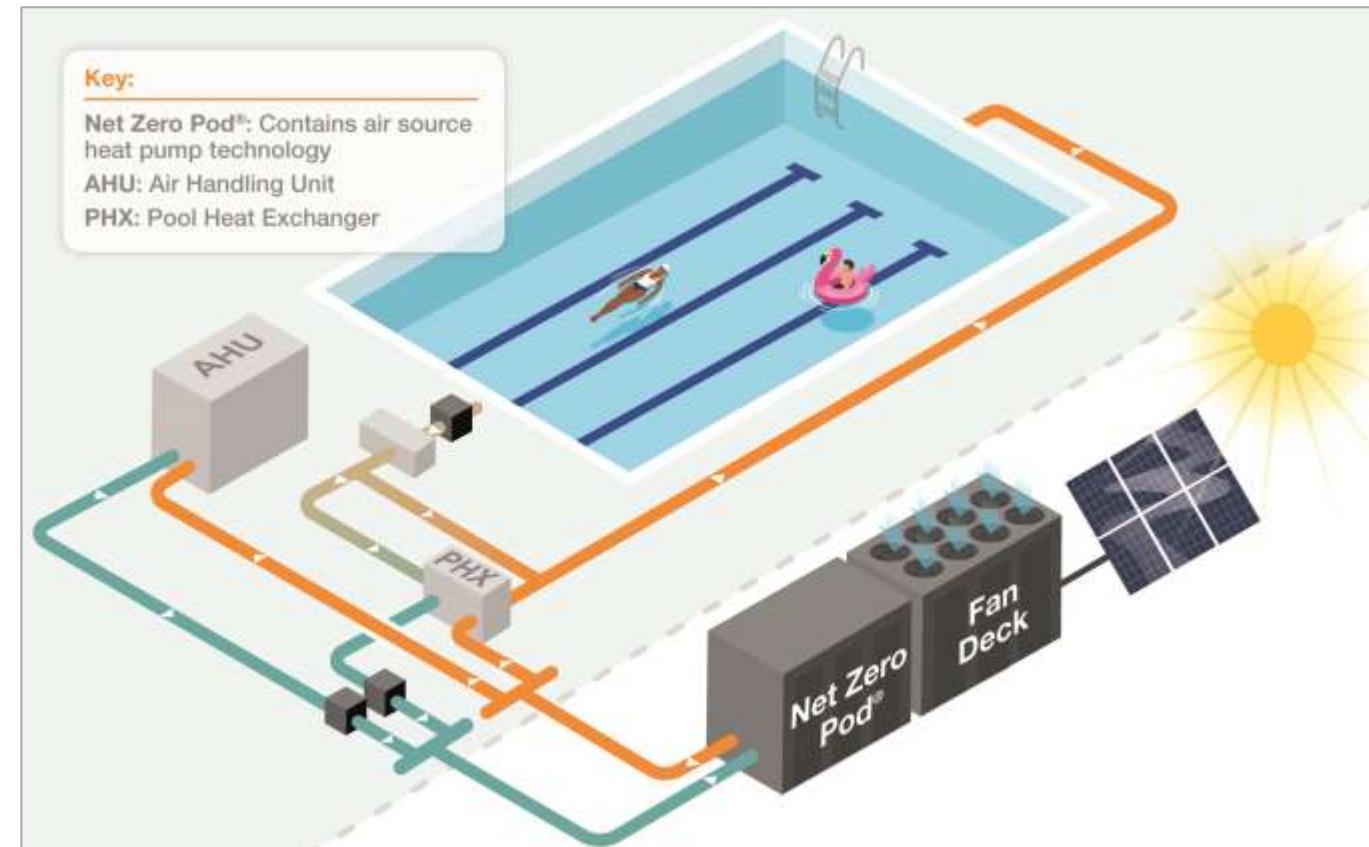
Solar PV – Renewable energy



- Prior to Solar PV the Leisure Centre used 624,149 kWh of electricity from the grid.
- 229,447 kWh solar electricity was generated since November 2024 (36.7% of its need)
- Grid electricity savings were 177,776 kWh
- Solar generation exported 51,701 kWh back to the grid
- Total financial benefit Nov 2024 – October 2025 was **£34,904**
- The environmental impact has been a reduction of **40,617 kg CO2 e.**

Decarbonisation – electrification of the leisure centre

- **Net Zero Pod® (NZP750) Packaged Plant Room – A tri pack (3 x 250 kWth) CO₂ Air Source Heat Pump solution operating in a duty/assist arrangement. Tri temperature 70°C flow, 30°C return. Plus, a 3 x V-Bank Evaporator.**
- A unique solution to accommodate the site constraints – NZP location to be confirmed.
- Building integration and upgraded heating systems.
- Pre decarbonisation running costs £347,000 p.a.
- Post decarbonisation estimated running cost significantly reduced to £173,965.
- **Reducing the operating cost of the leisure centre by £173,035 p.a. (inc. Solar PV)**



Net Zero Pod® Delivery

Powered by LE
**net
zero
pod**



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alliance leisure

LeisureEnergy
Sustainable savings

Social Value Plan

The Social Value Plan aims to:

- **Support Sustainability Goals:** Promote carbon literacy and net-zero practices within the community.
- **Enhance Community Well-being:** Engage with local organisations, schools, and colleges to encourage healthy, active lifestyles.
- **Strengthen Local Partnerships:** Collaborate with key community groups and stakeholders to support events and initiatives.
- **Boost Local Economy:** Monitor and increase the use of local suppliers and contractors, where possible.

Social Value Plan Monitoring & Update

LeisureEnergy
Community Grant

Theme	Action	Target Date	Responsible Party
Education and Skills Development	Host site visits for Grantham College students	From Sep 2025 - Ongoing	Leisure Energy
Education and Skills Development	Provide work experience for 1+ Grantham College students	Autumn 2025	Leisure Energy
Sustainable Facilities	Review and deliver energy efficiency improvements at Earlesfield Community Centre including Boiler upgrade	Q4 2025	Leisure Energy
Sustainability and Carbon Literacy	Deliver Carbon Literacy training for LeisureSK and SKDC staff	By April 2026	Leisure Energy
Sustainability and Carbon Literacy	Deliver Carbon Literacy training for Councillors	By April 2026	Leisure Energy
Sustainability and Carbon Literacy	Attend Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide update	10-Nov-25	Leisure Energy
Sustainability and Carbon Literacy	On-site engagement via hoarding and reception displays	By Mar 2026	Leisure Energy
Supporting the Local Economy	Monitor and report on local spend in South Kesteven	Quarterly updates through to Mar 2026	Leisure Energy
Supporting the Local Economy	Supplier outreach to encourage local supply chain engagement	Ongoing through to Mar 2026	Leisure Energy



Do you have any questions please?

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SOUTH
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Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 10 November 2025

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker,
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Review of Tree Management Policies

Report Author

Andrew Igoea, Tree Project Officer

 andrew.igoea@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the results of analysis and modelling on the potential costs associated with changing the Council's approach to managing tree related risk, through the adoption of the updated Tree Management Policies.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Recommend that Cabinet approve the adoption of the updated Tree Management Policies, inclusive of relevant amendments suggested by Committee members.**

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? **Sustainable South Kesteven**

Which wards are impacted? **(All Wards);**

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 A revenue budget bid is currently being prepared for 2026/27 that would help to meet the demand for tree works currently categorised as 'desirable' and would avoid the need for more expensive works in future years. However, if additional budget allocation is not approved, then the Tree Management Policies will help prioritise the most safety-critical work using the available budget.
- 1.2 Future costs may vary due to factors such as the adoption of new land containing trees, growth in the Council's planted tree stock, and potential increases in contractor rates. Changes in industry standards or inspection requirements could also affect long-term expenditure. It will therefore be important to review costs periodically to ensure the budget remains aligned with service needs.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 There are no significant legal or governance issues.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.4 From a risk management perspective, the proposed policy represents a clear improvement on the existing inspection regime. It aligns with recognised industry standards for defensible tree risk management and would strengthen the Council's ability to demonstrate that it is meeting its duty of care. While the Council's overall exposure is also influenced by its capacity to act on identified risks, implementing a proportionate, risk-based inspection system is an essential first step. Failure to adopt an improved regime, when the limitations of the current one are already known, would weaken the Council's position in the event of an incident or claim.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.5 The proposed policy represents a positive step in strengthening the Council's approach to managing health and safety risks associated with trees. By

introducing a risk-based zoning system, SKDC would be adopting a more proportionate and evidence-led method of inspection, which aligns with general principles of good safety management. It ensures that higher-risk areas receive more frequent attention and that the Council can demonstrate a proactive stance in preventing foreseeable harm. While the ability to act on identified risks remains essential, the establishment of a robust inspection regime is a fundamental component of the Council's overall health and safety framework.

- 1.6 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASWA) Section 3.1 states the following: **It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.** This places a clear legal responsibility, along with the moral obligation, to ensure that proactive measures are introduced to remove entirely or reduce the risk posed to persons not in our employment.

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Head of Service for Health, Safety, Compliance and Emergency Planning

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. A new draft policy document, Tree Management Policies, was presented to EOSC in June 2025 ([Item 9, EOSC, June 10th 2025](#)). This new policy will replace the existing 'Tree Guidelines' (TG) document, adopted in 2019. The draft tree management policy document sets out a clearer, risk-based and proactive framework for managing trees under SKDC's control, defining responsibilities, procedures, and priorities across council land, tenanted properties, and closed churchyards to improve clarity, safety, and long-term resource planning.
- 2.2. No concerns were raised with the draft wording of the policies during the meeting, but to better understand the impacts of the proposed policy changes to the management of Council trees, further detail was requested on the costs of implementing the proposed policies, particularly section 4, which introduced a comprehensive risk management strategy (key changes to existing strategy are summarised in the table below).
- 2.3. Separately, a revenue budget is 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). In addition, an increase of £11,000 is requested for Grantham SEA budgets (204% increase including Grantham SEA). The need for this requested budget increase is driven by the large volume of work recommended in surveys conducted under the current regime. In order to more proactively manage the Council's stock of trees, there is an ambition to complete more recommendations which are currently categorised as 'desirable'. These recommendations include works such as pruning away from property boundaries to prevent encroachment

issues, crown lifting for maintenance and access, and the removal of ivy to facilitate future inspections and reduce wind loading, amongst others. The completion of these types of desirable work has proved difficult in previous years due to budgetary constraints, nevertheless, the completion of desirable works is advantageous to avoid the need for more expensive, extensive and intrusive works in future years.

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

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. In order understand the projected cost implications of changing the regime of surveys to manage risk from trees, modelling has been completed. The cost modelling presented in this paper is based on a series of standardised assumptions relating to tree numbers, the distribution of trees across the Council's land holding, and the survey cost per tree. While these assumptions introduce some uncertainty around the absolute figures, the same parameters were consistently applied to both the existing and proposed systems. For this reason, the focus of the analysis is on the relative difference in cost between the two approaches, rather than on the absolute totals. Presenting results as percentage differences provides a more reliable indication of the expected change in expenditure, given that the key variable is the inspection frequency rather than the base cost inputs themselves. However, in the interests of transparency, the figures used in the modelling are provided in the appendices.
- 3.2. The cost estimates presented are based on current tree numbers, survey rates, and known land holdings. However, several factors could influence overall costs in future years. These include the adoption of additional land containing mature trees (for example, through new developments or transfers of public open space), and the Council's ongoing tree planting activity, which will gradually increase the number of trees requiring inspection as they mature. External market factors, such as inflationary pressures or changes in the availability and pricing of qualified survey contractors, could also affect survey costs. In addition, changes in national guidance or industry standards for tree risk management, or the emergence of new pest and disease threats, could require adjustments to inspection frequency or scope.

- 3.3. The expected cost differentials reported below relate solely to the costs associated with changing the Council's approach to **identifying** tree related risks. They do not include any projected increases in spending on tree work itself.
- 3.4. The costs associated with changing the Council's approach to identifying risks should be considered separately to increased spending on tree works for the following reasons:
 - 3.4.1. The council's duty of care requires both an adequate inspection system and the resources to act on identified risks. These are complementary but distinct responsibilities.
 - 3.4.2. Implementing the new inspection policy is about ensuring the Council meets the minimum legal standard for identifying risk. The availability of works funding then determines *how quickly* and *to what extent* we can respond to those risks.
 - 3.4.3. Deferring improvements to the inspection regime until the additional tree works budget (referenced in paragraph 2.3 above) is confirmed would delay the implementation of a more modern, risk-based approach that better reflects current industry practice.
- 3.5. Key areas for potential cost implications:
 - 3.5.1. **Service provider** – Survey timings and protocols need to be updated and may not be compatible with the current service provided. As a result, the Council may need to procure survey services from an alternative provider, potentially at a higher cost.
 - 3.5.2. **Tree record management** – The council's tree records are currently held in software under another authority's licence. Implementation of zoning will require the Council to have its own tree record management system.
 - 3.5.3. **Inspection frequencies** – zoning decreases inspection intervals in some areas but increases them in others, changing the overall inspection workload.
- 3.6. To provide clarity on the financial implications of implementing the new risk management strategy, the team has:
 - 3.6.1. Estimated a projected cost of implementing the existing system over the next 10 years, using set parameters for the number of trees, their distribution across the Council's estate, and the survey cost per tree.
 - 3.6.2. Created a draft zoning map covering all land under the Council's control to test the practical application of a risk-based zoning system.
 - 3.6.3. Modelled costs of the proposed zoning system, applying the same parameters (tree numbers, distribution, survey cost) over the same period, allowing direct comparison with the existing system.
 - 3.6.4. Investigated the annual cost of accessing North Kesteven District Council's (NKDC) tree database.

- 3.6.5. Explored alternative database systems, specifically investigating the cost of migrating the Council' tree data into its preferred system, OTISS, and the associated annual licence fee.
- 3.6.6. Investigated the potential cost of outsourcing tree surveying to a private company (in light of the potential need to move away from NKDC as the current provider).
- 3.6.7. Investigated the potential for a proportion of Zone 3 areas to be surveyed internally.

3.4. Results: A comparison of existing versus proposed

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>Strategy for managing risk from trees – RESULT = COST NEUTRAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All council-owned trees are split into 3 geographical groups and inspected on a 3-year cycle. Surveys take place in the autumn/winter each year. • Recommendations for remedial work are prioritised based on a binary system: 'essential' and 'desirable' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system of zoning based on occupancy/likelihood. • Areas with high rates of use (or high value targets) combined with large trees will be classed as 'Zone 1' and be surveyed every 18 months. Lower occupancy areas will be Zone 2, surveyed every 30 months, and Zone 3 areas will be surveyed every 54 months. • Recommendations for remedial work will be prioritised based on a framework of safety critical and general management recommendation types. Safety critical work will be scored from 1-3 and general management recommendations will be placed in 1 of 5 categories.
<p>Costs of the service provider – RESULT = COST NEUTRAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All surveying is outsourced • Current survey provider currently charges £3.50 per tree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most Zone 3 areas, where there are only a small number of trees in low-risk situations, could be surveyed internally. • Market engagement has indicated a local arboricultural consultant would match our current per tree rate for a multi-year contract.
<p>Costs associated with the inspection frequency – RESULT = COST INCREASE: 16% over a 10-year period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All council-owned trees inspected on a 3-year cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling suggests that, using the same parameters (tree numbers, distribution, survey costs), a zoning system would increase survey costs by ~16% over a 10-year period. This increase reflects more frequent inspections in Zone 1 and Zone 2 areas.

EXISTING	PROPOSED
Database costs – RESULT = COST SAVING: -55% over a 10-year period	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently £1,250 (ex VAT) for an annual fee to cover our use and access to the database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An alternative system (OTISS) would cost £670 per year, with an initial £600 setup fee for data migration.
Combined impact of inspection frequency and data base costs – RESULT = COST INCREASE, 10% over a 10-year period	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing system costs £8–10K per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factoring in the database saving into the 10-year model reduces the overall cost increase of the zoning system to ~10%.

3.5 Benefits of adopting the proposed system:

- 3.5.1 **Zoning is risk-based and proportionate:** The inspection frequency reflects actual exposure to harm (occupancy and use of space); Zone 1 areas are inspected more frequently reducing the likelihood of serious harm. More frequent inspections mean that potential hazards are identified sooner and can therefore be addressed in a timelier manner (subject to available resources). This gives the council the ability to shorten the period during which defects remain unmanaged, reducing public exposure to risk and improving overall safety outcomes.
- 3.5.2 **There is built-in flexibility:** The Council would not be locked into a rigid inspection cycle, so could escalate risk controls when needed; with three inspection interval options available, areas can be “upgraded” to a higher-frequency zone if circumstances change (e.g. plant health threats, new housing developments, increased footfall, or climate/storm impacts).
- 3.5.3 **The proposed strategy is more defensible (legally):** If harm occurs, it will be easier to justify in court that the Council’s management of risk is reasonable and proportionate (based on legal precedents; aligns with industry best practice guidance such as the National Tree Safety Group Common Sense Risk Management of Trees).
- 3.5.4 **Adoption of these policies will demonstrate strategic leadership:** It will show that the Council is proactively modernising tree risk management, not relying on a legacy system and ignoring changes in the industry.
- 3.5.5 **Improved efficiency and value for money:**
 - 3.5.6 Zoning avoids over-inspecting low-risk areas, reducing wasted effort.
 - 3.5.7 Control of our own tree records allows a hybrid model of internal resourcing and outsourcing.
- 3.5.8 **Better detection of hazards:** The proposed inspection intervals will ensure that inspections alternate between in-leaf and out-of-leaf, which improves the chance of spotting defects, and enhances monitoring of decline or disease progression (e.g. for ash dieback). This approach is more defensible in court. It may lead to an initial increase in recorded recommendations, particularly for lower-level management works. However, this reflects better visibility and data accuracy rather than an actual increase in underlying risk, and the trend is expected to stabilise over time.
- 3.5.9 **An improved prioritisation system:** Adoption of the proposed zoning policy provides an opportunity to move away from binary priority system (essential vs desirable) to a framework of safety critical and general management recommendation types. This will provide a clearer audit trail showing how work undertaken is prioritised and integrates risk management with broader tree and woodland management objectives.
- 3.5.10 **Strategic alignment:** The South & East Lincolnshire Council’s Partnership and Rutland County Council have published policy documents showing a commitment to manage tree risk through zoning, so the proposed policy will align with some other neighbouring authorities.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1. The implementation of the proposed risk management strategy is expected to require a ~10% increase in spending for surveys and associated data management, compared to the existing system. Due to modest sums of money involved, it is believed this would not create a significant financial burden for the Council and would deliver many benefits.
- 4.2. Although the costs associated with changing the Council's approach to identifying risks should be considered separately to increased spending on tree works, (due to the modest sums of money involved) it is expected that the overall cost increase associated with risk identification can be covered by the budget bid for tree work, so no additional budget will be requested to cover the implementation of the policy document.
- 4.3. Adopting the new tree management policy will improve risk management, clarity, consistency, and accountability in tree care, strengthen relationships between people and trees, and support more efficient, evidence-based use of resources.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1. EOSC, June 10th 2025
[Item 9: Update on Draft Tree Management Policies](#)
[Paper](#)
[Appendix 1](#) (draft policy document)
[Minutes](#)

6. Appendices

- 6.1. SKDC Tree Management Policies (updated draft)



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Tree Management Policies

[MONTH] 2025

v1.0

Executive Summary

This Tree Management Policy provides a structured approach to managing trees on council-owned land. It aims to balance public safety, ecological sustainability, and community interests while ensuring the responsible use of resources. The policy aligns with SKDC's Tree and Woodland Strategy, supporting biodiversity, climate resilience, and public well-being.

These policies apply to trees owned or managed by SKDC in public spaces, parks, highways, communal areas, and tenanted properties. Clear guidelines are set for tree pruning and removal requests relating to amenity and nuisance issues, risk management, the respective responsibilities of tenants and the council regarding trees on tenanted property, wildlife conservation considerations. The policy does not cover privately owned trees, which remain the responsibility of landowners, or councils' obligations to protect trees under planning legislation.

Tree management decisions will consider long-term environmental benefits, aligning with national and local climate policies to enhance urban greenery and wildlife habitats. By setting clear guidelines for pruning and removal requests relating to amenity and nuisance issues, and by clarifying responsibilities for tenants, these policies aim to promote harmonious relationships between people and trees and foster enthusiasm for the various objectives of the adopted Tree and Woodland Strategy.

Regardless of the management context, all tree work will be prioritised based on risk, ensuring public safety while preventing unnecessary interventions that could reduce tree health and canopy cover. This ensures that council resources focus on essential tree works (e.g., safety-related pruning) first, rather than minor nuisances such as seasonal leaf fall.

Regarding risk management, a zoning system ensures inspection frequency aligns with occupancy, providing a balance between resources allocation and legal obligations.

This policy ensures that SKDC meets its duty of care, maintains a healthy urban tree population, and upholds best practices in arboriculture. It enables efficient decision-making that reflects public interest, legal obligations, and environmental stewardship.

Tree Management Quick Reference Guide

Frequently Asked Questions

The following quick reference guide has been written with the public and the Council's social housing tenants in mind. The Council's commercial tenants should note that the answers provided below for social housing tenants may not apply to their situation, and they are advised to consult the main body of text and their lease agreement for answers to tree-related queries.

Ownership and responsibilities:

Q: I have an enquiry or concern about a tree, but I don't know who the owner is and who to contact about it.

A: Land and tree ownership is a complex subject. SKDC is responsible for several public open spaces across the district, but many are also managed by parish/town councils or private entities. SKDC has a stock of social housing, but this is not always easily identifiable. Contact details for SKDC are provided below.

Trees located on highway verges and within streets are likely to be the responsibility of the highway's authority. Lincolnshire County Council can be contacted by phone or via its website: www.lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Trees located on embankments or disused railway tracks are the responsibility of Network Rail or may be in private ownership.

See paragraph i(c) for further details.

Q: I have an enquiry or concern about a tree on private land. Can SKDC help?

A: SKDC will not normally get involved with privately owned trees. If you are concerned about the condition of a privately owned tree, you should contact the owner to make them aware. Discretionary powers are provided to the council under section 23 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Please contact our customer services team if you are concerned about the safety of a tree in your neighbourhood (customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk, 01476 406080, out of hours/emergency: 01476 406040)

See paragraph i(c) for further details.

Q: SKDC have placed a Tree Preservation Order on a tree I am concerned about. Who is now responsible for this tree?

A: A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) does not change ownership or responsibility for a tree. The landowner remains responsible for the tree's maintenance and any associated risks. However, any works on the tree, including pruning or removal, require formal

consent from SKDC. This policy document does not cover planning (i.e. TPO) related issues.

Tree Pruning & Overhanging Branches:

Q: Will the council prune a tree because its branches overhang my property?

A: The council will only prune trees under its ownership or management and will only prune overhanging branches if they create a significant risk, such as obstructing access, street lighting, or are causing property damage. Otherwise, you may trim branches back to your boundary if the tree is not protected (e.g., by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area). All tree work will be prioritised, so if budgets are limited and higher-priority issues remain outstanding, your request may not be addressed immediately – even if it aligns with policy.

Q: Can I request tree pruning for general nuisance (leaves, sap, blossom, etc.)?

A: No, seasonal issues like falling leaves, sap, or bird droppings are considered natural and not a reason for pruning and this policy document does not support pruning for these reasons. Regular garden maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner.

Q: Can I request tree pruning for interference with a TV or satellite signal?

A: No, whilst pruning may improve reception temporarily, trees are likely to regrow to their original size, making this an unsustainable long-term solution. This policy document does not support pruning for this reason.

See Part 1 for further details.

Shading & Loss of Light:

Q: A council tree is blocking sunlight to my property. Will it be pruned?

A: The council will only consider pruning in the following cases:

- The tree is taller than 12m and less than 5m from the nearest habitable room.
- The tree is shorter than 12m but is closer than half its height to a habitable room.
- An independent survey confirms severe shading as per Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidelines.

Trees will not be pruned to improve sunlight for solar panels. All tree work will be prioritised, so if budgets are limited and higher-priority issues remain outstanding, your request may not be addressed immediately – even if it aligns with policy.

Q: Are hedges causing shade issues covered by this policy?

A: Yes, if they are owned and managed by SKDC. Where a privately owned evergreen hedge more than 2metres in height is the cause of the issue the council may have powers under the Anti-social Behaviours Act 2003 to require appropriate action by the hedge owner, but the application and assessment process is not covered by this policy. For further information regarding complaints about privately owned hedges please refer to the SKDC's [Anti-Social Behaviour Policy \(2023\)](#) or the [planning enforcement web page](#).

See Part 1, paragraph 1.3 for further details.

Tree Roots & Damage

Q: What if tree roots from a council tree are damaging my property?

A: If you believe tree roots are causing structural damage, a professional report from a qualified structural engineer or arboricultural consultant is required before the council can investigate.

Q: Can I cut tree roots that extend onto my property?

A: Yes, if the tree is not protected, you may prune roots within your boundary. However, improper pruning can affect tree stability, so professional advice is recommended.

See Part 1, paragraph 1.8 for further details.

Wildlife & Conservation

Q: Does the council consider wildlife when pruning or removing trees?

A: Yes. Non-essential tree work is scheduled outside of bird nesting season (March–August). For tree work that is considered essential, checks for nesting birds will take place prior to the work commencing and specialist ecological advice will be sought where necessary. Trees will be checked for potential bat roost features prior to work commencing.

See paragraphs 1.9, 2.7 and 4.13 for further details.

Trees on Tenanted Property

Q: Who is responsible for trees in SKDC tenanted properties?

A:

- **SKDC is responsible** for work at height, tree health and safety, and major pruning/removal.
- **Tenants are responsible** for routine maintenance like clearing leaves and trimming small branches.

Q: Can I plant a tree in my SKDC tenancy garden?

A: Written permission is required before planting a tree to ensure it is suitable for the location.

See Part 2 for further details.

Reporting Tree Issues

If you need to report a tree issue, you can contact SKDC via:

- **Website:** www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback
- **Email:** customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk
- **Phone:** 01476 406080 (office hours) / 01476 406040 (out of hours emergencies)

For more detailed policies, visit our website or request a full copy of the Tree Management Policy.

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i. Introduction

a. Context

This policy document has been created in the context of the South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) Tree and Woodland Strategy. The vision of this strategy is defined as follows:

Healthy Trees, Healthy South Kesteven: Strengthening our tree assets through protection, enhancement, and growth, ensuring resilience and vitality in perpetuity

b. Scope

This document describes how South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) will manage trees on land under its ownership or management; it does not cover trees which grow on land which is not owned or managed by SKDC (this includes private land, and land owned/managed by other district councils, Lincolnshire County Council or parish/town councils located within the South Kesteven District).

Trees that are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) or which grow within Conservation Areas are dealt with by the relevant legislation and administered by the Development Control Service of SKDC.

SKDC's policies and processes relating to the tree-related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order Act (2003) and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 are covered in a separate policy document.

The four management contexts covered by this policy are:

1. Trees under SKDC management (impacts to the public)
2. Tree on SKDC tenanted property
3. Trees in closed churchyards/graveyards
4. Management of tree related risk

The Policy refers exclusively to trees and hedges and does not include shrubs or other vegetation. For the purpose of this policy, a 'tree' is a woody perennial plant, typically (in its natural form, without management as coppice stool or low pollard) having a stem or trunk which can attain a height of 6m or more, and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.

Low-level domestic hedges are outside of the scope of this policy. A hedge – a managed feature consisting of woody perennials that forms a continuous screen – will only be covered by the policies in this document if any part is over 2m high and 1m wide.

c. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the management of our trees are derived from relevant aspects of the Tree and Woodland Strategy and can be summarised as follows:

1. Resilience

Ensure that all decisions regarding tree management prioritize long-term sustainability, fostering resilience to climate change, diseases, and pests. Tree planting, maintenance, and removal must align with broader ecological goals, promoting species diversity and longevity.

2. Biodiversity Enhancement

Encourage the management of diverse tree species that support a wide range of wildlife.

3. Social Cohesion

SKDC will manage its trees in a way that fosters a positive relationship between people and their local environment. We aim to increase public appreciation for the benefits that trees bring, while actively working to minimize any disbenefits, such as shading, leaf fall, or root-related issues.

4. Public Safety and Risk Management

Maintain a proactive tree inspection and maintenance regime to manage risks posed by dead, dying, or hazardous trees. Ensure that public safety is a priority in urban areas and spaces frequently used by the community.

5. Ecosystem Services and Climate Change Mitigation

Recognize, protect and, where possible, enhance the ecosystem services provided by our trees, such as carbon sequestration, air quality improvement, flood mitigation, and urban cooling.

6. Amenity and Landscape Value

Preserve and enhance the aesthetic and cultural value of council-owned trees. Trees should contribute positively to the local landscape character, providing shade, beauty, and well-being benefits to residents and visitors alike.

7. Tree Health

Wherever possible, avoid (or reduce the frequency and/or extent) of works which have the potential to have a detrimental impact on tree health, or which are likely to increase the risk from pests, diseases, and environmental stress.

8. Legal Compliance and Best Practice

Adhere to all legal requirements and follow best practices in arboriculture and woodland management. This includes compliance with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), conservation area guidelines, and health and safety regulations.

Management in accordance with these guiding principles generally requires a proactive approach to tree care. However budgetary constraints limit the financial resources available for the management of SKDC trees. As a result, the council must make strategic decisions on where and how funds are allocated, prioritising essential services and projects that deliver the greatest public benefit. This means balancing the council's aspirations for tree management with many other competing priorities.

Regardless of the management context or the policies set out in this document – which define SKDC's position on various tree related issues – work can only be carried out if appropriate resources can be allocated. All proposed tree work will therefore be assigned a priority rating. For example, safety-related work, such as the removal of dead or dangerous branches, will take precedence over non-essential interventions, such as pruning to address nuisance issues like leaf fall or shading. This approach ensures that the council addresses the most critical risks while managing resources efficiently.

To support transparency and continuous improvement, SKDC will monitor and report on its performance against each priority rating. This will enable the council to objectively demonstrate its commitment to managing trees in line with the principles set out in the T&W.

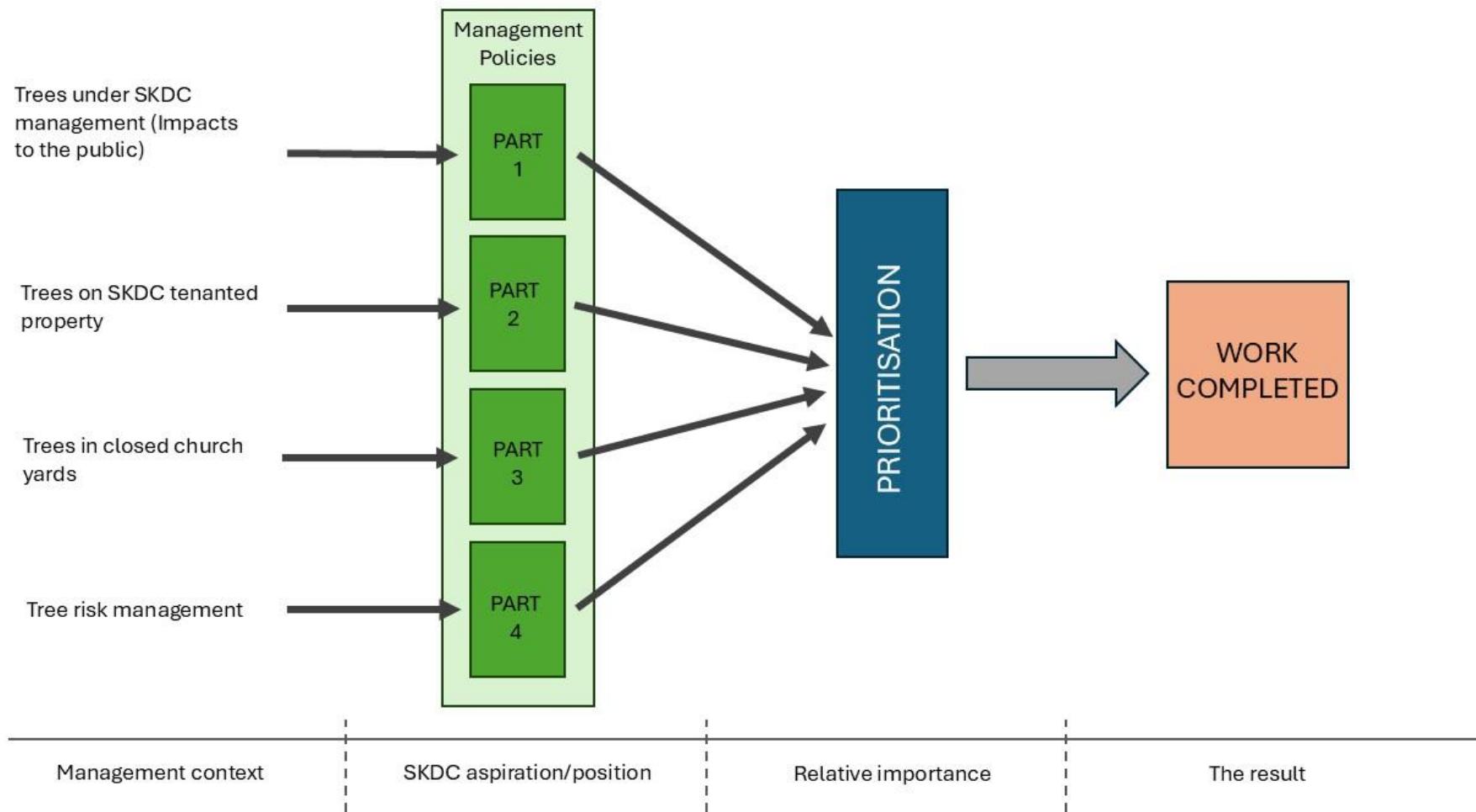


Figure 1. A diagram illustrating how tree work completed by SKDC results from the application of policies across different management contexts, followed by a unified prioritisation process that determines which work is undertaken

PART 1: Policies for pruning and removing council managed trees (relating to amenity and nuisance issues)

Introduction

Pruning of council managed trees can benefit our rate payers by reducing the number and extent of conflict issues which arise, such as overhanging branches, interference with property, or obstruction of light. As well as benefitting humans, properly managed pruning can also benefit trees and ecosystems, by extending their safe useful life expectancy and support their ecological benefits.

Decisions about pruning must consider the council's limited resources and the need to prioritise works that address public safety or structural stability. The policies in this section aim to balance the aesthetic and practical benefits of pruning with responsible stewardship of public funds and are focused on tree work required for reasons other than risk management. Policies relating to the council's duty of care in respect of trees will be addressed in Part 2 of this document.

Whenever the council undertakes pruning it should be assumed that the extent of work undertaken will be the minimum required to resolve the issue to the council's satisfaction (which may not always be to the complainant's satisfaction). All arboricultural operations undertaken on council managed trees will be done in accordance with British Standard 3998:2010 recommendations wherever possible, to ensure the negative impacts to the tree(s) are minimised. The work will always be done in accordance with the Arboricultural Associations Industry Code of Practice for Arboriculture, to ensure that the work is undertaken using a safe system of work.

1.1. Overhanging Branches

When the branches of trees located on council managed land overhang a boundary, they can cause obstructions to access (e.g. on footpaths or highways), visibility (e.g. at junctions, or of road signs), or lighting (e.g. streetlights), create a risk of damage to property or simply encroach on somebody's private property.

1.1.1. Obstructions

Obstructions to access, visibility or lighting can create hazards. Where these hazards result in an unacceptable risk to people or property and remedial pruning would reduce the risk to an acceptable level, this will normally be acceptable, and the council will arrange (and pay) for this work to be completed.

1.1.2. Risk of Damage

If overhanging branches create a significant risk of damage to a property (e.g. if they touch walls, roofs, windows or gutters) this will normally be acceptable, and the council will arrange (and pay) for this work to be completed.

1.1.3. Substantial Nuisance Issues

Substantial nuisance refers to an issue that goes beyond minor inconveniences. For example, if regular gutter blockages caused subsequent water damage to a structure, or if seasonal debris was so extreme that it caused excessive maintenance burdens or attracted pests. In these situations, pruning will normally be acceptable, and the council will arrange (and pay) for this work to be completed. Please note that a moderate amount of leaves falling in autumn is natural and is not usually seen as actionable.

1.1.4. Encroachment

Where branches simply overhang a boundary and do not result in any of the issues described in 1.2.1 – 1.2.3, the council will not undertake any pruning.

Provided that the tree is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order or situated in a Conservation Area, adjacent landowners have a common law right to prune back overhanging tree branches to their boundary. This work should be arranged and paid for by the adjacent landowner. Any works should be carried out in accordance with good arboricultural practice.

1.2. General and Minor Nuisances

Trees can cause a variety nuisance issues, whether they overhang the boundary or grow adjacent to it. The following are examples of minor nuisance issues that are considered to be normal and acceptable consequences of living near trees. In such cases, the council will not normally fell or prune trees to alleviate concerns raised by neighbouring properties.

- falling leaves, twigs, sap, blossom, fruit, nuts, bird and insect droppings.
- insects associated with trees (spiders, wasps, flies etc).
- reduction or increase of moisture to gardens.
- suckers or germinating seedlings in gardens.
- leaves falling into gutters, drains or onto flat roofs.

- the build-up of algae on fences, paths or other structures.

Routine seasonal maintenance tasks such as clearing gutters and paths, weeding seedlings from garden borders, and cleaning surfaces affected by sap, blossom, or bird droppings are the responsibility of property owners and are considered part of normal property upkeep.

1.3. Shading and Loss of Light

While trees are often perceived to block light to nearby properties, the extent of pruning or tree removal needed to noticeably improve this would frequently lead to significant impacts to local amenity, biodiversity and the delivery of ecosystem services. Therefore, and as part of our commitment to protect trees, pruning work to improve light levels and reduce direct shading will not normally be considered. However, we will consider acting (pruning or felling) in the following circumstances:

- If the height of the tree is more than 12m and the distance between the base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than 5metres.
- If the height of the tree is less than 12m and the distance between the base of the tree and the window of the nearest habitable room is less than half the height of the tree (or where the separation between the edge of the tree canopy and a vertical line through that window is less than 2 metres).
- If an objective assessment of shading undertaken by a chartered surveyor, based on the methodologies outlined in the Building Research Establishment Report 209 (Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice), which included measurements of the vertical sky component and sun availability, and a sun path analysis, showed that pruning was justified.

A ‘habitable room’ is a dining room, lounge, kitchen, study or bedroom but not a WC, bathroom, utility room, landing or hallway. Where vulnerable people who spend a significant amount of time within their home are affected, there will be flexibility to look at some form of intervention. Where it can be established that the presence of trees is detrimental to the health of vulnerable people, further consideration will be given to the management approach. This assessment will take into account the quality and importance of the tree(s) in question, as well as the benefits and impact to the wider community.

The Council will not prune or fell a tree under its management to improve natural light to a solar panel. While we recognize the importance of renewable energy sources like solar panels, trees provide numerous environmental benefits, including carbon sequestration, improving air quality, supporting biodiversity, and mitigating the urban heat island effect. These benefits are vital in our collective efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Property owners are encouraged to consider the placement of solar

panels with respect to existing trees, as trees are an essential part of a sustainable environment.

1.4. Loss of a view

Trees will not be pruned to improve private views. The Council will only undertake pruning to restore or maintain important public viewpoints, or where pruning would deliver a significant public benefit by enhancing the local street scene or landscape character.

Requests for such pruning will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the potential impact on local amenity, biodiversity, and the overall landscape value.

1.5. Loss of reception

Trees can sometimes grow to interrupt reception to nearby television aerials and satellite dishes. Whilst pruning may improve reception temporarily, trees are likely to regrow to their original size, making this an unsustainable long-term solution. Repeated pruning operations not only place a strain on council resources but can also harm the health of the tree.

As such, the removal or pruning of trees to improve television or satellite reception will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where there is a compelling public interest or where no reasonable alternatives exist. Property owners are encouraged to explore other solutions such as repositioning their aerials or satellite dishes to avoid interference or switching to cable or internet-based services.

1.6. Apprehension and overbearingness

Large trees adjacent to dwellings and private gardens can sometimes cause apprehension. Complaints that trees are ‘too big’ are common, but such concerns are often not supported by arboricultural evidence that the tree poses an unacceptable risk to people or property. A tree is not dangerous simply because somebody perceives it to be too large for its surroundings. Likewise, a tree swaying in the wind is not necessarily a hazard. The flexibility of a tree’s branches and structure is a natural mechanism to withstand wind and prevent breakage. The council will only undertake tree work where there is clear and objective evidence that the tree poses an unacceptable risk to people or property.

In some cases, the size of a tree may be perceived as overbearing by nearby residents, even where there is no concern about risk of failure or injury. While the Council acknowledges that the presence of large trees can be concerning for some, tree work will not normally be undertaken solely because of a tree’s size or its perceived overbearing nature, unless there are other compelling reasons to intervene.

1.7. Medical Issues

A range of personal medical complaints, from allergies to mental health impacts, can be attributed (rightly or wrongly) to trees. We will not normally prune or remove council managed trees when the request is based on a personal medical complaint. However, if a medical professional provides documented evidence that the presence of a tree is causing a significant detriment to the health of a resident, the council will consider the management approach taken with the trees in question. This may include exploring alternative solutions to mitigate the impact on the resident's health before considering pruning or removal.

1.8. Tree Roots

Trees exist above and below ground, and so do the issues arising from them. Tree roots can grow far beyond the canopy spread of their parent tree and do not recognise lines on plans, which means that it is not uncommon for roots to grow across ownership boundaries.

1.8.1. Encroachment

The presence of roots is unlikely to be affected by pruning, or even by felling so the council will not undertake any tree work if the issue relates solely to encroachment.

As with branches that grow across ownership boundaries, landowners have a common law right to prune back tree roots to their boundary, providing that the tree in question is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or situated within a Conservation Area. Landowners are encouraged to seek professional advice when pruning roots, as improper pruning can harm the health or stability of the tree and may result in legal consequences if a protected tree is affected.

1.8.2. Direct Damage

Forces exerted by the outward (longitudinal) growth and thickening (radial growth) of roots are relatively weak. As a result, roots tend to grow around obstructions presented by manmade structures, rather than displace them. However, large structural roots located near the base of a mature trees can exert enough force to damage pavements or smaller structures.

It is unlikely that council managed trees will be located close enough to boundaries to cause this type of damage. If issues do arise, the council will assess the situation on a case-by-case basis and explore appropriate mitigation measures where necessary. Possible mitigation measures may

include the installation of root barriers, re-surfacing of pavements, or localized pruning of structural roots, if appropriate.

1.8.3. Indirect Damage (Subsidence)

Tree roots can cause damage to structures indirectly through problems associated with shrinking and swelling subsoils. If an allegation is made that a council managed tree has caused, or is likely to cause, damage to a third-party structure through subsidence, the council will only consider acting if the allegation is supported by a report produced by a professional in a relevant field (e.g. arboricultural consultants, structural engineers, geotechnical engineers). The report should reference relevant industry guidelines relating to foundation design, the investigation and monitoring of subsidence, and tree work recommendations (i.e. NHBC standards and BS3998:2010). In cases of suspected subsidence, evidence of ongoing monitoring, such as crack monitoring or soil testing, may be required to substantiate claims before any remedial action is considered.

1.9. Prioritisation

In accordance with the prioritisation principle discussed in section i) c) and illustrated in figure 1, work required as a result these scenarios will be assigned one of the category ratings described in Section 4.10, summarised below as follows:

	Priority category	e.g.
Safety related	Safety group 1	Imminent hazard with severe consequences likely
	Safety group 2	Probable hazard with moderate consequences likely
	Safety group 3	Probable hazard with moderate consequences likely
General Management	General Management group 1 – damage	Work required to prevent damage to a structure
	General Management group 2 – obstruction	Work required to maintain access
	General Management group 3 – visibility	Work required to maintain site lines and light splays
	General Management group 4 – nuisance	Work required to resolve a nuisance issue
	General Management group 5 – proactive management	Work required to deliver other social, environmental and economic benefits

1.10. Wildlife and Habitat Considerations

The Council recognizes the important role that trees play in supporting local wildlife and biodiversity. Many species of birds, bats, insects, and other wildlife rely on trees for shelter, food, and nesting. Pruning or removing trees can have a significant impact on these species, particularly during sensitive times of the year. As such, the Council is committed to ensuring that all tree management activities are carried out in accordance with relevant wildlife protection laws and best practice guidelines. For further details please refer to section 3.13.

1.11. Replacement trees

The Council is committed to increasing tree canopy cover across all towns and villages within the district so that rate payers may benefit from the ecosystem services, amenity and economic benefits that trees provide. In addition to our annual planting programme of new trees and woodlands, where it is appropriate, the Council will plant replacement trees for those it has removed.

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PART 2: Policies relating to trees on SKDC tenanted property

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. Purpose of the Policy

Trees on tenanted properties play a crucial role in enhancing the local environment, supporting biodiversity, and contributing to the overall wellbeing of local people. However, they must also be managed to ensure safety, mitigate risks, and maintain a harmonious relationship between tenants, neighbouring properties, and the wider community.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities and management approach for trees located on land rented by tenants of SKDC. These policies may be referenced in tenancy agreements and related guidance documents.

2.1.2. Scope

This policy establishes the framework for how trees on tenanted properties will be managed, including:

- The respective responsibilities of SKDC and tenants regarding tree maintenance, protection, and care.
- Procedures for tenant requests regarding tree work, including pruning, removal, or planting.
- Guidance on the protection of trees during the start and end of tenancy agreements.
- Ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and environmental goals, including wildlife protection and conservation.

This policy applies to all trees located within the boundaries of SKDC tenanted properties, and trees located within communal areas adjacent to tenanted properties which are managed by SKDC, or agents acting on its behalf.

In this section of the policy document the terms 'tenants' and 'tenancy agreements' (or similar) apply to both housing and commercial tenants, unless otherwise specified. Where a policy applies exclusively to one group, the terms 'housing tenants' or 'commercial tenants' will be used explicitly.

2.2. Responsibilities of SKDC

2.2.1. Maintenance of Council-Owned Trees

SKDC will be responsible for any tree located in a communal area or shared space.

For trees located within private areas of domestic tenanted properties, SKDC will only be responsible for tree maintenance or management that:

- Involves ‘work at height’ (as defined by HSE).
- Requires specialist equipment, the use of which usually requires proper training or certification (e.g. chainsaws).
- Carries significant risk to health or safety.
- Requires technical knowledge or training, such as applying specific pruning methods (e.g. crown reduction).

Examples of tree maintenance and management that SKDC will be responsible for include:

- Removing deadwood from upper branches (over 3m from ground level).
- Felling or dismantling a tree (over 5m tall, measured from ground level).
- Crown thinning, lifting, or reduction requiring work above 3m from ground level.
- Removing roots that threaten property structures.

Housing tenants will be informed of their responsibilities for tree maintenance within their property boundaries at the start of their tenancy by reference to this policy, and any exceptions or specific conditions will be clearly outlined in the tenancy agreement.

For tenants of commercial property, SKDC may place greater maintenance responsibilities on tenants than those described above.

SKDC retains the right to inspect and act on any tree within the boundary of tenanted land if it is deemed hazardous or poses a risk to public safety, or if the tree is (or is likely to) cause structural damage to the property.

2.2.2. Routine Inspections and Maintenance

Any tree(s) located on land owned or managed by SKDC that are outside of a tenanted property will be managed in accordance with the policies set out in Part 4 of this document.

Trees located within private areas of domestic tenanted properties (e.g. private back gardens) and within commercial property will not normally be formally inspected by the council. See paragraph 2.3.3 and part 4 for further detail.

2.2.3. New Tenancy Agreements

SKDC will strive to ensure that when tenants move into a property the outdoor space will be handed over in a condition that reflects the standard the Council expects tenants to maintain. Prior to the start of a new tenancy, SKDC will inspect and carry out any necessary work on trees to ensure they are safe, well-maintained, and free of any hazards. Tenants will be provided with guidance on their responsibilities for ongoing garden and tree maintenance, including any specific requirements related to the condition of trees. This ensures a clear understanding of maintenance expectations from the outset of the tenancy.

2.2.4. Support During Periods of Tenant Incapacity

SKDC recognises that housing tenants may become incapacitated due to illness, disability, or other circumstances that limit their ability to maintain their gardens or care for trees within their property boundaries. To support tenants during these times, SKDC may provide temporary maintenance assistance to tenants who are temporarily unable to maintain their trees due to health-related issues. This assistance will be available for tenants with medical documentation supporting their period of incapacity, and support will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For further information please refer to [Assisted Garden Maintenance Scheme web page](#).

SKDC will adopt a flexible approach, offering reasonable adjustments for tenants experiencing temporary incapacity. This may include temporarily relaxing enforcement of garden maintenance standards or extending timelines for addressing garden upkeep concerns.

2.2.5. Tree Work Requests

SKDC recognises that there may be instances where housing tenants want to request tree work that is beyond their ability or responsibility to

undertake. The Council will only consider requests for tree work that involves tasks that are not reasonable for tenants to perform due to the complexity, scale, or safety risks associated with the work. For example, if the work can be done with ordinary hand tools (i.e. the removal of branches/stems up to 100mm diameter) from ground level in the council's reasonable opinion, SKDC would expect this to be done by the tenant. Tenants are encouraged to make requests for tree work under the following circumstances:

- Safety Concerns: If a tree is dead, dying, or showing signs of serious disease, or shows visible signs of structural defects (cracks etc.) that could pose a risk to people or property, tenants should report it to SKDC. The Council will assess the tree's condition and determine whether pruning or removal is necessary.
- Tree Size and Proximity: If trees that have grown too large for tenants to reasonably manage (e.g. large branches at height or trees requiring specialist equipment for safe pruning) these can be assessed by SKDC, which may take responsibility for pruning or removing them. If the tree size/proximity has become an issue due to a lack of reasonable maintenance by the tenant, the cost of works undertaken by SKDC to resolve the issue may be recharged to the tenant.
- Complex Tree Work: Tenants can request tree work be undertaken by SKDC if it would require specialized equipment that tenants are not expected to have, such as chainsaws or high-reach tools for significant pruning or removal tasks, or if the task involving work at height, or if it involves trees in dangerous locations (e.g. near power lines).

Housing tenants should submit requests for tree work via SKDC's customer service channels: www.southkesteven.gov.uk/feedback; customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk; 01476 406080. Each request will be reviewed to assess whether the work is necessary and falls outside the tenant's reasonable responsibilities. SKDC will communicate the outcome of the assessment and, if tree work is approved, arrange for a qualified contractor to carry out the necessary work.

Unless it is stated otherwise in their lease agreement, commercial tenants will be responsible for all tree related maintenance operations. It will be the responsibility of the tenant to ensure that any tree work is

undertaken safely and competently, in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

2.2.6. Trees Affecting Neighbouring Properties

For any tree(s) located on land owned or managed by SKDC that are outside of a tenanted property, complaints and concerns raised by neighbouring landowners will be dealt with by SKDC in all cases. These issues will be dealt with in accordance with the policies outlined in Part 1 of this document.

For trees in tenanted properties, complaints and concerns raised by neighbouring landowners should be directed to the tenant in the first instance. If the action necessary to resolve the issue falls outside of the tenants' responsibilities as described in paragraph 2.3 below or meets one of the criteria set out in paragraph 2.2.1 above, the tenant may submit a tree work request (see paragraph 2.2.5).

Only where the complainant can demonstrate that they have exhausted all reasonable means of resolving the issue directly with the tenant will SKDC consider reviewing the complaint.

2.3. Responsibilities of Tenants

2.3.1. Routine care and maintenance

The following tasks are considered routine maintenance and fall within the tenant's responsibility:

- Clearing leaves, twigs, and small branches.
- Pruning small, accessible branches that can be safely managed with household tools.

2.3.2. Prohibited Actions

Tenants are not permitted to fell or remove any tree(s) located on their tenanted property with a stem diameter greater than 8cm measured at 1.5m above ground level without prior written consent from SKDC.

Housing tenants are prohibited from undertaking significant pruning or tree work that requires working at height or involves large trees (>8m height). This includes the removal of large branches, canopy reduction, or any work that requires specialist equipment (e.g. chainsaws). Unless it is stated otherwise in their lease agreement, commercial tenants are not prohibited from undertaking this type of work

Where a tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or located within a Conservation Area, tenants must seek the necessary planning consent for the proposed work.

Tenants are prohibited from cutting, damaging, or interfering with tree roots, especially structural roots, without consent from SKDC. This includes actions such as digging near the base of trees, installing new hard landscaping, or excavating trenches.

Tenants are prohibited from applying any herbicides, pesticides, or other chemical treatments to trees without written permission from SKDC.

Tenants are prohibited from lighting fires or using fire pits close to trees, as this can damage the tree bark, roots, and surrounding soil.

Tenants must not intentionally damage trees (e.g. carving into tree trunks, breaking branches, or deliberately poisoning trees).

2.3.3. Reporting Concerns

Housing tenants are expected to take an active role in the safe management of trees within their tenanted properties by promptly reporting any concerns to SKDC. Timely reporting ensures that trees are properly maintained, and any risks to safety, property, or the environment are addressed. Tenants' responsibilities include reporting safety hazards (dangerous trees), signs of disease and/or pests (unusual leaf loss, fungal growth etc.) structural issues (e.g. signs of subsidence), and instances of unauthorised work.

Housing tenants are responsible for reporting tree concerns through SKDC customer services (customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk; telephone – 01476 40 60 80; out of hours telephone – 01476 40 60 40). When reporting concerns, tenants should provide as much detail as possible, including details of the specific issue and the location of the tree within the property, and, if possible, provide photographs, to assist in the assessment.

Note: The responsibilities of housing tenants to report tree safety concerns means that trees located in private tenanted areas (e.g. private back gardens) will not normally be formally inspected by the council. In exceptional circumstances, however, where risk factors such as large tree size and high occupancy warrant it, some trees may be added to the council's schedule of regularly inspected trees. Where this is the case, council officers (or its appointed contractor) will require access to the area from time to time to carry out the inspections.

Unless it is stated otherwise in their lease agreement, commercial tenants will be responsible for all tree related maintenance operations, so would not normally need to report concerns in the same way as housing tenants.

2.4. Enforcement and Penalties

Tenants are responsible for maintaining their trees in accordance with the terms of their tenancy agreement. If the terms of the tenancy agreement are breached SKDC can apply to the Court for a possession order.

2.5. Appeals and Dispute Resolution

If you dissatisfied with a decision taken by SKDC about a tree related matter, the complaints process outlined in [SKDC's Customer Feedback Process](#) should be followed.

2.6. Tree Planting on Tenanted Property

Tenants are encouraged to contribute to the environmental and aesthetic value of their gardens by planting trees, but they must seek written permission from the Council prior to planting any tree. This ensures that the proposed species and location are suitable and do not interfere with existing structures, underground utilities, or future property maintenance.

The tenant is responsible for maintaining any trees they plant, ensuring they do not become a nuisance to neighbouring properties or pose safety risks. The Council reserves the right to request or undertake tree removal if the tree is not maintained or causes issues and may recharge any costs incurred to the tenant.

At the end of the tenancy, the tenant may be required to remove any trees they have planted if they are deemed unsuitable or if they may interfere with future occupancy.

2.7. Prioritisation

In accordance with the prioritisation principle discussed in section i) c) and illustrated in figure 1, work required as a result these scenarios will be assigned one of the category ratings described in Section 4.10, summarised below as follows:

	Priority category	e.g.
Safety related	Safety group 1	Imminent hazard with severe consequences likely
	Safety group 2	Probable hazard with moderate consequences likely
	Safety group 3	Probable hazard with moderate consequences likely
General Management	General Management group 1 – damage	Work required to prevent damage to a structure
	General Management group 2 – obstruction	Work required to maintain access
	General Management group 3 – visibility	Work required to maintain site lines and light splays
	General Management group 4 – nuisance	Work required to resolve a nuisance issue
	General Management group 5 – proactive management	Work required to deliver other social, environmental and economic benefits

2.8. Wildlife and Habitat Considerations

For trees under its management, the Council will consider habitat and wildlife protection as described in sections 1.9 and 3.13. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that any tree maintenance work they undertake complies with all relevant legislation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and any regulations related to the protection of nesting birds, bats, and other protected species. It is the tenant's duty to check for and avoid disturbing wildlife habitats during maintenance activities.

PART 3: Policies relating to trees in closed churchyards

3.1. Introduction

The responsibility for the management of closed churchyards is set out in Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972. This legislation states that if a churchyard has been closed for burials by an Order and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) formally notifies the local authority, the responsibility for its maintenance passes to the local authority. The legal ownership of a closed churchyard is not affected by the transfer of maintenance responsibility.

3.2. Duty of Care

In respect of trees, the duty of care will be managed as set by the policies in Section 4 of this document.

3.3. Service definition

SKDC will only undertake essential works. ‘Essential’ in this context means that either:

- Tree work is required to avoid damage to a built structure or boundary fence; or,
- Tree work is required to maintain access along established/formalised pedestrian and/or maintenance routes; or,
- Tree work that is required to avoid litigation.

Examples of scenarios relevant to the last point in above list are as follows:

- If SKDC was aware that a tree was likely to fail and there was a reasonable chance that failure would result in injury/damage, this would be considered essential, because if SKDC chose to do nothing a claim of negligence could be made against the council.
- If the encroachment of branches was causing material damage to a neighbouring property (rather than just inconvenience), this would be considered essential because it may lead to a claim of nuisance.

Although SKDC are responsible for the management of closed churchyards under Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972, the land, and the trees on it, remain in the ownership of the church. The church can therefore undertake additional non-essential work to achieve aesthetic (or other) objectives as it sees fit.

PART 4: Policies relating to risk management

4.1. Introduction

Although trees provide many environmental, social and economic benefits, they can also pose risks to people and property. In general, the risk of harm from trees is very low, but it is a risk that must be actively managed.

Trees are living structures that sometimes shed branches or fall during severe weather. SKDC can't remove all the risk, but the council will fulfil its duty of care by managing the risk to an acceptable or tolerable level.

SKDC manage and maintain a variety of amenity areas and communal gardens throughout the district, containing trees of different species, ages and conditions. These trees are found in diverse contexts, with some having minimal public access and others seeing regular vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

4.2. Legal Obligations

SKDC has a legal obligation to manage the risk posed by trees which is referred to as a 'Duty of Care'. There are two key pieces of legislation that outline this responsibility:

- The Occupiers Liability Act (1957,1964) places a duty on the occupier of land to take reasonable care to ensure that visitors are safe while on their property.
- The Health and Safety at Work, Etc., Act (1974) requires employers take reasonable steps, as far as is practicable, to ensure that non-employees (the public) are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

In addition to these statutory duties, SKDC also owes a duty of care at common law to all individuals who may be injured by a tree on land it owns, unless that duty has been discharged to another party through a legally binding agreement (e.g. a tenancy agreement). SKDC also owes the same duty of care for trees in their management which are not on council-owned land.

The duty of care involves **taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that cause a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury to persons or damage to property.**

4.3. Industry Guidance

The following policies draw on guidance from several key documents which are currently accepted as best practice for managing the risk from trees:

- Common sense risk management of trees, National Tree Safety Group (NTSG), 2024
- Hazards from trees: A General Guide, Forestry Commission (Lonsdale), 2000

- Tree Surveys: A Guide to Good Practice, The Arboricultural Association (Fay, Dowson, Helliwell), 2005
- Tree Safety Management – Operational Guidance Booklet, Forestry Commission, 2007
- Sector Information Minute 01/2007/05 – Management of the risk from falling trees or branches, HSE, 2013.

4.4. Scope

The following policies outline how the physiological and structural health of the trees under SKDC's control will be monitored to identify foreseeable and unacceptable risks posed to any person owed the duty of care.

Additionally, the policies describe how SKDC will allocate its limited resources for tree management across the various sites under its jurisdiction, ensuring effective prioritization of resources within and between sites.

All land and property under the direct control of SKDC is covered by this policy.

4.5. Strategic Approach

The council's objective is to grow, maintain and conserve trees because of the many benefits they give us. The council aims to manage the risk from tree failure to an acceptable or tolerable level. A risk is 'tolerable' if it is as low as reasonably practicable (i.e. if the costs of risk reduction are much greater than the value of risk reduction).

Zoning will be used to define areas of high confluence (high rates of use or high value, combined with large trees). This zoning will determine the assessment type and interval.

Assessments will be passive and active. A passive assessment is one where the observer is not actively looking for tree risk features but may notice them as they go about their daily routine. Passive assessments can be undertaken by SKDC staff, tenants and members of the public.

A active assessment is one where the observer is actively looking for tree risk features. Active assessments can be basic or detailed. Active assessments will be triggered by a proactive schedule or a reaction to a trigger (i.e. a report from a member of the public, or a severe weather event).

The frequency of active assessments will be based on the zoning.

4.6. Zoning Policy

Zoning is a means of focusing resources where they are most needed and contributes to a cost-effective approach to risk management.

All land and property under the direct control of SKDC will be zoned – see table 1 below.

Table 1. Zone classes for land managed by SKDC

Zone Class	Characteristics
1	Occupancy (likelihood of harm): Used by many people each day Value (Likelihood of damage): High value static target(s) Trees: Large size/mature or older/known features of interest (Most likely to cause harm/damage)
2	Occupancy (likelihood of harm): Used by some people each day Value (Likelihood of damage): Low value static target(s) Trees: Medium size/young or early mature/no known features of interest
3	Occupancy (likelihood of harm): Used by few people. Value (Likelihood of damage): No static target(s) Trees: Small size/young or early mature/no known features of interest
4	Land that does not contain trees Private tenanted land (exceptions may apply) – see notes below

Due to the responsibilities of tenants described in section 2.3.3 above, passive assessments are considered sufficient to manage the risk arising from trees on private tenanted land. In exceptional circumstances, where occupancy, value or tree factors warrant it, some areas of private tenanted land may be classified into other zone categories.

If a passive assessment of a tree on private tenanted land (Zone 4) identifies a feature that needs to be monitored, the individual tree may be recorded and recommended for ongoing active assessment.

4.7. Active Assessments

Active assessments can be basic or detailed.

Basic active assessments will be walkover surveys and ‘visual checks’ intended to identify obvious and significant hazards that need to be escalated to detailed assessments.

Detailed active assessments will include inspections of all trees with a stem diameter over 8cm, measured at 1.5m above ground level, based on the Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) method defined by Mattheck and Breloer (1995). For further details of VTA methodology, please refer to appendix 1.

The type of assessment and the time interval between assessments will be determined by the zone, as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2. Assessment type and interval for each Zone.

Zone Class	Assessment type	Interval
1	Detailed Active	18 months
2	Detailed Active	30 months
3	Basic Active	54 months
4	Passive	n/a (none)

The assessment interval for a particular tree or tree group can be increased beyond the default interval for zone, if it is recommended by the surveyor due to the structural or physiological condition of the tree(s).

4.8. Records

Regardless of the zoning, the Council aims to create a full inventory of all the trees under its control with basic data such as species, age class, height class and stem diameter class.

For trees that have features which may cause nuisance issues, or which raise their risk level above the acceptable level, a range of additional data will be collected.

Assessment of the risk level related to particular tree feature is highly context specific, based on factors such as species, age, and the relationship to nearby targets. The Council will keep individual tree records in a proprietary tree management database system.

4.9. Recommendations for remedial action

Recommendations for a given tree or group of trees resulting can include:

- Escalation to higher level or specialist type of assessment.
- A reduced reassessment interval.
- Remedial action for the tree (e.g. pruning)
- Remedial action for the tree environment (e.g. target management, or treatments that improve the soil environment)
- Remedial action to facilitate a future assessment (e.g. ivy removal).

All recommendations for remedial action will be given a priority rating (see section 4.10 for detail).

4.10. Priority Ratings

If resources were not limited, all recommendations would be acted upon in the shortest possible timeframe. The limited resources available for tree work mean that the council must prioritise recommendations linked to scenarios which present the highest level of

risk. Every recommendation resulting from a formal proactive survey will therefore be given a priority rating.

Priority ratings for safety critical recommendations will be a number from 1 to 3. The protocol for assigning priority ratings is as follows.

Firstly, the feature identified as a hazard will be assigned one of the hazard ratings described in table 3 below, based on the likelihood of failure:

Table 3. Hazard ratings to be applied to features based on the likelihood of a failure occurring.

Likelihood Rating	Example
Improbable	A tree with good vitality, good biomechanical structure, and limited external environmental stressors.
Possible	A tree with compromised vitality and/or biomechanical structure and/or a tree subject to moderately increased external environmental stressors.
Probable	Tree with major biomechanical defects, hazards, and/or physiological decline, and/or a tree with significantly increased external environmental stressors.
Imminent	Tree at imminent risk of collapse due to serious significant defects

Secondly, the identified hazard will be assigned one of the consequence ratings described in table 4 below, based on the context of its setting:

Table 4. Consequence ratings to be applied to identified hazards, based on the harm that may be caused if failure occurred.

Consequence Rating	Example
Negligible	Potential for injuries requiring only minor first aid
Minor	Potential for an injury requiring medical attention
Moderate	Potential for serious injury likely to cause on-going disability
Severe	Potential for serious life-threatening injury or fatality

Lastly, the hazard rating and consequence rating are cross referenced via the matrix shown in table 5 below, to produce a priority rating, as follows:

Table 5. A matrix to determine the priority rating based on the hazard and consequence rating.

Consequence Rating ↓	Priority Rating			
	2	3	n/a	n/a
Negligible	2	3	3	n/a
Minor	2	3	3	n/a
Moderate	1	2	3	3
Severe	1	1	2	2
Hazard Rating →	Imminent	Probable	Possible	Improbable

The protocol for assigning priority ratings to safety critical recommendations is a basic form of risk assessment. The terms used are qualitative and broad but are sufficient for the intended purpose: to prioritise recommended works to ensure that limited resources are prioritised to scenarios which present the highest level of risk.

Recommendations for work which is not safety critical will be categorised as 'General Management' (GM) and be assigned to one of the subcategories described in table 6 below. In terms of their priority rating, all GM recommendations will be a lower priority rating than any safety critical recommendation. However, for logistical reasons some GM recommendations may be undertaken before safety critical recommendations, if they can be done at the same time as safety critical works being carried out in the same location at minimal additional cost.

Table 6. Subcategories of general management recommendation.

Sub-category code	Name	Example (e.g. ...)
GM-1	Damage prevention	Where work is required to prevent (further) damage to a structure or infrastructure
GM-2	Obstruction to access	Where work is required to maintain reasonable access along a highway or footpath.
GM-3	Visibility issues	Where work is required to maintain/restore visibility to a highway junction or amenity area or maintain/restore the effective functioning of street/security lighting.
GM-4	Nuisance issues and/or neighbour relations	Where work is required to prevent or abate a nuisance issue such as leaf litter, or to maintain good neighbouring relations by dealing with any situation causing a neighbouring landowner concern.
GM-5	Proactive management	Where work will deliver social, environmental, or economic benefits.

4.11. Surveyor Competency

Detailed active assessments will be undertaken by a competent person who holds a RQF level 3 accreditation in arboriculture (or higher) OR a Lantra Professional Tree Inspection Qualification.

Basic active assessments will be conducted by someone who holds a Lantra Basic Tree Inspection Qualification.

4.12. Private Neighbouring Trees

Where a privately-owned tree situated on neighbouring land is believed to pose an unacceptable risk to targets on council land, the landowner will be contacted in writing to be made aware of the issue. Access to the affected area may be restricted or prohibited until the risk has been addressed.

Section 23 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows SKDC to deal with trees on private land that pose an immediate danger to the people or property, however, it is beyond the scope of this policy to describe the accepted protocols for utilising these powers.

4.13. Wildlife and Habitat Considerations

The policies described above (3.1 to 3.12) are intended to manage the risk posed by council-owned trees. Whenever remedial tree work is required, there is the possibility that this could have an unintended negative impact on local wildlife and biodiversity. The main areas of concern are bats, birds and the loss of deadwood

4.13.1. Bats

Bats are known to roost in several features commonly found in trees such as hollows, holes, cracks, loose bark and thick ivy. It will be the responsibility of SKDC's appointed contractors to undertake the necessary checks for bats prior to undertaking the specified tree work.

4.13.2. Birds

Birds can nest in trees from March to August. No recommended tree work designated as 'general management' (refer to table 6) will be undertaken during this period. Tree work designated as 'safety critical' may be undertaken during the nesting period if suitable checks have determined that disturbance of nesting birds is unlikely or if the risk identified is immediate and significant and no other options are available to manage the situation.

4.13.3. Deadwood

Deadwood habitats are vital for a wide range of plants, fungi, animals, and micro-organisms. Council-owned trees are often in urban locations where the retention of standing deadwood would create an unacceptable risk. If deadwood cannot be retained without posing an unacceptable risk, we will consider the risk posed could be adequately managed by shortening the dead branch/stem rather than completely removing it. If it is not feasible to retain any standing deadwood, we will consider whether it is possible to retain deadwood nearby on the ground (without causing an obstruction, nuisance issues, or introducing a new hazard).

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APPENDICES

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Appendix 1 – additional information about the visual tree assessment methodology

The Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) method was developed by Claus Mattheck and is an internationally acknowledged method for tree inspection. It is a logical, systematic, and diagnostic approach which aims to identify trees with reasonably foreseeable defects, hazards, or features that may indicate dysfunction in the structural integrity or physiological vitality of the tree.

There are 3 stages to the inspection process:

- I. **Inspection** – conducted from ground level to identify features which may be a symptom of compromised structural or physiological condition. It is a visual assessment only.
- II. **Examination** – conducted from ground level or as an aerial inspection, as required, to confirm the presence or absence of a suspected defect. Only basic tools are involved such as a probe and sounding mallet.
- III. **Measurement** - conducted from ground level or as an aerial inspection, as required, to measure the extent of the defect and calculate/estimate the remaining strength of the affected part. It is likely to include the use of advanced tools such as resistance measuring drills or sound velocity measuring devices.

Limitations of a Stage 1 VTA:

The majority of tree inspections undertaken will be Stage 1 VTAs. It is important that the limitations of this method are documented and understood.

- A3.1. Trees are living organisms and can decline in health rapidly due to biotic and abiotic influences. Therefore, failure of intact trees can never be ruled out due to the laws and forces of nature. An example being extreme wind speeds.
- A3.2. No invasive means of investigation are used at this stage. No detailed decay measurements shall be taken. No soil or foliage samples shall be taken. The requirement for any further investigation (Stage 2) or discussion shall be identified during the Stage 1 investigation and presented as a recommendation.

- A3.3. No soil profile assessment shall be made. For this reason, the failure of a tree because of ground failure, such as landslip, cannot be ruled out. Where the inspector identifies the potential for failure in such a manner, however, they shall make a recommendation for further investigation.
- A3.4. Recent excavation or ground works near a tree may have resulted in structural roots being damaged or severed, and that damage being hidden by deposited soil or a new structure. For this reason, the failure of a tree because of hidden root damage or dysfunction cannot be ruled out. Comments shall be made, however, for trees which have obviously and most likely been affected.
- A3.5. Only the trees within the areas indicated on the associated maps shall be assessed and presented in the reporting.
- A3.6. Although limitations shall exist within these investigations, it is believed that all reasonably practicable steps are being taken to identify and address unacceptable risk, and that the duty of care has been met by the author, the surveyor, the manager, and the tree owner.

References

The body language of trees: A handbook for failure analysis. Mattheck, Breloer. TSO. 1994.

The Body Language of Trees: Encyclopaedia (sic) of Visual Tree Assessment. Mattheck, Bethge, Weber. KIT. 2015.

SKDC Tree Management Policies

10-Year Cost Modelling for Implementation of Proposed Tree Risk Management Policy

Modelled costs of existing survey protocol:

NKDC Survey Area	No. Arbortrack records	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Total
Area 1 - NE Grantham	2020	£7,070.00			£7,070.00			£7,070.00			£7,070.00	£28,280.00
Area 2 - SW Grantham + Villages	2216		£7,756.00			£7,756.00			£7,756.00			£23,268.00
Area 2 - Towns	1526			£5,341.00			£5,341.00			£5,341.00		£16,023.00
Total	5762	£7,070.00	£7,756.00	£5,341.00	£7,070.00	£7,756.00	£5,341.00	£7,070.00	£7,756.00	£5,341.00	£7,070.00	£67,571.00
Annual software fee		£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£1,250.00	£12,500.00
TOTAL		£8,320.00	£9,006.00	£6,591.00	£8,320.00	£9,006.00	£6,591.00	£8,320.00	£9,006.00	£6,591.00	£8,320.00	£80,071.00

Notes

Survey cost (£/tree) = £3.50

'Arbortrack records' is a GIS point dataset available in Statmap that shows individual tree records (excluding archived trees) that was exported from NKDC's Arbortrack database in November 2023

Excludes Arbortrack polygons

The annual software fee is the current annual fee charged by NKDC for access to their Arbortrack database

Modelled costs of proposed survey protocol:

	No. Arbortrack records	Inspection Interval (months)	0	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60
Zone 1	352	18											
NKDC #1	285		£997.50			£997.50			£997.50			£997.50	
NKDC #2	0				£0.00			£0.00			£0.00		
NKDC #3	67					£234.50			£234.50			£234.50	
Zone 2	4396	30											
NKDC #1	1289		£4,511.50				£4,511.50					£4,511.50	
NKDC #2	1792				£6,272.00				£6,272.00				
NKDC #3	1315					£4,602.50				£4,602.50			
Zone 3 - EXTERNAL	517	54											
NKDC #1	317		£1,109.50							£1,109.50			
NKDC #2	155				£542.50								
NKDC #3	45					£157.50							
Zone 3 - INTERNAL	402		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
Zone 4 (total)	95	(18)	£166.25										£166.25
			£6,784.75	£0.00	£6,814.50	£997.50	£4,994.50	£4,677.75	£997.50	£6,506.50	£0.00	£6,709.50	£4,912.25
Annual software fee			£1,280.00		£680.00		£680.00		£680.00		£680.00		£680.00
TOTAL	5762		£8,064.75	£0.00	£7,494.50	£997.50	£5,674.50	£4,677.75	£1,677.50	£6,506.50	£680.00	£6,709.50	£5,592.25

Notes

- Survey cost (£/tree) = £3.50
- 'Arbortrack records' is a GIS point dataset available in Statmap that shows individual tree records (excluding archived trees) that was exported from NKDC's Arbortrack database in November 2023
- Excludes Arbortrack polygons
- The annual software fee is the expected annual fee for OTISS, with an initial setup fee included in year 0
- 95 trees were found within areas designated as Zone 4 (which would not normally receive formal inspections). It was assumed that these trees would continue to be inspected on an 18-month cycle.
- The timing of the initial survey of a particular zoned area will depend on its position relative to the three areas defined under the existing system. Or to put it another way, the timing of the initial survey of a Zone 1 area will depend on whether that zone sits within NKDC Area 1, 2 or 3.

66	72	78	84	90	96	102	108	114	120	
	£997.50			£997.50			£997.50			
£0.00			£0.00			£0.00			£0.00	
		£234.50			£234.50			£234.50		
			£4,511.50					£4,511.50		
			£6,272.00			£6,272.00			£4,602.50	
				£4,602.50				£4,602.50		
					£1,109.50				£542.50	
£542.50		£157.50							£166.25	
	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	
				£166.25					£166.25	
£542.50	£7,269.50	£392.00	£4,602.50	£5,675.25	£234.50	£6,272.00	£2,107.00	£4,837.00	£5,220.25	£80,547.25
		£680.00		£680.00		£680.00		£680.00		£8,080.00
£542.50	£7,949.50	£392.00	£5,282.50	£5,675.25	£914.50	£6,272.00	£2,787.00	£4,837.00	£5,900.25	£88,627.25

Comparison of existing vs proposed:

10-year costs:	Current	Proposed	Difference (£)	Difference (%)
Surveys	£67,571.00	£80,547.25	-£12,976.25	16
Software	£12,500.00	£8,080.00	£4,420.00	-55
Total	£80,071.00	£88,627.25	-£8,556.25	10



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 10 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 scrutinises the 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? Sustainable South Kesteven

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, which is for noting.

Completed by: David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance (Deputy 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: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

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 purview of this Committee with accompanying measures were presented to and agreed by the Committee on 19 March 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 twelve actions being presented in this session. Commentary by the responsible officer is provided for each action. Performance is summarised using a RAG system as follows:
- 3.3 Eight of the actions are rated Green. These are actions which are on or above target as planned.
- 3.4 Three 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 Zero actions are rated as Red. These are actions that are significantly below target.
- 3.6 One action is classed as N/A. These are actions for which the reporting cycle is yet to commence e.g. being sequenced on the completion of other items, or where data is unavailable.
- 3.7 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 corporate plan delivery period. 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: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26

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Corporate Plan 2024-27: KPI Summary Report Q2 2025/26 – Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee							
Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Quarterly Overall Status			
				Q3 2024/25	Q4 2024/25	Q1 2025/26	Q2 2025/26
ENVIRO1	Sustainable South Kesteven	Deliver the Climate Change Action Strategy programme.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ENVIRO2	Sustainable South Kesteven	Continue to reduce operational emissions to achieve the target of a 30% reduction on 2019 by 2030 and develop modelling to set a target of achieving Net Zero operations as soon as viable.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ENVIRO3	Sustainable South Kesteven	Review and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities across the corporate estate, such as solar panels and EV chargers.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	On Target	On Target	On Target	Below Target
ENVIRO7	Sustainable South Kesteven	Adopt a Tree and Woodland Strategy and deliver the accompanying action plan.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ENVIRO8	Sustainable South Kesteven	Ensure that biodiversity net gain is embedded through corporate projects and operations	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ENVIRO9	Sustainable South Kesteven	Continue to tackle waste related crimes, including fly tipping with support from the Environmental Crime Partnership	Head of Service (Public Protection)	Below Target	On Target	Below Target	Below Target
ENVIRO10	Sustainable South Kesteven	Manage a smooth implementation of twin stream recycling to improve the recycling rate and reduce contamination.	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ENVIRO11	Sustainable South Kesteven	Develop and implement an effective process for the collection of food waste. (Food waste collection mandatory from 31st March 2026)	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ENVIRO12	Sustainable South Kesteven	Deliver a range of schemes to improve the recycling rate.	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
ENVIRO13	Sustainable South Kesteven	Manage the construction and transition to a new depot, that is fit for purpose, and explore options for the old depot	Head of Service (Property and ICT)	On Target	On Target	On Target	Below Target
ENVIRO14	Sustainable South Kesteven	Develop and deliver the Fleet Management strategy and accompanying action plan.	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target

ENVIRO15	Sustainable South Kesteven	Review and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities within private properties in the district.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	On Target	On Target	N/A	On Target
Corporate Plan 2024-27: KPI Summary Report Q2 2025/26 – Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee							
Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
ENVIRO1	Sustainable South Kesteven	Deliver the Climate Change Action Strategy programme.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	Development & Approval of Action Plan	Draft Climate Action Plan developed	On Target	The draft Climate Action Plan has been developed, including 64 actions from across all Council service areas. The Plan will be presented to Environment OSC on 10 November 2025.
ENVIRO2	Sustainable South Kesteven	Continue to reduce operational emissions to achieve the target of a 30% reduction on 2019 by 2030 and develop modelling to set a target of achieving Net Zero operations as soon as viable.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	Reduction in SKDC carbon emissions.	29.24% reduction as of end 2024/25 FY	On Target	A reduction of 29.24% was reported for the 2024/25 financial year. Further projects are expected to contribute to a continued reduction for 2025/26. The ongoing decarbonisation project at Grantham Meres leisure centre is due to be completed in early 2026 and will deliver a significant carbon reduction from 2026/27.
ENVIRO3	Sustainable South Kesteven	Review and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities across the corporate estate, such as solar panels and EV chargers.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	Charging Point Utilisation Percentage (15%)	11.48%	Below Target	Overall use of chargers at Stamford North Street reduced from 38% in Q1 to 28% in Q2. New chargers were installed at Stamford Cattlemarket during the reporting period.
ENVIRO7	Sustainable South Kesteven	Adopt a Tree and Woodland Strategy and deliver the accompanying action plan.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	% delivery of actions included in the Tree and Woodlands Action Plan	Specific workstream KPIs developed for OSC approval	On Target	Tree Management policies have been developed and are due to be presented to Environment OSC on 10 November 2025. A draft series of workstream KPIs have been developed for presentation to Environment OSC.

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
ENVIRO8	Sustainable South Kesteven	Ensure that biodiversity net gain is embedded through corporate projects and operations	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	Develop and deliver a Biodiversity Action Plan.	Action Plan developed for OSC presentation.	On Target	The Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed with input from all relevant services, including Streetscene, Parks, Planning Policy and Development Management. The Action Plan will be presented to Environment OSC in November 2025. Once approved, the Plan will be implemented from Q4 2025/26.
ENVIRO9	Sustainable South Kesteven	Continue to tackle waste related crimes, including fly tipping with support from the Environmental Crime Partnership	Head of Service (Public Protection)	Number of enforcement actions undertaken when evidence of an offence is available.	No. of fly tips with evidence in Q2 is 35. Of those investigations 2 Community Protection Warning Notices were issued and 4 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued.	On Target	In Q2 17% of cases have had a positive enforcement outcome (where evidence is found). The number of fly tips with evidence increased from 5 in Q1 to 35 in Q2. The team issued 2 fixed penalties and 4 community protection warnings in Q2 and investigations are continuing which may result in some cases going for prosecution. It is important to note that an investigation can take a considerable amount of time and many are not concluded within a quarter. While evidence is obtained from flytips it does not always lead to the perpetrator meaning the case would not have a positive outcome in terms of enforcement action.
ENVIRO10	Sustainable South Kesteven	Manage a smooth implementation of twin stream recycling to improve the recycling rate and reduce contamination.	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	% of households with access to the twin stream recycling service. (1% quarterly growth on baseline 88%)	90%	On Target	Rollout of the waste collection round restructure was undertaken in Q2 2025/26. An extensive communications package was delivered in August 2025, including letters to all residents. Overall, the rollout has been a success. A notable increase in complaints and service requests related to assisted collections has been recorded in the transition, which the Crews and office staff in the Waste team are working to resolve. In September 2025, the Council was recognised as the Best Service Team for Waste, Recycling and Street Scene at the Association for Public Service Excellence for performance in 2024/25.
				% of households rejected for non-target waste within the recycling stream.	0.15% (Paper & Card), 1.07% (Dry Mixed Recycling). 0.61% Combined	On Target	
				Proportion of total recycling waste collected which is paper and card. (35%)	43%	On Target	

South Kesteven District Council - Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2024-27 KPI Report: Environment OSC End-Year (Q2) 2025/26

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
ENVIRO11	Sustainable South Kesteven	Develop and implement an effective process for the collection of food waste. (Food waste collection mandatory from 31st March 2026)	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	Work with relevant stakeholders to establish a project group and Action Plan for implementation		On Target	Mandatory weekly food waste collections are due to start in April 2026. The Council has received the delivery of the food waste receptacles. Elected Members have been briefed on the forthcoming changes in two sessions over the summer.
ENVIRO12	Sustainable South Kesteven	Deliver a range of schemes to improve the recycling rate.	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	Domestic waste recycled per household (55 KG)	75kg	On Target	South Kesteven's contamination continues to fall, achieving the lowest quarterly average contamination rate. Garden waste has had a successful start to the 25/26 subscription period with a 4% increase achieved in Q1. Waste recycled per household has also achieved a significant increase from the previous period and is currently 20Kg above target. A 15kg increase was observed on Q1 2025/26. The figure for the comparative quarter in 2024/25 was 60kg. A decrease in waste recycled per household is expected for Q3 2025/26 in line with seasonal changes to waste streams observed in previous years.
				Increase uptake of the garden waste recycling service. (Target 1% growth)	4%	On Target	
				% of non-recyclable materials in the recycling stream. (15%)	6%	On Target	
ENVIRO13	Sustainable South Kesteven	Manage the construction and transition to a new depot, that is fit for purpose, and explore options for the old depot	Head of Service (Property and ICT)	Construction Completion (November 2025)	Construction has continued on site, a four week delay in construction has been reported of which 2 weeks will be absorbed in the mobilisation phase.	Below Target	Works have continued to progress following commencement on site in October 2024. A four week delay has been reported by the contractor, two weeks of which can be absorbed into the mobilisation phase by consolidation of the mobilisation programme. This results in a new Go Live date of 1 December 2025.

South Kesteven District Council - Appendix A – Corporate Plan 2024-27 KPI Report: Environment OSC End-Year (Q2) 2025/26

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
ENVIRO14	Sustainable South Kesteven	Develop and deliver the Fleet Management strategy and accompanying action plan.	Head of Waste Management & Market Services	Develop and adopt Strategy	Strategy adopted. Action Plan developed for OSC presentation.	On Target	The Fleet Strategy commenced on 1 April 2025. The Fleet Strategy Action Plan has been developed for presentation to Environment OSC in November 2025. Once agreed, actions will commence from Q4 2025/26.
ENVIRO15	Sustainable South Kesteven	Review and implement energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities within private properties in the district.	Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	Number of properties improved	Next round of the Warm Homes: Local Grant mobilises in October 2025.	On Target	The HUG2 scheme closed at the end of 2024/25 financial year. Allocation of funding has been confirmed for the next three years for the Lincolnshire partnership. Governance and procurement have been completed for the next round of funding under Warm Homes: Local Grant. The programme will mobilise from October 2025 onwards.

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SOUTH
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COUNCIL

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 10 November 2025

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Green Fleet Action Plan Update

Report Author

Kay Boasman, Head of Waste Management and Market Services

 kayleigh.boasman@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on the timetable for the implementation of the actions highlighted within the Green Fleet Strategy 2025 - 2028, following its approval by Cabinet in January 2025.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the Action Plan and associated timescales for delivery.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Sustainable South Kesteven

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 Green Fleet Strategy sets out actions to encourage efficient vehicle use which will maximise the use of the fleet of vehicles operated by the Council and help to manage the need for additional vehicles as service requirements expand.
- 1.2 The measures to adopt cleaner technologies and fuels include some actions that do or will have an associated budget for implementation. This is included in further detail at Appendix 1.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 To demonstrate good governance and leadership on the Council's stated ambition of meeting the net-zero carbon target of a 30% reduction by 2030, it is important that Members are updated on progress of the Green Fleet Strategy.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.4 The Council's vehicle fleet remains a significant contributor to overall greenhouse gas emissions, being responsible for 36% of reported emissions in the most recent 2024/25 year. The ongoing implementation of the Green Fleet Strategy will tackle fuel consumption through managing demand and maximising efficiency, whilst also implementing alternative technologies where appropriate including electrification of vehicles and alternative fuels.
- 1.5 These initiatives will be implemented and monitored over the lifetime of the Strategy and, alongside reducing carbon emissions, will also contribute to improvement of local air quality through reduced emissions.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Green Fleet Strategy 2025-28 was designed as an enabling Strategy which will transform the way SKDC considers the environmental impact of its fleet of vehicles. It is the first Green Fleet Strategy the authority has considered. While the Council is on track to achieve its interim target of a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from its 2018/19 baseline, the fleet is now the largest single category contributing to the Council's annual emissions. It is therefore important that an action plan to drive down emissions associated with operation of fleet vehicles is implemented, to support the Council's longer-term ambition of reaching net zero as soon as viable before 2050. The strategy has been designed to enable a flexible approach to making important changes to the way vehicles are procured and used.
- 2.2. The draft Strategy was taken to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th December 2024. The Committee reviewed the Strategy and recommended the Strategy to Cabinet, where it was approved on 16th January 2025.
- 2.3. The current fleet is made up of over 150 vehicles which are used across multiple service areas including Housing, Waste and Street Scene. The vehicles vary in size and type and cover everything from basic cars through to refuse collection vehicles. These vehicles are vital to the delivery of effective and efficient services in a district which is both geographically large and predominantly rural.
- 2.4. The Strategy focusses on the following areas:
 - **Adopting cleaner technologies and fuels** – embedding green criteria (for example choosing electric vehicles where feasible) within the Council's procurement process to encourage the exploration of alternative vehicles.
 - **Encouraging efficient vehicle use** – introduce a system for monitoring and analysing vehicle usage across all service areas to explore how to reduce overall fuel use.
 - **Managing demand** – reducing mileage, encouraging efficient journey planning and optimising routes. This will include rationalising the fleet to reduce the number of vehicles required where possible and ascertaining where vehicle life cycles can be extended. Current practices will be examined and improved to ensure demand is managed to maximise resource efficiency.
 - **Improving supporting infrastructure** – the new depot project (due to complete in late 2025) offers the opportunity to increase the number of EV charging points. This increase will influence the vehicle replacement schedule moving forward.

2.5. The Strategy is formatted to highlight what the Council wants to achieve and how they will achieve it. This is presented as:

1. **Vision and Key Objectives** – this section sets out the high-level vision of the Council and highlights the agreed key objectives, which will remain the same throughout the period of the Strategy. They form the basis of this Strategy and are essential for building a solid foundation for a change of culture around fleet management.
2. **Action Plans** – this will be a living document. It will be reviewed and updated annually, to reflect any changes in strategic direction, policy or legislation. The action plans will be monitored to identify strengths and weaknesses. These will help guide decisions made at the annual review. The key KPI's will 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 will take time to implement, are key to the long-term success of the green fleet aspiration.

2.6. The Strategy is made up of three key Outcomes; each Outcome has a separate Action Plan which sets out how the Outcome will be delivered and measured. The three outcomes are:

1. Facilitate the transition to a carbon neutral fleet through the usage of green technology including electric vehicles and alternative fuels,
2. Facilitate the transition to greener driving behaviours and more effective fleet usage by ensuring vehicles are used as efficiently as possible and eliminating unnecessary journeys, and
3. Ensure the fleet is fit for present and future service delivery.

2.7. Appendix 1 contains an operational delivery Action Plan which combines the three separate Action Plans contained within the Strategy document. This workable delivery plan outlines timescales, costs and resource requirements, and is an outline of the practical steps SKDC will take to achieve the vision and key objectives laid out within the Strategy.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. The costs of delivering the Strategy must be considered and additional costs will be considered through the annual budget setting process.

3.2. For 2026/27 a revenue budget bid has been made for the alternative fuel commitment. Currently, HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) is a more expensive fuel than diesel and transferring one third of our fuel usage to HVO in year 1 will increase fuel costs by £50,000. This will increase the current spending on fuel by around 5.6%. However, this is expected to reduce the carbon emissions associated with operating the whole fleet by between one quarter and one third. This is equivalent to a 6-8% total carbon reduction against the Council's baseline.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1. No other options have been considered at this time.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1. The report recommends that the Committee note the Action Plan and associated timescales. The Action Plan shown in Appendix 1 will enable the Council to deliver the Fleet Strategy within the agreed timescales.

5.2. All the actions contained within the Action Plan are taken directly from the Green Fleet Strategy. The Action Plan in Appendix 1 highlights the timescales and resource requirements for the delivery of the strategy and it should be noted that it does not contain any new actions.

6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix 1: Green Fleet Strategy Action Plan

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Appendix 1: Green Fleet Strategy Action Plan

Key Indicator	Actions		Outcomes	Timescale	Cost / Resources
Outcome 1: Facilitate the transition to a carbon neutral fleet through the usage of green technology including electric vehicles and alternative fuels					
Annual reduction in vehicle CO2 emissions through utilisation of alternative fuels and electric/hybrid vehicles where feasible	1.1a	Year on year increase in the use of HVO (or another suitable alternative).	Year on year increase in the use of alternative, low emission fuels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 in 2026/27 • 2/3 in 27/28 • Fully utilised by 28/29 	£50,000 in year 1 £100,000 in year 2 £150,000 in year 3
	1.1b	Replace vehicles with electronic alternatives as replacements become due, in-line with budget, procurement and infrastructure requirements. This will include 4 x EV's within this 3-year period.	Ensure 4 electric vehicles are included within the vehicle replacement programme for the next 3 years, in line with infrastructure allowances at the new depot	Additional vehicles procured by 31 st March 2027	Procured within current vehicle replacement budget. (Electric vehicle cost varies greatly by type of vehicle, and any additional costs will be included within the budget setting process).
	1.1c	Introduce a BEV procurement policy that follows a clear process to prioritise BEV purchases (based on highest efficiency and the greatest potential to reduce GHG emissions). The process should consider utilisation, whole life costs and emissions as part of the vehicle procurement.	Review all current fleet-related policies and processes with a view to embedding the 'green fleet' principles	September 2026	Officer time
Establish an E-vehicle home charging trial for vehicles which are stored at home overnight	1.2a	Create a business case for the implementation of the trial, if successful, roll out the trial and monitor performance.	Collect data throughout the trial period to ascertain the success of the trial and the viability of rolling this out more widely within the council	31 st March 2026	Officer time
	1.2b	Once complete, analyse the success of the trial and ascertain if this can be rolled out on a larger scale.	Establish a programme for further roll out	31 st March 2027	Estimated cost of £1,500 per charging point

Outcome 2: Facilitate the transition to greener driving behaviours and more effective fleet usage by ensuring vehicles are used as efficiently as possible and eliminating unnecessary journeys					
Establish baseline data for current fleet usage which covers the usage of council owned vehicles, pool cars and grey fleet.	2.1a	Create baseline from existing data and identify areas for improvement.	Established baseline data set which clearly defines starting position to track progress against	31 st December 2025	Officer time
	2.1b	Where possible, benchmark data against other local authorities and identify where best practice can be shared.	Identify suitable network which offers benchmarking against like for like authorities	31 st March 2026	Officer time
Undertake a vehicle utilisation assessment and route review and establish areas for improved efficiency.	2.2a	Undertake vehicle utilisation review and establish vehicles which are under-utilised and explore alternative options.	Annual review of vehicle utilisation which aligns with the council's vehicle replacement programme to ensure there isn't a vehicle surplus	31 st March 2026 Follow-up assessments to take place annually	Officer time
	2.2b	Undertake a route review for each service area and establish areas where route optimisation would be effective.	Introduce optimised routes for all service areas alongside a process for regular route optimisation assessments	30 th September 2026	Officer time
	2.2c	Establish mechanism within the Transport User Group (Outcome 3) to monitor and improve vehicle utilisation and route optimisation.	The creation of a mechanism which allows high-level monitoring of performance through the user group	31 st March 2026	Officer time
Work with each service area to identify best practice driving behaviours and how these can be rolled out to their team.	2.3a	Establish training plan for all employees who are required to drive council vehicles.	Training plan to be rolled out to relevant service areas within one year of strategy adoption	31 st March 2026	Officer time
	2.3b	Create monitoring process which allows poor driving behaviours to be identified and rectified through training and education.	The creation of key KPI's which allow high-level monitoring of performance through the user group	31 st March 2026	Officer time

Outcome 3 Ensure the fleet is fit for present and future service delivery					
Ensure SKDC's fleet and Operating Centres remain compliant with the conditions of the Operator's Licence.	3.1a	To ensure that all requirements of the operators' licence requirements are met, including vehicle maintenance, inspections, driving hours and behaviour.	Services continue to run seamlessly with no disruption to service delivery	Ongoing	Officer time
Retain 'Green' OCRS (Operator Compliance Risk Score) status.	3.2a	To ensure that vehicles are always maintained to a high standard and are properly prepared in advance of their annual MOT.	Seamless delivery of transport services	Ongoing	Officer time
	3.2b	To ensure Mechanics are trained and accredited to ensure they have the necessary skills required.	Continuous and safe delivery of service	Ongoing	Officer time
Establish a Transport User Group to monitor policy compliance and driver behaviour across all departments using vehicles. The group will establish terms of reference and relevant KPI's in line with policies.	3.3a	Establish the group including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership, • Meeting interval, • Terms of reference, • KPI's, and Roles and responsibilities.	Establish group, and establish KPI's for performance and improvement monitoring at initial meeting of the group	31 st December 2025	Officer time
	3.3b	Monitor and feedback progress through annual corporate performance reporting through the Corporate Plan.	Incorporate agreed KPI's into the corporate performance monitoring process within first year of strategy adoption	1 st April 2026	Officer time
Health and Safety – ensure Risk Assessments and relevant documents are reviewed annually and after any significant incident.	3.4a	Undertake annual review of risk assessments and safe systems of work.	Completion of annual review of relevant RA's and SSOW	Completed annually through established internal processes	Officer time
	3.4b	Undertake additional reviews when relevant in-line with legislation updates, policy changes and health and safety recommendations.	Undertake additional reviews when required and as advised by the corporate Health and Safety team	As required	Officer time

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 10 November 2025

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker,
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven

Report Author

Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

 serena.brown@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present to the committee the draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the content of the draft Climate Action Plan
2. Recommend to Cabinet to approve the adoption of the final Climate Action Plan, inclusive of any relevant amendments suggested by Committee members
3. Note the proposed reporting schedule on the Climate Action Plan

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Sustainable South Kesteven

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 draft Climate Action Plan includes a column on the estimated cost for South Kesteven District Council of implementing the action, in order to provide a reference guide for the cost of actions. This level of detail does not consider factors such as grant funding contributions or expected payback periods on investment.
- 1.2 The Council has an existing climate change reserve of £500k for the 2025/26 financial year, which was established to help respond to the budgetary pressures driven by the increasing cost of energy, and the Council's stated ambition of carbon reduction across the Council's property portfolio. It is expected that the Committee will continue to receive annual reports on utilisation of the climate change reserve, including detail on projects funded and expected cost, energy and carbon savings.
- 1.3 Multiple projects referred to within the draft Climate Action Plan have their own budgetary remit outside of the climate change reserve. Where a project included in the draft Climate Action Plan is in the feasibility stage, each project will need to make a budget bid on a case-by-case basis in order to progress.
- 1.4 To date a total of £406k has been committed towards climate change projects which will be funded from the reserve allocation leaving a remaining £94k for further projects.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.5 It is good practice for a local authority to present a strategy on the issues and impacts of climate change within the district. South Kesteven District Council is one of the local authorities to have formally declared a climate emergency, which set carbon reduction targets for Council operations. The climate emergency declaration also noted the wider leadership potential of the Council to help fulfil the UK government's national target to reach net zero by 2050, and this activity helps to clarify that role.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.6 The South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy, approved by Cabinet in 2023, sets out the Council's role in facilitating the transition to net zero carbon for the whole district of South Kesteven. The Climate Action Plan provides a workplan for the goals of the Climate Action Strategy to ensure continued progress against local and national net-zero carbon goals and associated co-benefits.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. There is a clear role for local government to shape, drive, and deliver local action on climate change. South Kesteven District Council made a formal declaration of climate emergency on 26 September 2019 with cross party support. Alongside this, the Council confirmed the ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by at least 30% by 2030, and to endeavour to become net-zero as soon as viable before 2050. Over three-quarters of local authorities in the UK have now taken the step of declaring a climate emergency
- 2.2. Following this declaration of climate emergency, the Council's updated carbon footprint was established, using baseline data from 2018/19, which was presented to [Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21st July 2020](#). This signalled some of the major categories of carbon emissions arising from council operations and highlighted projects to pursue to reduce carbon emissions.
- 2.3. South Kesteven District Council has continued to publish updates on progress towards the outlined carbon emissions target from the 2018/19 year onwards. **The latest report covering the 2024/25 period reported a total carbon emissions reduction of 29.24%**, discussed in detail at a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on [23rd September 2025](#).
- 2.4. The Council has also developed and delivered several key projects which contribute to either energy and carbon reduction for council operations, contributing to a reduction in operational carbon emissions, or energy and carbon reduction for the wider district. These initiatives include:
 - Upgrading all SKDC-owned streetlights to energy efficient LEDs
 - Grantham Meres leisure centre decarbonisation, including installing a modern, upgraded heat pump heating system and additional solar PV panels to reduce running costs
 - Establishment of a climate change reserve fund for both General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts

- Publication of a Green Fleet Strategy for South Kesteven, to drive forward efficiency and decarbonisation targets for Council owned vehicles
- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation upgrades for Council owned tenanted properties, with matched support from government *Warm Homes Plan* funding since 2021
- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation upgrades for eligible private properties in South Kesteven, via support from government *Warm Homes Plan* funding since 2022

2.5. The Council published its first Climate Action Strategy, endorsed by Cabinet in [November 2023](#), following an extensive consultation exercise and engagement with Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Strategy was developed to set out South Kesteven District Council's aspirations to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change both within Council operations and the wider district.

2.6. The Climate Action Strategy sets out eight key Themes, reflecting the broad scope of work needed to effectively address climate change for South Kesteven. These Themes are the framework for the draft Climate Action Plan presented:

- Built Environment
- Power
- Growing our Green Economy
- Natural Environment
- Transport
- Resources
- Communities
- Decision Making

2.7. The draft Climate Action Plan, included at Appendix A, provides a workplan from across service areas of the Council consisting of 64 ongoing, short or medium term actions. Each of these actions includes one or more co-benefits. It is important to recognise that, beyond the uniting theme of delivering carbon emissions reductions or adapting to severe weather, actions will also provide wider benefit for people, economic growth and the wider environment.

2.8. Each of the outlined actions includes a lead officer who is responsible for the implementation or ongoing delivery of the project. The draft Climate Action Plan also includes a framework for delivery that sets out the remit of the action. These have been defined as the following, to help distinguish the benefit of the action:

	Focus	Example
Council	Council operational activity and emissions	Project to reduce energy use in council owned buildings; reducing fuel consumption from Council owned vehicles

District	Statutory and non-statutory Council delivered services within the District	Project to reduce energy use in private properties; provision of electric vehicle charging points for car park users
Communities	Leadership, lobbying, partnership working and communications	Communications to raise awareness for residents; working alongside partners on response to flood events

2.9. The purpose of the draft Climate Action Plan is 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. Effective monitoring and reporting of all actions will be fundamental to the success of the Action Plan.

2.10. It is proposed that twice yearly reporting will be completed on the Action Plan, with updates provided by the officer lead. An annual report will also be presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update on actions. Any amendments to the plan, following formal adoption of the finalised draft by Cabinet, are proposed to be made by the Director for Housing and Projects in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. The South Kesteven Climate Action Plan sets how South Kesteven District Council, within its remit, will address and influence carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of extreme and challenging weather conditions. It is important that these duties are taken into account and the Climate Action Plan provides a framework for the Council to deliver on its ambitions.

3.2. The actions included in the Plan both address carbon emissions from Council operations (direct and indirect emissions principally from the operation of buildings and vehicles), as well as reviewing where services delivered by the Council can contribute to the goals of the Climate Action Strategy.

3.3. South Kesteven District Council's direct emissions are a small fraction arising from the district of South Kesteven, but our wider work in the district, as well as ongoing work to support energy efficiency improvements in homes across South Kesteven, has the potential to drive much larger reductions.

4. Other Options Considered

3.1 The Council could choose not to publish or report on the projects highlighted within the draft Climate Action Plan.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

5.1. Publishing a Climate Action Plan helps to clarify the specific projects the Council intends to implement and continue towards its ambitions both to meet its own interim net-zero carbon target, but also to contribute to national carbon reduction targets and adaptation strategies.

6. Background Papers

6.1 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21st July 2020 - [CarbonFootprintReportEnvOSC_Final.pdf](#)

6.2 Cabinet 7th November 2023 - [Update on Climate Action Strategy for South Kesteven.pdf](#)

6.3 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12th December 2023 - [Update on Local Authority Biodiversity duties Report.pdf](#)

6.4 Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21st July 2020 – [CarbonFootprintReportEnvOSC_Final.pdf](#)

6.5 Cabinet 12th May 2024 - [Trees and Woodland Strategy 2024-2034.pdf](#)

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix A: Draft Climate Action Plan for South Kesteven

South Kesteven Climate Action Plan

Updated
October 2025

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Climate Action Plan Context

South Kesteven District Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019, joining the three-quarters of councils who have formally recognised their organisational role in tackling climate change.

As part of that declaration South Kesteven District Council set the ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions by at least 30% by 2030, and to endeavour to become net zero carbon as soon as viable before 2050. Alongside the aim of carbon emissions reduction for the Council, the declaration recognised the much more far-reaching impact of the Council's community leadership role in addressing our changing climate.

Working with sector specialists The Carbon Trust, the Council's carbon emissions were reviewed, a baseline from which to reduce carbon emissions was established, and a [Carbon Footprint and Reduction Opportunities Report](#) was published in June 2020. This provided recommendations and a roadmap to reduce carbon emissions across Council operations.

SKDC has since published [annual reports tracking carbon emissions](#). A positive and sustained downward trend in carbon emissions has been reported, including the latest update from the 2024/25 year of a 29.5% reduction against the baseline.

The Council has also published a [Climate Action Strategy](#) in 2023, reviewing all aspects where SKDC can have a role or significant influence in tackling climate mitigation or adaptation throughout the whole district of South Kesteven. The Climate Action Strategy set out an eight-part framework for action against which progress will be measured.

This Climate Action Plan will follow up on those key ambitions, setting out work already underway or planned across the Council. To ensure success, the plan will be delivered across departments.



Our Journey So Far

Warm Homes Funding for South Kesteven District Council Properties

South Kesteven District Council has allocated over £15m since 2021 to upgrade council owned properties with energy efficiency and low-carbon heating measures. Delivered over two schemes with match funded support through the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Council have now established a dedicated team to oversee the successful delivery of upgrades to help sure properties are rated with an Energy Performance Certificate of C or higher.

Warm Homes Funding for Private Properties in South Kesteven

Alongside the programme to upgrade Council owned properties, SKDC has also delivered funding directed towards private properties with an Energy Performance Certificate of D or lower to also upgrade with energy efficiency and low-carbon heating measures. Delivered through a partnership including three other Lincolnshire authorities, 89 properties have been fully upgraded to date, helping to reduce energy costs for residents.



Streetlights Upgraded to Energy-Efficient LEDs

£1m was allocated to upgrade nearly 4000 SKDC owned streetlights throughout the district to energy-efficient LEDs in 2023. The programme of upgrades is due to be completed in late 2025, and there are expected electricity savings of 75% for every streetlight upgraded.

Grantham Meres Leisure Centre Decarbonisation

Following a successful bid into the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (phase 3c), works are currently underway to upgrade the heating system and supporting infrastructure in SKDC's largest leisure centre. Once completed in winter 2025/26, the new low-carbon system, alongside the new solar PV panels installed, will slash carbon emissions and help stabilise energy costs for the centre.



Our Journey So Far

Climate Change Reserve Fund

To respond to some of these opportunities for the Council to inwardly invest as well as reduce energy consumption and cost from council buildings and activities, SKDC has established a Climate Change Reserve Fund for both General Fund of £500,000 and Housing Revenue Accounts £100,000.

Trees and Woodland Strategy for South Kesteven

South Kesteven District Council developed and adopted an ambitious Trees and Woodlands Strategy in 2024 which sets the direction of travel for management of Council owned trees as well as trees within the wider district. The Strategy has set the long term goal to increase tree canopy cover throughout South Kesteven.

Green Fleet Strategy for South Kesteven

A Green Fleet Strategy was approved in 2025, which agrees several actions to improve the efficiency of the Council's fleet of vehicles and set a pathway for the wider adoption of electric vehicles and alternative fuels to reduce the carbon emissions associated with the operation of SKDC vehicles.

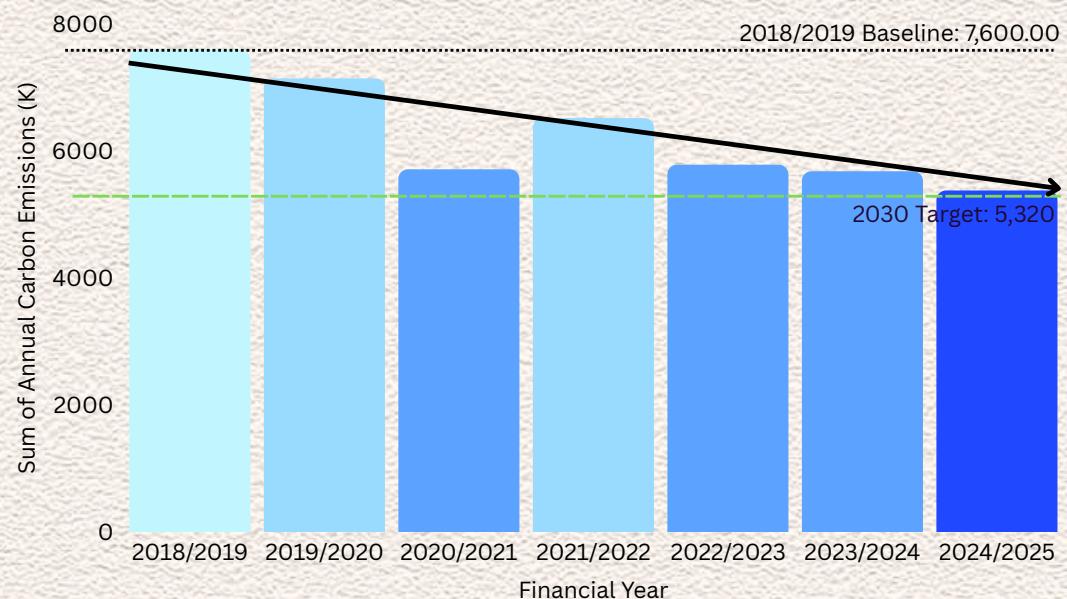


Reduction of Carbon Emissions from Council Operations

South Kesteven District Council's carbon emissions have seen a steady decrease in line with our carbon reduction target of at least 30% by 2030. The most significant reductions have been seen from gas and electric use in SKDC buildings as well as from energy use at leisure centres in the district.

South Kesteven District Council Carbon Emissions Tracker- Annual Comparison

Full details of the carbon reports can be found here: <https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/climate-news/our-action-council>



Measuring and Reporting

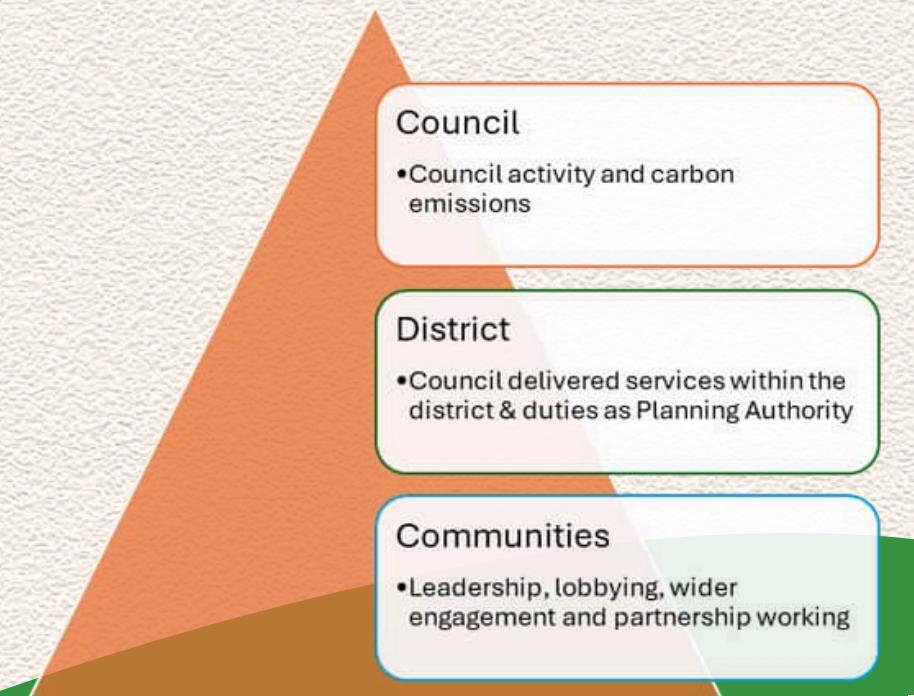
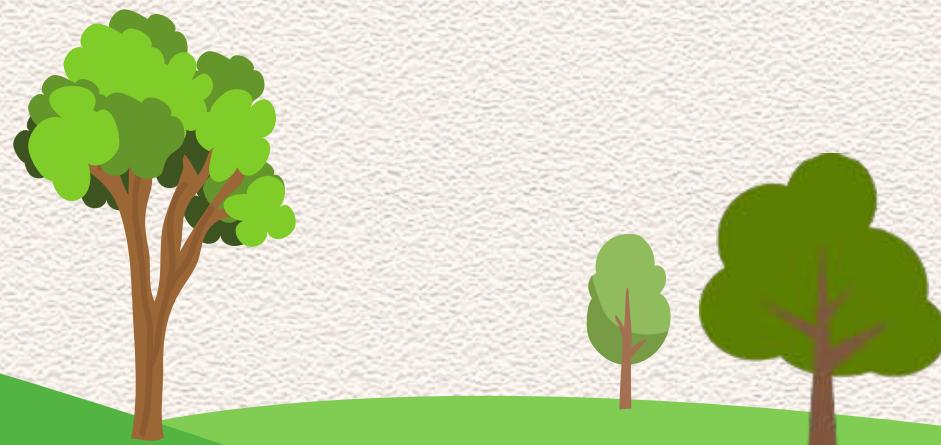
Since South Kesteven District Council's carbon baseline of the 2018/19 year was published in 2020, the Council have continued to publish annual reports stating the operational carbon emissions of the authority. A positive and sustained downward trend in carbon emissions has been reported, including the latest update from the 2024/25 year of a 29.5% reduction against the baseline.

The purpose of the Climate Action Plan is not only to track progress in implementing projects to continue to drive down carbon emissions arising from direct council operations (energy used in council buildings and leisure centres, fuel used in vehicles), but also to set out actions for our wider service delivery and external-facing work with stakeholders to address climate change for the region. Effective monitoring and reporting of each of these aspects will be fundamental to the success of the Plan.

Twice yearly reporting on the progress of the actions under the Climate Action Plan will be completed. This will be presented to the Corporate Management Team in line with ongoing performance monitoring against SKDC's existing Corporate Plan. An annual progress report will also be presented to the Council's Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any post-approval amendments to this Action Plan are to be approved by the Director for Housing and Projects.

The lead officer identified for each action is responsible for providing progress updates against the plan, as well as incorporating any new actions within their area to future versions of the Climate Action Plan.

Our framework for delivery is across three key strands:



Format of Climate Action Plan

Themes

South Kesteven District Council's Climate Action Plan is presented against our eight Themes, with relevant actions each assigned into an area.



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Reference

A reference number is allocated to each action to aid correct references when monitoring the Climate Action Plan.

Action

This includes detail on the proposed action.

Focus

Our framework for delivery covers three key areas:

- Council
 - Council activity and carbon emissions
- District
 - Council delivered services within the district & duties as Planning Authority
- Communities
 - Leadership, lobbying, wider engagement and partnership working

Outcome

The outcome states what the action sets out to achieve within the scope of the Climate Action Plan.

Timeframe

The timeframe for actions state when the action is intended to be implemented:

- Short term- 2025 to 2027
- Medium term – to 2030
- Long term – 2030 and onwards

The Climate Action Plan also notes where relevant actions have already been completed or are underway.

Format of Climate Action Plan

Co-benefits

Integral to the Climate Action Plan is that actions will deliver co-benefits beyond the goal of climate mitigation or adaptation. Some actions may offer the potential to deliver multiple co-benefits.

We have mapped out eight key co-benefits of action:



Reducing fuel
poverty



Improving health
and wellbeing



Boosting jobs
and growth



Improving
air quality



Reducing the
impact of
flooding



Boosting
Biodiversity



Reducing traffic
congestion



Ensuring a
fair society



Estimated cost

The below guide gives an indication of the estimated cost of implementing the action:

Cost code	Estimated cost
(£)	Internal cost
£	£1-£10,000
££	£10,001-£50,000
£££	£50,001-£500,000
££££	£500,001-£5 million
£££££	£5 million+

Services involved in delivery

Where an action is or needs to be delivered across multiple areas, this notes where service areas, beyond the officer lead, are included in delivery of the action.

Officer lead

This represents the senior officer lead responsible for the implementation of the action.

Officer lead

This represents the Cabinet Member lead with portfolio responsibility covering the action.

Built Environment

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
BE1	Continue to implement energy efficiency upgrades to council occupied corporate properties	Council	Reduce energy consumption and cost across council assets	Ongoing	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
BE2	Continue to implement energy efficiency upgrades to leisure centres	Council	Reduce energy consumption and cost across leisure assets	Ongoing	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
BE3	Complete PSDS funded decarbonisation project for Grantham Meres leisure centre	Council	Implement low-carbon heating system and associated supporting works	Ongoing	Boosting jobs and growth	££££	Assistant Director for Leisure and Culture	Cllr Rhys Baker
BE4	Complete energy efficiency and decarbonisation surveys for council occupied assets to understand path to net zero	Council	Produce a roadmap for future investment into council occupied properties	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	£	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
BE5	Complete energy efficiency and decarbonisation surveys for leisure centres to understand path to net zero	Council	-	Completed	Boosting jobs and growth	£	-	
BE6	Review feasibility of improving EPC standard for lettable properties to a minimum of a EPC "D" across the portfolio	District	Ensure energy efficiency of lettable properties owned by SKDC	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
BE7	Provide information and guidance to residents about energy efficiency in the home	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
BE8	Deliver improvements to private properties in South Kesteven with an EPC of D or below to implement energy efficiency and heating upgrades, using Warm Homes Plan funding	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Ongoing	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	££££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

BE9	Deliver programme of energy efficiency and heating upgrades to SKDC owned properties with an EPC of D or below, with support from using Warm Homes Plan funding	Council	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Ongoing	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	£EEEE	Head of Housing Technical Services	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE10	Ensure Sheltered Housing service charges review considers energy consumption and energy efficiency opportunities as part of recommendations	Council	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	£££	Director of Housing and Projects	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE11	Complete decarbonisation study of whole SKDC housing portfolio to understand pathway to achieve a minimum EPC C	Council	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	££	Head of Housing Technical Services	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE12	Review provision of energy advice services to residents across tenure types	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
11 BE13	Enforce the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for private rented properties	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Ongoing	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	(£)	Environmental Health Manager - Environment and Private Sector Housing	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE14	Develop a policy to agree energy efficiency standard for Council owned new build properties and new asset acquisitions	Council	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Short term	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	(£)	Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change	Cllr Virginia Moran
BE15	Continue to review appropriate net-zero policy recommendations for the next Local Plan	District	Reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions from domestic energy used	Ongoing	Fuel poverty Fair society Health and wellbeing	(£)	Planning Policy Manager	Cllr Phil Dilks

Power

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
PO1	Review Council owned and occupied buildings for further solar PV potential	Council	Increase self-generation and reduce electricity cost across council assets	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
PO2	Review leisure centres for further solar PV potential	Council	Increase self-generation and reduce electricity cost across leisure assets	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
PO3	Review current SKDC portfolio of ownership for potential to develop utility scale solar PV	Council	Increase self-generation and offset cost and carbon emissions from property portfolio	Medium term	Boosting jobs and growth	££££	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
PO4	Develop an options paper for the development of a council owned local renewable energy project, to offset unavoidable council carbon emissions	Council	Review options to increase self-generation and offset cost and carbon emissions from property portfolio	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
PO5	Continue to upgrade SKDC owned streetlights to LED	Council	Reduce electricity consumption and cost by 75% from streetlights	Ongoing	Boosting jobs and growth	££££	Corporate Facilities Lead	Cllr Rhys Baker
PO6	Review opportunities as part of Local Government Reorganisation to conduct a Local Area Energy Plan	District	Co-ordinate regional growth with energy considerations	Medium term	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Phil Dilks

Growing our Green Economy

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
GE1	Support SMEs within the district to reduce their energy use and decarbonise	District	Reduce energy consumption and cost for SMEs	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	£££	Economic Development Inward Investment Manager	Cllr Ashley Baxter
GE2	Review integration of energy and sustainability content in SKDC delivered Skills Summit	District	Increase awareness of skills to support the green economy	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	(£)	Economic Development Inward Investment Manager	Cllr Ashley Baxter
GE3	Review inclusion of green economy themes in emerging Tourism Strategy	District	Highlight opportunities for green tourism in district	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	(£)	Economic Development Inward Investment Manager	Cllr Ashley Baxter
GE4	Develop guidance for contract managers to deliver social value and sustainability aspects of contracts, in line with Contract Procedure Rules	District	Align procurement needs with SKDC strategic goals for sustainability	Short term	Boosting jobs and growth	(£)	Assistant Director of Finance	Cllr Ashley Baxter

Natural Environment

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
NE1	Continue to implement the Trees and Woodland Strategy	Council Communities	Deliver the targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan	Ongoing	Improving health and wellbeing Improving air quality Reducing the impact of flooding Boosting biodiversity	£££	Tree Project Officer	Cllr Rhys Baker
18	Develop and implement new Biodiversity Action Plan for SKDC	Council Communities	Deliver the targets of the Trees and Woodland Strategy work plan	Short term	Improving health and wellbeing Improving air quality Reducing the impact of flooding Boosting biodiversity	££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

Transport

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
TR1	Implement the actions of the Green Fleet Strategy	Council	Deliver the actions of the Green Fleet Strategy	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	££££	Head of Waste Management and Market Services	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR2	Implement a sustainable travel plan for all staff and councillors, including reducing the need to travel where feasible	Council	Review business travel needs across SKDC and modes of travel.	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR3	Develop SKDC electric vehicle charging strategy to agree where and how new charging infrastructure will be included on SKDC properties	District	Agree operating model for future charge point provision and principles on locating new infrastructure	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR4	Ensure the existing EVCPs in SKDC car parks are reliable and offer good value to users	District	Improve accessibility and affordability of electric charging	Ongoing	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR5	Install further EVCPs in SKDC car parks	District	Improve accessibility and affordability of electric charging	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	£££	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR6	Continue to work alongside Lincolnshire County Council to support rollout of charging infrastructure in the district	District	Improve accessibility and affordability of electric charging	Medium term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
TR7	Support the implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan for Grantham	District	Continue to monitor and work toward improving air quality within the Air Quality Management Area	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Environmental Health Manager - Environment and Private Sector Housing	Cllr Phil Dilks
TR8	Highlight opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling in the district	Communities	Increase uptake of active travel	Short term	Air quality Traffic congestion	(£)	Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader	Cllr Paul Stokes

Resources

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
RE1	Ensure waste reduction messaging is included in SKDC comms on waste and recycling	Communities	Increase awareness of waste avoidance alongside waste recycling	Short term	Ensuring a fair society	(£)	Communications Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
RE2	Successfully implement kerbside food waste collections from April 2026	Council	Treat food waste through anaerobic digestion and remove from general waste stream	Ongoing	Ensuring a fair society	££££	Head of Waste and Markets	Cllr Rhys Baker
RE3	Review implementation of kerbside soft plastics	Council	Better separation of plastic waste in line with Environment Act (2021)	Medium term	Ensuring a fair society	£££	Head of Waste and Markets	Cllr Rhys Baker
RE4	Promote reusable alternative to common single-use items in SKDC Comms	Communities	Signpost waste reduction opportunities to residents	Short term	Ensuring a fair society	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
RE5	Review water consumption across Council owned assets and review reduction opportunities	Council	Identify leaks and reduce water consumption	Short term	Ensuring a fair society	(£)	Head of Service (Property and IT)	Cllr Richard Cleaver
120 RE6	Promote water conservation awareness and opportunities to SKDC tenants	Council	Help to reduce domestic water consumption for households	Short term	Reducing fuel poverty	(£)	Communications Manager	Cllr Virginia Moran
RE7	Review water consumption targets for new residential developments as part of Local Plan review	District	Help to reduce domestic water consumption for households	Short term	Reducing fuel poverty	(£)	Planning Policy Manager	Cllr Phil Dilks
RE8	Review implementation of lower-flow toilets across Council owned properties	Council	Help to reduce domestic water consumption for households	Short term	Reducing fuel poverty	££	Head of Housing Technical Services	Cllr Virginia Moran

Communities

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
CO1	Keep under review adverse weather plans for SKDC service areas and ensure effective mitigations are in place	Council	Improved forward planning and risk mitigation for adverse and extreme weather	Ongoing	Improving health and wellbeing Reducing impact of flooding	(£)	Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead	Cllr Richard Cleaver
CO2	Review and conduct analysis of areas of greatest risk from extreme and disruptive weather for the wider district	Communities	Improved forward planning and risk mitigation	Short term	Improving health and wellbeing Reducing impact of flooding	(£)	Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead	Cllr Richard Cleaver
CO3	Continue to work with partners on improving flood resilience within communities	Communities	Residents are better prepared for future flooding events	Short term	Reducing impact of flooding	(£)	Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead	Cllr Richard Cleaver
121 CO4	Continue incident response to major flooding events within the district, working alongside partners	District	Improved response to disruptive flooding events	Short term	Reducing impact of flooding	££	Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Lead	Cllr Richard Cleaver
CO5	Where possible support communities to engage with authorities and landowners to repair and maintain water and flood management assets.	Communities	Help to create proactive multi-agency working resulting in more resilient communities.	Medium term	Reducing impact of flooding	(£)	Environmental Health Manager - Environment and Private Sector Housing	Cllr Richard Cleaver
CO6	Implement external communications activity to update stakeholders on Climate Action Plan workstreams	Communities	Improve awareness of SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Communications Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
CO7	Agree delivery of SKDC led events focusing on sustainability within the district	Communities	Improve awareness of SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

Decision making

Reference	Action	Focus	Outcomes	Timeframe	Co-benefits	Estimated cost	Officer lead	Cabinet lead
DM1	Review feasibility of a community grants scheme to support energy and sustainability projects in South Kesteven	Communities	Support partners to deliver their own energy projects	Short term	ALL	(£)	Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM2	Continue to ensure SKDC investments meeting the Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) factors as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy, whilst protecting the security of taxpayer funds	Council	Ensure investment strategy is aligned with SKDC strategic goals for sustainability	Short term	ALL	(£)	Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer	Cllr Ashley Baxter
DM3	Ensure the Corporate Projects list includes climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve visibility of energy and sustainability considerations for SKDC projects	Short term	ALL	(£)	Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change	Cllr Phillip Knowles
122 DM4	Implement internal governance to progress and monitor the Climate Action Plan	Council	Ensure actions are fit for purpose and delivery is progressing	Short term	ALL	(£)	Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change	Cllr Phillip Knowles
DM5	Complete review of comments included in climate change section of Committee report templates to ensure responses are fit for purpose	Council	Improve visibility of energy and sustainability considerations for SKDC led activity	Short term	ALL	(£)	Head of Projects, Performance and Climate Change	Cllr Phillip Knowles
DM6	Publish internal guidance for officers on how to assess the climate impact and carbon emission considerations of major projects and proposals	Council	Improve visibility of energy and sustainability considerations for SKDC projects	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM7	Implement an internal communications plan to keep Councillors updated on climate action work, and signposting relevant resources	Council	Improve awareness of SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

DM8	Implement an internal communications plan to keep staff updated on climate action work, and signposting relevant resources	Council	Improve awareness of SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM9	Review grant funding opportunities and cascade information to key officers	Council	Improve access to relevant grant funding for Climate Action Plan projects	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM10	Offer bitesize training to all SKDC staff on climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve awareness of and potential for SKDC action and commitments	Ongoing	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM11	Develop ongoing training for senior leaders on climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve awareness of and potential for SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM12	Offer ongoing training for all staff on climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve awareness of and potential for SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker
DM13	Develop ongoing training for Councillors on climate impact and carbon emission considerations	Council	Improve awareness of and potential for SKDC action and commitments	Short term	ALL	(£)	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager	Cllr Rhys Baker

Contact Details

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

South Kesteven District Council
01476 40 60 80
customerservices@southkesteven.gov.uk
www.southkesteven.gov.uk

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Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 10 November 2025

Report of Councillor Rhys Baker,
Cabinet Member for Environment and
Waste

Biodiversity Action Plan for South Kesteven

Report Author

Louise Case, Sustainability Project Support Officer
 louise.case@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To present the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review and comments.

Recommendations

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- 1. Note the current content of the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan and suggest any amendments.**
- 2. Recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the finalised South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan.**

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? Sustainable South Kesteven

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 South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan sets a framework for the Council to respond to the issue of biodiversity loss within the district. The implementation of this proposed Biodiversity Action Plan will need to carefully review the financial implications of all agreed actions, including any sources of external funding support or cost implications to the Council, on a case by case basis.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 As a local authority, South Kesteven District Council has a statutory duty to consider how it will conserve and enhance biodiversity across the district. This report considers the Council's plan to deliver biodiversity improvements to ensure compliance with Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.3 The South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Council's statutory role to conserve and enhance biodiversity across the district of South Kesteven. The Biodiversity Action Plan sets out key opportunities to restore healthy ecosystems, improve biodiversity and help reverse the loss of wildlife.

Completed by: Louise Case, Sustainability Projects Support Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. Our natural environment is currently facing a triple planetary threat of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Driven by the destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitats, biodiversity has deteriorated at an alarming rate. The effects of this biodiversity crisis have been observed worldwide.
- 2.2. England is now widely considered to be one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, given historic and ongoing declines in biodiversity. A recently published analysis by the State of Nature Partnership states that since 1970, UK species have declined, on average, by 19% and that nearly one in six species are

threatened with extinction in Great Britain. Furthermore, a recent study by the Wildlife Trust has suggested that 90% of lowland grassland has been lost in the 20th century. This has contributed to a loss or reduction in insects, wildlife and grassland species which are an integral part of the UK's ecological infrastructure.

- 2.3. The compounding impacts of climate change, pollution and land use change are the principal drivers of the long-term decline in the health of our natural environment. The encroachment of industrial activity and intensified agricultural management have been identified as the most prominent contributing factors.
- 2.4. In recognition of the decline in the nation's biodiversity, Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 required that "every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity."
- 2.5. The Environment Act 2021, under Section 102, subsequently amended Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to strengthen this 'biodiversity duty' which now places 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.
- 2.6. This legislation covers the Council in both its duties as a local authority, as well as a local planning authority (LPA).
- 2.7. In December 2023, the Council published a '[first consideration](#)' report which set out its initial consideration of what action could be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It was a requirement that policies and objectives would be agreed as soon as possible after this date. Following this, the Council was to report on achievements resulting from its actions, and actions it plans to take in the next reporting period. The end date of the first reporting period should be no later than 01 January 2026 and then reconsidered within five years of the previous reporting period.
- 2.8. The aim of this Biodiversity Action Plan is to produce a set of objectives and actions to assist in delivering and protecting strategic biodiversity networks, taking into consideration both local and national priorities.
- 2.9. The vision of the South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan is to firstly conserve and enhance habitats that create better and more interconnected places for wildlife across South Kesteven. The Council will also seek to increase awareness of biodiversity and encourage more people to connect with nature and by doing so take positive action that benefits biodiversity in South Kesteven.

2.10. The proposed Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the strategic approach the Council will 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

2.11. Following an introduction to the Council's biodiversity duty as a public authority, the Biodiversity Action Plan sets out its background connection to the upcoming [Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#), to be delivered by Lincolnshire County Council as a tool designed to guide action for nature recovery. Also detailed within the Biodiversity Action Plan is the Council's role as a local planning authority in supporting the implementation of green infrastructure under the Local Plan, and its responsibility to enforce Biodiversity Net Gain.

2.12. The first of three themes, Nature Recovery and Management, largely focuses on the management of Council-owned open space. The area of South Kesteven covers 365 square miles and the Council delivers the maintenance of all Council owned land through its Street Scene team. In addition to General Fund and Housing Revenue Account open space, this includes the maintenance of three Green Flag accredited parks in Grantham, Grantham Cemetery, closed churchyards and sports pitches. Collectively, this presents significant opportunity to further explore the implementation of new biodiversity andrewilding initiatives.

2.13. The second dedicated theme focuses on People, Partnerships and Funding, and considers the responsibility of the Council to engage and educate the community on ways to support biodiversity and nature recovery within the wider South Kesteven environment. Also referenced is the potential for partnership working to deliver higher-value biodiversity initiatives.

2.14. Finally, the Planning and Policy theme largely reflects on the current responsibility of the Council, as an LPA, to reinforce the core actions required to support Biodiversity Net Gain, work with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership to embed the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and promote the incorporation of green infrastructure into more sustainable developments in South Kesteven.

2.15. Supplementary to the Biodiversity Action Plan, the Council has produced Appendix A, the 'Our Progress for Nature' report, to provide a comprehensive overview of the actions that have already been taken to support biodiversity in the district.

- 2.16. Many of these actions stem from the Council's formal declaration of a climate emergency in September 2019, which reflected the urgent need to reduce its environmental and climatic impact. To overcome the ongoing degradation of our environment, the importance of integrating green infrastructure into urban environments was identified as a crucial element of nature recovery. As set out in the Climate Action Strategy, it is the Council's vision that wildlife habitats are valued, maintained, enhanced and created in South Kesteven and that biodiversity is restored.
- 2.17. Furthermore, the Council's Corporate Plan (2024 – 2027) sets out the Council's mission to meet the challenge of climate change and ensure a clean, green and healthy natural and built environment for present and future generations. This is under-pinned by an ambition to protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitats, working to actively restore and rehabilitate damaged ecosystems.
- 2.18. When developing the Council's plans for biodiversity it must be recognised that the public open space the Council maintains is used by residents in different ways, including dog walking and for informal leisure and physical activity pursuits. The benefits of implementing biodiversity measures must be balanced with local community need to avoid negative perception and publicity.
- 2.19. This report reflects both on the action that the Council has previously taken and proposes further actions to support biodiversity across the district as part of its wider Biodiversity Duty.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. It is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 that all local authorities (excluding parish councils) and local planning authorities must publish a biodiversity report.

4. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. It is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 that all local authorities (excluding parish councils) and local planning authorities must publish a biodiversity report. Therefore, the option to 'do nothing' has been discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The Environment Act 2021 has strengthened the Biodiversity Duty of local authorities and as a result, it has become the legal obligation of South Kesteven District Council as a both a public authority and local planning authority to develop and implement a Biodiversity Action Plan.

6. Background Papers

6.1. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 12th December 2023 - [Update on Local Authority Biodiversity duties Report.pdf](#)

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix A – Progress for Nature Update

7.2. Appendix B – South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan



Progress for Nature

Update November 2025



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Introduction

England is now widely considered to be one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, given historic and ongoing declines in biodiversity. A recently published analysis by the State of Nature Partnership states that since 1970, UK species have declined, on average, by 19% and that nearly one in six species are threatened with extinction in Great Britain. Furthermore, a recent study by the Wildlife Trust has suggested that 90% of lowland grassland has been lost in the 20th century. This has contributed to a loss or reduction in insects, wildlife and grassland species which are an integral part of the UK's ecological infrastructure.

The compounding impacts of climate change, pollution and land use change are recognised to be the principal drivers of the long-term decline in the health of our natural environment. The encroachment of industrial activity and intensified agricultural management have been identified at the most prominent contributing factors

Supplementary to South Kesteven District Council's Biodiversity Action Plan, this progress document sets out the action that the Council has already taken to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district.

So far, the Council has facilitated initiatives on Council-owned land, supported external funding opportunities for town or parish councils and community groups, and enhanced staff knowledge of wildlife-friendly open space management.

Moving forward, the Biodiversity Action Plan will outline future priorities for habitats and species in South Kesteven. Ultimately, this will play an important role in the delivery of the Council's plans for climate change mitigation and adaptation, to provide value for wildlife and residents alike.



Witham Slea Blue Green Corridor Initiative

SKDC was the lead partner for the £1.2m [Witham/Slea Blue Green Corridor initiative](#) which was funded from the European Regional Development Fund, with financial contributions and partnership support from North Kesteven District Council, the Environment Agency and the National Trust. The resulting river restoration and biodiversity project taking in the Witham through Grantham was shortlisted as a finalist for the prestigious UK River Prize 2024.

This Blue/Green project formed a crucial part of the overall, long-term, Upper Witham Restoration, a habitat improvement programme that has been ongoing for more than 10 years overseen by the Upper Witham sub-catchment partnership who submitted the area for the prestigious award.

Work in and around Grantham began in 2019 and ended in Summer 2023, supporting and developing areas alongside the River Witham and River Slea. It saw rivers linked with their floodplains, new habitats created, and existing habitats improved to support a more diverse range of species.

The 14 individual projects of the Upper Witham Restoration, including four in the Sleaford area, were designed to improve the freshwater habitat, support the ecosystem and benefit local communities.



Image – Belton Floodplain Improvements

Examples of work undertaken include tree planting and the introduction of bird boxes and wildflower meadows. Other work included:

- River channel improvements to restore straightened and over widened sections of the river to reinstate natural processes, improving habitat for people, places and wildlife
- Wetland creation, creating rare landscapes and supporting a wide variety of special native species, such as amphibians and water voles previously limited by the lack of habitat
- Wildflower meadow creation, establishing a wide range of flora, and creating habitat for many important species through refuge and food provision, as well as benefiting pollinators
- Flushing meadow creation, creating a spring-fed meadow to support diverse flora
- Tree management to support native species by introducing light and adding woody material for habitat creation
- Footpaths to bring essential transport links throughout the town, making enjoyable riverside walks more accessible

The work on the river was well received and set a good example of how river restoration projects can enhance public green spaces for the benefit of local users whilst also supporting wildlife.

The wider Upper Witham Restoration involved partnership work between the Environment Agency, East Mercia Rivers Trust, Wild Trout Trust, The National Trust, Grantham Angling Association Fly Fishing Section, South Kesteven District Council and the University of Lincoln.

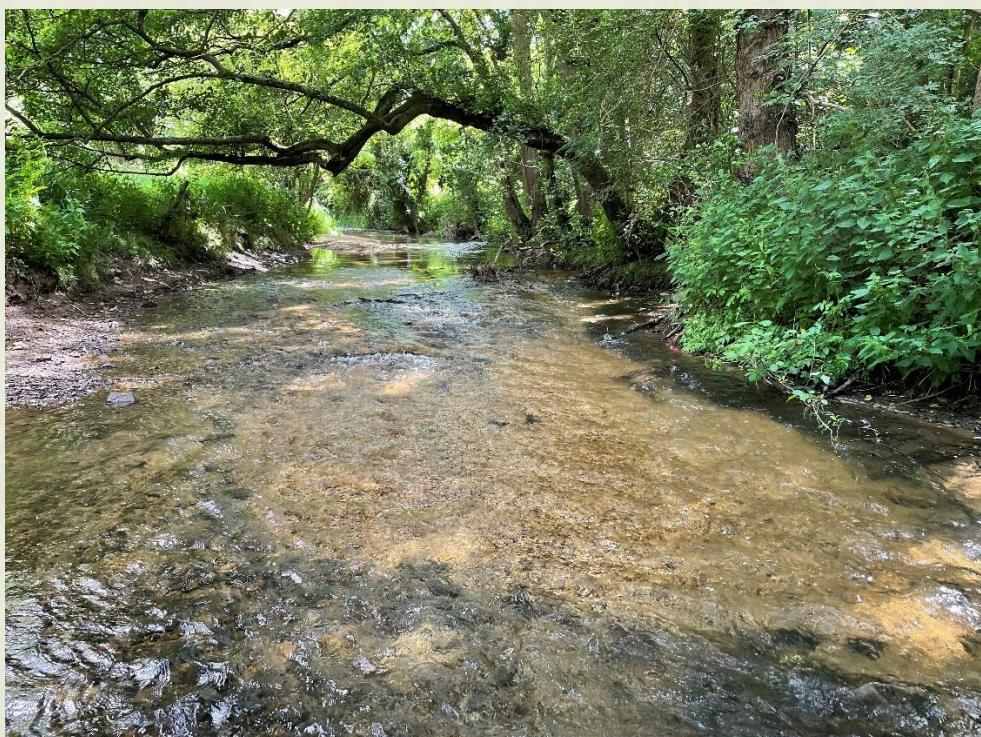


Image – [In-channel Restoration](#) of the Papermill Weir, Grantham

Coronation Community Orchards Funding

New mini-orchards were planted across the district following a Coronation Living Heritage grant awarded to SKDC to celebrate the accession of King Charles III. Parish councils, community groups and parent/teacher associations could apply for funding to plant fruit trees on publicly accessible sites, with protective spirals, information signage and protective fencing as required.

It was recognised that Orchards deliver on several fronts through the provision of organic fruit, engaging the community and helping to withstand climate change, increase carbon sequestration and the filtering of pollutants. The choice of fruit trees was down to local preferences, though successful applicants were required to outline plans for aftercare of the orchard to ensure it is maintained permanently.

Green Flag Status – Wyndham Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and Dysart Park

SKDC manages three formal parks in the district: Wyndham Park, Dysart Park and Queen Elizabeth Park, all of which are situated in Grantham. All three parks have accredited Green Flag status, acknowledging them as among the very best in the East Midlands.

The Green Flag Award is the benchmark international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom and signifies that a park is well-maintained and welcoming. In addition, the award acts as a tribute to SKDC staff and community volunteers who give their time freely to help maintain the parks to a standard befitting Green Flag status.

Biodiversity Officer Working Group

An internal working group was formed to help steer the Council's biodiversity plans. This working group includes officers from a range of departments and meets monthly to achieve the following objectives:

- Understand the current health of the natural environment in the district and identify areas of improvement.
- Set out the council's remit to influence the natural environment and improve biodiversity.
- Consider the council's role as a local planning authority and the new expectations for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new developments.
- Consider the council's role as a local authority and the specific actions and projects we intend to implement to improve biodiversity.
- The working group will provide regular updates on the council's biodiversity plans to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Summer 2025 Biodiversity Consultation

Residents were asked for their views on South Kesteven District Council's approach to wildlife habitat, nature and biodiversity in a four-week consultation which opened early June 2025. The consultation illustrated SKDC's commitment to setting aside land for nature and provided an opportunity to identify what support other organisations would like to help promote biodiversity. Responses were sought from residents, landowners, organisations and other stakeholders to help it refine and develop its future direction and actions.

Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback on existing rewilding and wildflower sites and suggest areas of Council owned land that could be suitable for a biodiversity scheme. The Council was also keen to establish how best it can support other organisations and community and voluntary groups to set aside areas of their own land for the benefit of nature.



Biodiversity Training for Council Staff

Establishment and Management of Wildflower Areas in Amenity Turf

In May, the Council organised a training day course at Boothby Wildland, a Nattergal rewilding project situated here in South Kesteven. The course, which focused on the successful establishment of wildflower areas in amenity turf, was delivered by Dan Carne of Woodmeadow Makers, supported by the Boothby Wildland team.

The desired outcomes of the course were:

- For staff to have the relevant knowledge and skills to successfully turn areas of amenity turf into wildflower areas that a) look attractive and b) provide benefit to wildlife.
- For example, equip staff with the knowledge to evaluate diverse site conditions and tailor techniques for varying soil types, microclimates, and other local factors.
- For staff to learn how to mimic ecological processes to achieve outcomes a) and b) in the long term with minimal cost.

The outline of content delivery covered:

- Site assessment and planning
- Preparation and establishment
- Management and maintenance

Arboricultural Knowledge Training Course

To ensure that Officers can make informed decisions regarding tree-related issues in their work and align tree-related decision-making across departments to improve service delivery and consistency, training was provided by local Arboricultural consultant, Andrew Belson.

The course focused on providing a foundational understanding of tree biology, identification and best management practices. The training was directed to Grounds Maintenance staff, Climate and Sustainability Officers, and Officers from Planning and Planning Enforcement.

Basic Tree Inspection

As a follow up to the foundational Arboricultural Knowledge training course, a follow-up day was dedicated to Basic Tree Inspection so that staff were equipped with the skills to recognize hazardous trees and assess risk. Delivered in SKDC's very own Wyndham Park, the content supported Officers in the early identification of potential tree-related safety issues, reducing the need for reactive interventions.

Make Space for Nature Biodiversity Projects Scheme

In August 2024, the Council announced its Make Space for Nature scheme. Following a successful bid to the South Kesteven UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Council was awarded £54,490 to support town and parish councils implement biodiversity initiatives.

A 'Rewilding Menu' guide was developed by SKDC to support town and parish councils in their endeavour to tackle local biodiversity loss and improve the health and wellbeing of residents. It presented a menu of rewilding options with projected costings that could provide inspiration for new rewilding initiatives within the district. Ideal sites were identified as areas of open space with existing public access that were underutilised within residential areas. It was the responsibility of the town or parish council to identify areas of interest within the district and manage the organisational element of project work, although Officers were on hand to provide advice and shape new project ideas.

The Council has also developed a Tree Planting Guide to provide practical advice to town and parish councils and other partners who are intending to plant new amenity trees in their area. This document guides the reader through the process of planning, site assessment, species selection, procurement of nursery stock, the practical act of planting the trees, and post planting maintenance. Considering each of these elements in turn will provide a new planting scheme the best chance of success.



Image: Wyndham Park Biodiversity Paddock, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund under South Kesteven's 'Make Space for Nature' scheme.

South Kesteven's Trees and Woodland Strategy

Lincolnshire has some of the lowest levels of tree cover in England, although this is expected given the agricultural land use in the County. SKDC's Trees and Woodlands Strategy will inform how the Council can protect and enhance the district's tree population, with specific reference to tree preservation orders, development control and tree canopy cover increase through public and partnership engagement. In doing so, the Strategy will play a key role in the Council's ambitions to increase biodiversity and represents a significant opportunity to increase tree cover and help tackle the effects of climate change.

The Strategy was developed with the support of Treeconomics, who have worked with other local authorities, in recognition of the pivotal role trees and woodland play in cutting carbon emissions.

The public consultation on the Strategy closed in February 2024, with approximately 900 responses. 99% of these respondents agreed that trees and woodlands were valuable assets, and 96% agreed that planting, maintaining and protecting trees was a worthwhile investment. This demonstrated a clear desire from residents for the Council to develop a strategic approach to the management of its tree assets.

The Council appointed a dedicated Tree Project Officer whose role will involve securing funding opportunities and engaging with local communities.



Rewilding Trial Sites

SKDC's commitment to increase wildlife habitat and improve biodiversity is a key strand of the Council's Corporate Plan, which seeks a Sustainable South Kesteven and following the 2019 declaration of a Climate Emergency, states: "We will protect and enhance the natural environment and wildlife habitats, working to actively restore and rehabilitate damaged ecosystems."

Rewilding involves the restoration of healthy ecosystems, aimed at increasing biodiversity and reversing the loss of our wildlife. By developing and protecting existing habitats, we can build towards a more resilient landscape that is better positioned to adapt to the effects of climate change. Furthermore, rewilding serves a dual purpose of reconnecting people with nature, at minimal cost. By altering our approach to the management of our open spaces, we can provide better habitats for wildlife, improve biodiversity, and increase amenity value. This is especially important as many people are spending a significant amount of time indoors where a busy, technology-mediated life leads to a disconnect with nature. The incorporation of green space within our environment can foster a deeper sense of connection to nature, reduce stress and promote healthier living. Encouraging people to spend more time moving in nature-focused environments can also help lessen the effects of mental and physical illness.

To align with biodiversity initiatives, specific pocket sites across the district can be maintained differently to attract a diverse range of beneficial species. The creation of rewilding areas may be complemented by regularly mown sections and pathways, maintaining the visually appealing environment of South Kesteven whilst supporting local wildlife populations. By considering the environment, wildlife species and need of local people in individual locations, a tailored approach can be taken to ensure maximum benefit across the wider community.

New community rewilding areas have been and are still being identified across South Kesteven to enable pockets of land to go back to nature. New locations will be proposed with guidance from SKDC ward members, parish councils, and the Council's Sustainability and Climate Change team and its grounds maintenance staff. The idea is that these areas would receive minimum essential maintenance and be allowed to grow as nature intended. The Council acknowledges that not everywhere is appropriate for rewilding initiatives, as the recreation use of green space and safety aspects to each site must also be considered.

Proactive work has already taken place in key locations across South Kesteven. An area of the Foxglove Road playing field at Rutland Heights in Stamford has already been allowed to go back to nature. Grasses and other plants flourish there as a haven for wildlife, insects, birds and mammals. Similarly, Tattershall Drive, in Market Deeping, is blooming thanks to an area which is building a sustainable balance between recreational use and conservation in a public open space. Lastly, the Grantham rewilding site is part of the Blue Green Corridor project in Queen Elizabeth Park, to restore and reconnect the river and river corridors through the urban area of Grantham. The initiative has shown the way to restore, protect and increase local biodiversity.



Image: Wildflower Bund down Tattershall Drive, Market Deeping

More recently, the Council developed a Biodiversity Paddock in Wyndham Park, Grantham. Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund under South Kesteven's 'Make Space for Nature' scheme, the project incorporated native tree planting, wildflower segments and several benches for residents and visitors to sit and enjoy the space.



Image: The 4,000sqm paddock is located on the east side of Wyndham Park, adjacent to Sandon Road.

Each site is marked with an information board advising the public why some strips and pockets of open space are left unmown, and to ask people to refrain from walking on the natural environment.



Image: The Council's standard rewilding site signage



South Kesteven Biodiversity Action Plan

**Our vision, aims and high level ambition to conserve and enhance
biodiversity in our District**



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Our Biodiversity Duty



Biodiversity, or biological diversity, refers to the variety of life on Earth, in all its complex forms and interactions. This term encompasses all plants, animals, their habitats and the natural systems that support them, the collective interactions between each being known as an ecosystem. Healthy ecosystems form an intricate web that maintain and support life.

South Kesteven's wildlife, habitats and ecosystems are vitally important, from the services they provide, through to their role in climate regulation and access to nature for health, wellbeing and recreation. Biodiversity can be subtle but its associated ecosystem services are critical to human well-being, fundamental to both planet and people. These key functions include:

- **Provisioning** services (the provision of food, water, timber and fibre)
- **Regulating** services (helping to regulate climate change and carbon storage, air and water quality, flood management and disease control)
- **Cultural** services (providing recreational, aesthetic and cultural benefits, such as a sense of place and supporting human wellbeing)
- **Supporting** services (providing space for wildlife to flourish through pollination, photosynthesis, soil formation and nutrient cycling)

However, we have witnessed a startling decline in the biodiversity that underpins our natural world. Driven by the destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitats, biodiversity has deteriorated at an alarming rate. The effects of which have been observed worldwide. England is now widely considered to be one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, given historic and ongoing declines in biodiversity. A recently published analysis by the State of Nature Partnership states that since 1970, UK species have declined, on average, by 19% and that nearly one in six species are threatened with extinction in Great Britain.

The impacts of climate change, pollution and land use change are the principal drivers of the long-term decline in the health of our natural environment. The encroachment of industrial activity and intensified agricultural management have been identified at the most prominent contributing factors.

In September 2019, South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) formally declared a climate emergency, reflecting the urgent need to accelerate carbon emission reductions. To overcome the ongoing degradation of our environment, the importance of integrating green infrastructure into urban environments has been identified as a crucial element of nature recovery. As set out in the Climate Action Strategy, it is the Council's vision that wildlife habitats are valued, maintained, enhanced and created in South Kesteven and that biodiversity is restored. This report reflects on the action that SKDC has taken to support biodiversity across the district as part of its wider Biodiversity Duty.



Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 required that:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

The Environment Act 2021 subsequently amended Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 to strengthen this ‘biodiversity duty’ which now places a legal obligation on public authorities to:

1. Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration; and
3. Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

This legislation covers SKDC in both its duties as a local authority, as well as a local planning authority (LPA).

In December 2023, SKDC published a ‘first consideration’ report which set out its initial consideration of what action can and is to be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It was a requirement that policies and objectives would be agreed as soon as possible after this date. Following this report, the Council must report on achievements resulting from its actions, and actions it plans to take in the next reporting period. The end date of the first reporting period should be no later than 01 January 2026 and then reconsidered within five years of the previous reporting period.

The aim of this Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is to produce a set of objectives and actions to assist in delivering and protecting strategic biodiversity networks, taking into consideration both local and national priorities. It is the vision of the Council to:

- Conserve and enhance habitats that create better, and more interconnected places for wildlife across South Kesteven
- Increase awareness of biodiversity and encourage more people to connect with nature and by doing so take positive actions that benefit biodiversity in South Kesteven

Timeframe

The timeframe for actions state when each is intended to be implemented:

- Short term- 2025 to 2027
- Medium term – to 2030
- Long term – 2030 and beyond

This BAP sets out the strategic approach the Council will 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



Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) are a new system of spatial strategies for nature recovery, legislated for in the Environment Act 2021. The Defra Secretary of State appointed 48 responsible authorities (in most cases county or combined authorities) to lead the preparation of the strategies. Each strategy will agree priorities for nature recovery and the wider environment and propose actions in the locations where they would have the most impact in helping to deliver those priorities. The current rollout of LNRSs across England presents an opportunity for all local authorities to help shape and implement the vision for nature in their area.

As place leaders for their area, all local authorities have a key role to play in preparing and delivering LNRSs. As a supporting authority for the Greater Lincolnshire LNRS, SKDC has the opportunity to:

- Work closely with Lincolnshire County Council (the responsible authority) and other supporting authorities in the area to help shape the LNRS, ensuring it aligns with the Council's needs, existing strategies and priorities.
- Provide local data and input information from other relevant strategies, such as South Kesteven's Trees and Woodland Strategy. This will assist in mapping 'areas of particular importance for biodiversity'.
- Periodically review and agree drafts of the LNRS. The Regulations provide all supporting authorities with the opportunity to review and agree drafts ahead of public consultation and publication to ensure widespread agreement on the content and approach.

The LNRS legislation requires that responsible authorities involve all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in the preparation process. This includes SKDC within its role as LPA.

Supporting authorities are expected to be key users of LNRSs. As such, the Greater Lincolnshire LNRS will be instrumental in directing and delivering on nature-based objectives in the future. For example, the LNRS will:

- Inform the rollout of Biodiversity Net Gain, by helping to guide where offsite habitat is created and enhanced.
- Provide important evidence that will need to be considered in the making of Local Plans.
- Be considered as part of the Council's statutory duty to take action, consistent with its functions, to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- Inform how future funding and investment in nature recovery is targeted, e.g. via initiatives like the Water Restoration Fund.



Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development. In England, BNG became mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and ensures that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development.

Unless exempt, developers in England are required to provide 10% BNG on all habitats within the redline boundary of their development, whether they are impacted or not. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development. Separate arrangements apply to on-site irreplaceable habitat.

For the purposes of BNG, biodiversity value is measured in standardised biodiversity units. A habitat will contain a number of biodiversity units, depending on factors such as its size, quality, location or type. Biodiversity units can be lost through development or generated through work to create and enhance habitats.

An ecologist can be consulted to assess the biodiversity value of an existing habitat and advise on suitable habitat creation or enhancement for the land. There is a statutory (official) biodiversity metric tool, which is used to measure how many units a habitat contains before development, and how many units are needed to replace the units of habitat lost and to achieve 10% net gain.

There are 3 ways a developer can achieve BNG.

- They can create biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a development site).
- If developers cannot achieve all their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
- If developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This should be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

The landowner is legally responsible for creating or enhancing a habitat for BNG. A detailed habitat management and monitoring plan (HMMP) will be required to outline how the land will be managed for at least 30 years to achieve the target condition. This applies if you make on-site gains or sell off-site gains on a site you own. If you buy off-site units, you are paying the land manager to manage the land for 30 years to achieve the target condition. If anything is changed on the land, a new base line would need to be produced with a new HMMP so that monitoring can be maintained by the Council and developer in question.

Once published, the LNRS will be used to guide BNG offsite habitat creation and enhancement into strategic locations for nature. Specifically, the BNG metric includes a 15% “strategic significance” uplift in biodiversity units per hectare for delivering proposals in the locations mapped by the LNRS.





Biodiversity in South Kesteven

South Kesteven is a largely rural landscape, populated by only a very small urban area. The district is divided into four National Character Areas (NCAs) by Natural England; The Fens, Kesteven Uplands, Trent and Belvoir Vales, and the Southern Lincolnshire Edge. These are further subdivided into seven Landscape Areas, each with its own distinctive characteristics.

The Kesteven Uplands, the largest and central part of the district, contains a high proportion of ancient woodlands, both semi-natural and replanted, and is abundant with species-rich calcareous grassland. Rivers Witham, East Glen and West Glen dissect the area, their valleys containing species-rich meadows, grazing marsh and woodlands.

In accordance with established practice, landscape character assessment is used as the basis for determining landscape sensitivity and capacity. SKDC commissioned FPCR to prepare the [South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment](#) (SKLCA) in January 2007, which builds upon the previously described NCAs at a finer grain of assessment. The SKLCA has since been used by the Council to inform its Landscape Policy.

South Kesteven has a variety of nature reserves and protected sites. These sites should be seen as part of an ecological network, managing, restoring and creating habitat in the right places helps rebuild a resilient network and enables species to thrive not just in one place but across wider landscapes. There are two Natura 2000 Special Area of Conservation (SAC) sites in the district: Baston Fen and Grimsthorpe Park. A summary of nature sites present in the South Kesteven District can be seen below (*Figure 1*).

Designation	Number of Sites
Natura 2000 (Special Areas of Conservation)	2
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	27
National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	None
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	228
Sites of Nature Conservation Interests (SNCI)	64
Local Geological Sites (LGS)	15
Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological sites (RIGs)	4



Planning and Policy

Adopted Local Plan

The South Kesteven Local Plan sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and policies for the future development of the district up to 2036. Whilst it must be noted that the Plan was adopted before BNG was implemented, Chapter 10 is dedicated to 'Protecting and Enhancing the Natural and Built Environments' of South Kesteven.

Policy EN2: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity seeks to protect internationally, nationally and locally designated sites for their biodiversity and geodiversity importance.

The EN2 policy also seeks to enhance ecological networks and to deliver a net gain on all proposals, where possible. It is important to note that the language used here does not mandate delivery of net gain but seeks it, where possible.

Policy EN3: Green Infrastructure requires development proposals to enrich biodiversity habitats

The EN3 policy stipulates that 'the green infrastructure network in the district will be maintained and improved by enhancing, creating and managing green space within and around settlements. Development proposals should ensure that existing and new green infrastructure is considered and integrated into the scheme design, taking opportunities to enrich biodiversity and habitats, enable greater connectivity and provide sustainable access for all. Proposals which may result in recreational and visitor pressure on designated biodiversity sites will be particularly expected to provide such green infrastructure.' By improving existing and requiring new residential proposals to provide green infrastructure, the policy makes a key contribution towards providing a more extensive inventory of nature destinations in the proximity to new homes. This will be a key driver in deflecting recreational pressure from habitat sites.

Emerging Local Plan

The emerging Local Plan, the most recent published draft of which was the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan up to 2041, includes a revised environment chapter. The revised chapter was written in consultation with the Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England and Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership. The Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping and Green Infrastructure Opportunity Mapping and the associated policies and appendices were produced by the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.

The revised environment chapter not only includes a reviewed and strengthened policy EN2: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity, but also includes a new policy: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains. The Green Infrastructure policy has also been strengthened to include reference to Green Infrastructure Mapping.



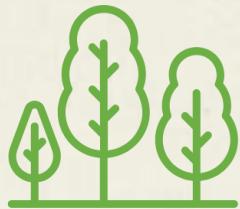
A Report for Habitats Regulations Assessment, prepared in July 2025 for SKDC, concluded that the wording within Policy EN2 (Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and Policy EN3 (Green Infrastructure) protects habitats sites and strengthens South Kesteven's green infrastructure network.

Co-benefits of tackling the biodiversity crisis

Through our three identified themes, we outline the multiple co-benefits of supporting biodiversity action for each area. We recognise that, beyond conserving and enhancing biodiversity, many of the actions needed will also provide wider benefits for people, climate adaptation and the environment.

By altering our approach to the management of our open space, we can ensure better habitats for wildlife, provide quality green space, and increase amenity value. By developing and protecting existing habitats, we will build towards a more resilient landscape that is better positioned to adapt to the effects of climate change, helping to improve the wellbeing of our residents.

We have mapped out six key co-benefits of enhancing biodiversity:



Community Resilience & Adaptation



Carbon Sequestration & Mitigation



Climate Regulation



Health and Wellbeing



Healthy Environment (air, water and soil)



Flood Protection



Strategic Objective	Reference	Priority Actions	Action Owner	Timescale	Co-Benefits
Theme 1: Nature Recovery and Management					
151 Within areas of direct influence, the Council will seek to enhance the natural environment and support the sustained delivery of ecosystem services.	BAP1	Develop a 'biodiversity hierarchy' to outline best practice for maintaining Council-owned or managed grassland areas with each step designed to increase biodiversity and environmental resilience.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Short term	Carbon Sequestration Climate Regulation Healthy Environment
	BAP2	Prioritise quick wins by improving biodiversity around council sites, such as installing bird boxes and insect holes.			
	BAP3	Develop a process to support the delivery of measures which improve biodiversity and climate adaptation in social housing communal open spaces. This will be based on tenant engagement outcomes, with a focus on co-benefits and ensuring a balance with the existing recreational use of the space.			
	BAP4	Conduct a survey or audit of selectively identified SKDC owned open space to help assess district wide potential to improve biodiversity. This will combine trial sites identified across the wider portfolio with resident-led suggestions.			
	BAP5	Existing data about wildlife and habitats in the local area should be reviewed before the commencement of new projects.			
	BAP6	Consult the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy once published to identify what actions will benefit specific areas.			
The Council's actions and decisions should seek to support and protect pollinators (including bees, moths, butterflies, and other insects) and their associated habitats as they are vital to the resilience of a healthy and biodiverse ecosystem.	BAP7	Endeavour to plant pollinator friendly plants where possible and include a diversity of species, colours, shapes, and flowering times to support a variety of pollinators.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture	Medium term	Carbon Sequestration Climate Regulation Healthy Environment
	BAP8	Support existing wildflower projects and develop new opportunities with the focus on 'feeding, breeding and sheltering' local wildlife.			

<p>The Council will include measures to reduce and/or prevent environmental damage resulting from our operations.</p> <p><i>Environmental damage can arise from activities which disrupt natural processes or negatively impact the natural environment (land, air, and water), habitats or living species. Sources of environmental damage include Greenhouse Gas emissions, chemical pollution, air pollution, land degradation, nitrogen and phosphorous loading, and the exploitation of natural resources.</i></p> <p>152</p>	<p>BAP9</p> <p>In recognition of the critical role peatlands play in carbon storage, biodiversity, and water regulation, the Council will avoid the direct use of peat in its operations, using only peat-free compost for planting initiatives and ornamental bedding displays.</p>	<p>Street Scene Manager</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>Healthy Environment</p>
	<p>BAP10</p> <p>The Council acknowledges that peat-free composts are not yet universally viable in all settings or for all applications, including nursery tree production. Where viable, the Council will prioritise nursery suppliers who use certified peat-free alternatives, with a view of phasing out to those using sustainable alternatives as they become available.</p>			
	<p>BAP11</p> <p>Within the Council's wider operations, plant protection products (PPP) will be used with care and only as a last resort on land where it is safe to do so and does not present a health and safety concern or impact of the aesthetics of an area. The Council will actively seek to further reduce PPP use where safe to do so.</p> <p>Licensed pesticides may still be used where there is a strong public health justification. For example, on areas of hardstanding or justified applications against pests e.g, Oak Processionary Moth</p> <p>Herbicides remain the most cost-effective way of managing competing vegetation around amenity trees and preventing unwanted regrowth on tree stumps. Herbicides may also still be used on invasive species such as Japanese knotweed.</p>			
<p>Ensure the Council's local tree planting programmes contribute to climate adaptation objectives in line with SKDC's Trees and Woodland Strategy.</p>	<p>BAP12</p> <p>Educate residents on the positive impact trees have on biodiversity and their role in alleviating the effects of climate change.</p>	<p>Tree Project Officer</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p>	<p>Short term</p>	<p>Climate Regulation</p> <p>Flood Protection</p>
	<p>BAP13</p> <p>To minimise and control the spread of diseases and pests, the Council will only source new trees from suppliers that can demonstrate adherence to the Plant Health Management Standard, the gold standard for biosecurity.</p>			
	<p>BAP14</p> <p>The Council will diversify its tree population to support resilience against pests, disease and the adverse impacts of climate change, helping to support biodiversity where possible. Trees species will be chosen to match the site conditions and constraints and may include a mixture of native and non-native species.</p>			

	BAP15	The Council plans to support and further encourage local bat populations by providing bat boxes and identifying trees where they can roost.			
Ensure the ongoing monitoring of the impact rewilding measures have on local biodiversity.	BAP16	The Council will monitor and report on its actions to meet the biodiversity duty by collecting data on specific performance indicators and including a specific section within the Council's Annual Environment Key Performance Indicator Report.			
	BAP17	<p>A range of indicators will be developed to monitor the Council's action on biodiversity, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of native tree species planted • Number of instances of pruning practices to promote biodiversity (veteranisation, preservation of cavities and deadwood). • Number of habitat piles created (e.g. from arboricultural arisings) • 25-year projected canopy cover from newly planted amenity trees. • Species diversity of newly planted trees (number of families, genera, and species) • Area restored for natural flood management • Metres of hedges planted • Area of wetland created or restored 	<p>Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</p>	Medium term	



Theme 2: People, Partnerships and Funding

Continue to engage with residents to understand how they would like public Council-owned land to be best managed to support green infrastructure, increased opportunities for biodiversity in open spaces, and to facilitate climate adaptation.	BAP18	Provide regular updates across the SKDC website and supporting communications e.g., social media.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Ongoing	
Support small enhancement projects across the district through the development of a funding matrix.	BAP19	To enable the delivery of community focused nature improvement and regeneration projects which maximise co-benefits for residents, the Council will continue to actively explore potential streams of grant funding which can be filtered down to support local biodiversity initiatives.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Ongoing	All
Facilitate Council-led community engagement events to foster a culture of biodiversity stewardship among residents, schools, and businesses.	BAP20	Annual participation in Great Big Green Week with supporting biodiversity consultation.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Ongoing	Community Resilience
	BAP21	The Council will explore hosting Citizen Science projects and BioBlitz events.			
	BAP22	Seek to involve staff and local communities in tree planting events and accompanying nature-based processes.			
	BAP23	Signpost residents and local businesses to best practice advice.			
Be committed to partnership working with neighbouring local authorities and organisations to maximise wildlife benefit.	BAP24	Share data and best practices with other local authorities.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste	Medium term	Healthy Environment
	BAP25	Apply jointly for biodiversity funding opportunities e.g., DEFRA, Natural England, National Lottery Heritage Fund.			
	BAP26	Encourage the adoption of sustainable food production methods and raise awareness of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes.			

Theme 3: Planning and Policy

The Council will review its commitment to enhance the natural environment linked to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties.	BAP27	Conduct a review of the Council's approach to Biodiversity Net Gain in relation to its new build properties and future affordable housing developments.	Sustainability and Climate Change Manager Cabinet Member for Planning	Short term	
The Council will work to ensure the promotion of green infrastructure, prioritising proposals that contribute to biodiversity net gain and enhancement of green infrastructure, in particular Priority habitats and species, in line with an increasing level of mandatory action.	BAP28	Ensure developments in South Kesteven minimise their environmental impacts and deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity of at least 10% in line with existing policy and statutory legislation.	Planning Policy Manager Cabinet Member for Planning	Medium term	Climate Regulation Flood Protection Health and Wellbeing
	BAP29	Promote as standard the guidance on biodiversity in new housing developments: creating wildlife-friendly communities produced by the National House Building Council (NHBC) Foundation, ensuring landscaping schemes are complied with following completion, and undertaking enforcement action where required.			
	BAP30	Promote the mandatory requirements of the forthcoming Design Code, once published, to enhance the uptake of green infrastructure and ecologically friendly measures.			
	BAP31	Adhere to the national standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to ensure new developments include biodiversity features such as wetlands, swales, and ponds to support aquatic and terrestrial species where appropriate.			
	BAP32	Continue to improve the biodiversity value of new build development in line with the adopted Design Guide and existing Supplementary Planning Document.			
Work with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership to embed the Local Nature Recovery Strategy into site allocation, priority habitat creation, and BNG offset location decisions.	BAP33	Leverage the GLNP's Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping to guide site allocations and planning decisions using key Geographic Information System (GIS) outputs.	Planning Policy Manager Cabinet Member for Planning	Medium term	Climate Regulation Carbon Sequestration
	BAP34	Prioritise the protection of high-quality ecological network zones, buffer Priority habitats, and target creation areas for new habitat enhancement.			

The Council will review the resource needed to successfully deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in the district.	BAP35	Provide ongoing ecological and biodiversity baseline training for planning staff and decision-makers to improve understanding of ecological issues and BNG implementation.	Planning Policy Manager Cabinet Member for Planning	Short term	
	BAP36	If required, the Council could seek to engage a planning ecologist to scrutinise planning reports for improvements to biodiversity in new developments, and to support BNG.			
Within its role at local planning authority, the Council will review and enforce the protection of trees across the district.	BAP37	The Council will conduct a review of its Tree Protection Orders (TPOs), of which many trees are in high target low canopy coverage urban areas.	Tree Officer - Planning Cabinet Member for Planning	Short term	All
	BAP38	Develop an agreed policy for enforcement of unauthorised works to protected trees (TPOs and trees in conservation areas) in accordance with Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) as amended and the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.	Tree Officer – Planning Cabinet Member for Planning	Short term	All
	BAP39	The Council will maintain a record of TPO replants and all 5-day notices issued.	Tree Officer - Planning Cabinet Member for Planning	Short term	All
	BAP40	The Council will have regard to government guidance associated with ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees, as a material planning consideration in decision making.	Planning Policy Manager Cabinet Member for Planning	Ongoing	All

Strategies relevant to the Biodiversity Duty – additional policies to consider

Strategy/ Plan	Current contribution to Biodiversity
Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Corporate Plan commits us to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in South Kesteven. This means actively working to restore and rehabilitate damaged eco-systems, respecting the rural nature of the district to promote green and open spaces where nature and wildlife can thrive.
South Kesteven Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adopted South Kesteven Local Plan serves as a strategic document guiding development and planning decisions within the district. It outlines the vision, objectives, and spatial strategy for the area, including policies to address environmental considerations and the enhancement of green infrastructure to support biodiversity recovery (EN2 and EN3). The plan aims to ensure sustainable growth, meet the needs of the community, and protect the district's character and environment. The emerging Local Plan, the most recent published draft of which was the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan, includes a revised environment chapter. This includes a reviewed and strengthened policy EN2: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity, alongside a new policy: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains. The Green Infrastructure policy has been strengthened to include reference to Green Infrastructure Mapping.
Climate Change Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council published its first Climate Action Strategy, endorsed by Cabinet in November 2023, following an extensive consultation exercise and engagement with Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Strategy was developed to set out South Kesteven District Council's aspirations to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Strategy set out eight key themes, reflecting the broad scope of work needed to effectively address climate change in South Kesteven. It is the vision under the Natural Environment theme that 'wildlife habitats are valued, maintained, enhanced and created in South Kesteven and biodiversity is restored'.
Climate Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SKDC's Climate Action Plan is in development to support the previously published Climate Action Strategy.
Trees and Woodland Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing canopy cover and urban greening will create and enhance habitats providing habitats for pollinators, birds, and other urban wildlife. This will further contribute to regulating services such as carbon sequestration, air and water quality improvement, and flood mitigation, which are vital for maintaining biodiversity. By promoting the value of trees and woodlands, the strategy helps to raise awareness of biodiversity. By focusing on species diversification, the strategy supports a resilient tree population capable of thriving under changing climatic conditions.

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Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2025/26

WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/PRIORITY
10 November 2025				
Leisure Energy Update on Grantham Meres Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme	Leisure Energy (external)	Update presentation on the progress of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funded works at Grantham Meres leisure centre to install new low-carbon heating system and supporting upgrades.		Sustainable South Kesteven
Tree Management Policies Update	Andrew Igoea (Tree Officer)	Update on the new Tree Management Policies (replacing the SKDC Tree Guidelines).		Sustainable South Kesteven
Corporate Plan: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Q2	Charles James (Policy Officer)	To present the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2024-27 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for quarter 2 2025/26.		Effective Council
Green Fleet Update	Kay Boasman (Head of Waste and Markets)	To update on implementation of the actions of the Green Fleet Strategy		Sustainable South Kesteven
Climate Action Plan Update	Serena Brown (Sustainability & Climate Change Manager)	To update on the Climate Action Plan		Sustainable South Kesteven

REPORT TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/PRIORITY
Biodiversity Action Plan Update	Louise Case (Sustainability Project Support Officer)	To update on the newly developed Biodiversity Action Plan.	December 2023	Sustainable South Kesteven
13 January 2026				
Grantham Canal Partnership Presentation	Grantham Canal Society [External]	To present the work of the Grantham Canal Society and develop the renewal of the Grantham Canal Partnership.		Sustainable SK
Grantham Canal Maintenance Works Update	Gyles Teasdale (Head of Service – Property & ICT)	To provide committee with the works to be undertaken in respect of the CSKDC owned section of Grantham Canal.		Sustainable SK
Update on recently published Section 19 reports	Tom Amblin-Lightowler (Environmental Health Manager)	To review the recommendations to mitigate and prevent future flooding risks.	February 10 th 2025	Sustainable South Kesteven
Air Quality Annual Update	Tom Amblin-Lightowler (Environmental Health Manager)	To provide an update on the air quality within South Kesteven District Council in particular against the Air Quality Objectives and the Air Quality Management Area.		Sustainable South Kesteven
3 March 2026				
Unscheduled future items				

REPORT TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE/PRIORITY
Role of the District's Rivers, Canal, and Drainage Board				
National Hedge Laying Association				
Flooding Working Group Update		To update on the formation and development of the Flooding Working Group.	18 March 2025	Sustainable South Kesteven

The Committee's Remit

The remit of the Environment 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:

- Air quality
- Animal welfare licensing (Policy)
- Commercial, industrial, and clinical waste collection and management
- Dog breeding and control orders
- Domestic waste and recycling management
- Energy efficiency
- Environment SK Ltd
- Environment SK Commercial Services Ltd
- Estate and grounds maintenance
- Flooding
- Food hygiene and safety
- Health and safety
- Noise
- Renewable energy
- Scrap metal dealers
- Green open space management

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