

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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

Committee Members: Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)
Councillor Rhea Raysia (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor David Bellamy, Councillor Pam Bosworth, Councillor James Denniston,
Councillor Tim Harrison, Councillor Robert Leadenham, Councillor Habib Rahman
and Councillor Lee Steptoe

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 Interest**
Members are asked to disclose any interest in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 4. Minutes of the meeting held 16 October 2025** (Pages 3 - 10)

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01476 406080

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

5. **Updates from the previous meeting** (Page 11)
To receive updates on actions agreed at the previous meeting.
6. **Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**
7. **Rural Crime Action Team presentation** (Pages 13 - 27)
For an update to be given on the work of the Rural Crime Action Team.
8. **Corporate Plan 2024-27: Key Performance Indicators Report - Mid-Year (Q2) 2025/26** (Pages 29 - 37)
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.
9. **Customer Service Update - Quarter 2 - 2025-26** (Pages 39 - 73)
To provide the Committee with an update regarding customer interactions within the Customer Service team and high contact service areas for Quarter 2 during 2025/26
10. **Welfare and Financial Advice Team Update – Q2 2025/26** (Pages 75 - 107)
To provide the Committee with an update regarding the support issued as part of Household Support Fund during Q2 2025/26, and the wrap around support provided by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team. This will detail the activity undertaken by the team, number of residents supported, value of support provided and an update regarding District, County and National activities
11. **Armed Forces Covenant Report 2025** (Pages 109 - 120)
This report provides an update on the Council's actions to meet its responsibilities under the Armed Forces Act and the Armed Forces Covenant. It provides an overview of achievements under the Council's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award, highlights progress in the delivery of major projects, engagement and advocacy activity and includes plans for the coming year.
12. **Small unmanned aircraft (Drone) Policy** (Pages 121 - 137)
Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) / Drone use is growing at a rapid rate in the UK. Drone usage will provide a safer option for certain work streams and this Policy sets out the controls required to implement Drones and their use for Council activities.
13. **LCC Health Scrutiny update**
Delivered by Councillor Morgan.
14. **Work Programme 2025 - 2026** (Pages 139 - 141)
To receive the Work Programme for 2025 – 2026.
15. **Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Meeting of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Thursday, 16 October 2025, 10.00
am

Committee Members present	Cabinet Members present
Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)	Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Vice-Chairman)	
Councillor Tim Harrison	
Councillor Robert Leadenham	
Councillor Habib Rahman	
Councillor Lee Steptoe	
Councillor Charmaine Morgan	
Officers	
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer	
Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and Community)	
Carol Drury, Community Engagement & Manager	
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection	
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer	
Nicola Moore, Customer Service Manager	

14. Public Speaking

There were none.

15. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Denniston, substituted by Councillor Charmaine Morgan.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren.

16. Disclosure of Interest

There were none.

17. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2025 were proposed, seconded, and AGREED as an accurate record.

18. Updates from the previous meeting

The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that an update on the Customer Service Update – Outturn 2024/25 action was included within item seven of the agenda.

An update regarding the two outstanding actions from the South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan & Age Friendly Communities Update would be provided at the following meeting on 10 December 2025.

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

There were none.

20. Customer Service Update - Quarter 1 (2025/26)

The Customer Service Update – Quarter 1 (2025/26) was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance & Licencing.

The report outlined the different methods and number of customer interactions received into the Customer Services Team during the first quarter of 2025/26, compared to 2024/25. The comparison demonstrated a slight overall decrease in total face-to-face and telephone interactions from 61,866 to 59,487.

Despite this, there was an increase in Grantham face-to-face appointments from 79 to 248, resulting from the relocation of Customer Services in October 2024.

The report demonstrated a significant increase in interaction from digital channels from 388,346 to 513,530.

Incorporating all methods of interaction (telephone, walk ins, appointments, and digital), there was an overall increase in total contact from 452,564 to 573,017.

It was also noted that there had been improvements made in call handling with 83% of calls answered (76% previously) and 17% of calls abandoned (24% previously).

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- It was confirmed that the abbreviation IVR in table one referred to the system used for callers to press a number on their phone to be transferred to service areas.
- A Member noted concern about the number of website users who selected the option that the webpage they accessed had not been useful. The Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service and Community) acknowledged the concern and confirmed that all individuals who left contact details along with their response were contacted.
- It was confirmed that the significant increase in appointments in Grantham was due to the relocation of the Customer Service Centre, and the Customer Service team had encouraged vulnerable or individuals who struggle to access digital channels to attend in person.
- The Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service and Community) noted their desire for a more co-ordinated approach to managing the website between service areas.

The Customer Service Update - Quarter 1 (2025/26) was noted by the committee.

21. Welfare and Financial Advice Team Update

The Welfare and Financial Advice Team Update – Quarter 1 2025/26 was introduced by the Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service and Community).

For the period 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025, the initial amount of Household Support Funding allocated to South Kesteven was £458,452, equating to 14% of the district allocation.

Section 2.5 of the report updated on the delivery of this funding on the following areas:

- Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)
- SKDC Administrative + Preventative Measures
- 3rd Party Referrers
- Outreach Work/ Pensioners
- HSF7 Vouchers – Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)
- SKDC HSF7 Vouchers – Welfare & Financial Advice Team

A total of 683 vouchers were issued during the seven week period from 4 August 2025 to 22 September 2025, to the value of £94,898.

The timeline for subsequent voucher distribution was as follows:

October 2025 to December 2025 - open for third party referrals from support agencies and low-income pensioners.

January 2026 to March 2026 - open to public application until funding ends. Assistance predominantly by supermarket vouchers and Energy Vouchers.

Furthermore, the total value of additional wrap around support awarded by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team totalled £123,305.

The action plan for additional activities to be undertaken by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team during 2025/26 were detailed within appendix one of the report.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- Members praised the Welfare and Financial Advice Team for their tireless work following referrals made by Members.
- It was confirmed that the type of vouchers issued were largely at the request of the user and so officers anticipated an increase in energy vouchers over the winter months.
- The provision of carpets was confirmed not to be within the remit of the Household Support Fund, but the suggestion was made that this could be considered by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service and Community) was confident that the full funding allocation could be distributed within the allocated time the delayed experienced in quarter one was due to the delay in the release of eligibility guidance.

The Welfare and Financial Advice Team update was noted by the committee.

22. Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2029 - Action Plan

The Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2029 – Action Plan was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licencing.

The Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2029 was intended to provide a framework for the continued development of the Council's customer focus, to meet the principle of Effective Council, as outlined within the Corporate Plan 2024-27.

The strategy provided a single corporate document that outlined the Council's vision and ensures point of reference, accountability and governance to a Council-wide approach to customer experience.

The Strategy also set out the Customer Charter which defined the Council's responsibility to customers, as well as what the Council would like from customers.

The Customer Experience Steering Group was developed with insight and support from all front-facing service areas and consists of representatives from each of these service areas. The individuals in the group since became Customer Experience champions for their service area who had embed the Strategy within their teams, supporting the launch during National Customer Service Week (6 to 10 October 2025).

The Action Plan included within appendix two of the report outlined the approach taken to support the implementation of the strategy and the priorities encapsulated within. These activities included within the action plan were linked to relevant service plans, staff appraisals, and detailed the financial implications.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- Members praised the customer focused, forward thinking of the Customer Service Team and all officers involved in producing the strategy.
- A Member urged officers to ensure that the strategy was inclusive for vulnerable individuals. The Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service and Community) confirmed the strategy had been designed with all service areas to be user friendly and user groups had stress tested the design. It was also noted that individuals could still come visit the Customer Service Centre for in-person support.
- In addition to the staff training outlined within the Customer Experience Strategy and Action Plan, it was suggested that an outline of Member training could also be incorporated in the document.
- It was confirmed that feedback from complaints had been utilised when designing the strategy.
- It was also confirmed that the provision of site visits was determined on a service-by-service basis.
- It was queried whether any other locations were being considered in addition to the Grantham and Bourne sites. Following research undertaken by monitoring the postcodes of individuals visiting the sites, officers did not believe there to be significant demand for extra sites in other areas. However, this would continue to be monitored.

The Customer Experience Strategy 2025–2029 – Action Plan was noted by the committee.

23. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement 2024

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Position Statement 2024/25 was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licencing.

The Council's commitment to equalities was underpinned by the Corporate Plan (2024-2027) which stated that equality objectives would be supported by a delivery plan as part of the People Strategy.

The 2024/25 Annual Position Statement included the Council's current Equality Objectives which covered the period 2024-2027. The document also contained a snapshot of the actions taken against these objectives to provide Members with an overview of achievements.

The 2024/25 Annual Position Statement was included within appendix one of the report and encapsulated the following:

- Profile of South Kesteven
- Demographics and workforce comparisons
- Census statistics: disabilities
- Census statistics: religion
- Census statistics: sexual identity
- Supporting SKDC staff
- Ensuring equality and inclusion in the workforce
- Ensuring equality and inclusion for customers and communities

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- Given some of the data used was from the 2021 census, Members queried whether this data risked presenting an outdated demographic of the district. The Community Engagement Manager confirmed that these were the most recent statistics in this level of detail, however, ONS Mid Year Population Estimates were also used which contained more recent Office for National Statistics information. This however did not provide the same level of information across all the protected characteristics.
- It was noted that SKDC could not mandate the workforce to answer demographical questions, hence why 45% of the SKDC workforce had not provided information about sexual identity.
- It was confirmed that providing an equality, diversity, and inclusion annual position statement was a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010.
- Members noted that they were pleased to see accessible versions of the documents were available. It was noted that this was the case for all official council documents.

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to note the full support of the Rural and Communities OSC in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Annual Position Statement 2024/25 and to recommend that the Leader of the Council publishes the information at the earliest opportunity.

24. Corporate Enforcement Policy

The Corporate Enforcement Policy was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licencing.

This 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 Policy also incorporated three other South Kesteven District Council Enforcement Policies as specific content within the appendices:

- Enviro Crime Enforcement Policy (adopted April 2018)- now Appendix A to the policy titled Environmental Crime and Antisocial Behaviour-Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Environmental Services Enforcement Policy (dated February 2017)- now Appendix B to the policy titled Environmental Health Approach to Investigation and Enforcement.
- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (dated November 2018) - now Appendix C to the policy titled Private Sector Housing Approach to Investigation and Enforcement.

The enforcement options listed within the Policy ranged from no action to prosecution, and identified that when deciding whether to prosecute, South Kesteven District Council would have regard to the provisions of The Code for Crown Prosecutors as issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions. This Code provided two tests that must be satisfied when deciding to prosecute, these were the following: Evidential Test and the Public Interest Test.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- It was confirmed that the value of fines and fees were reviewed annually.
- Regarding fly tipping, a range of enforcement options were followed, and officers were looking to introduce a fly tipping matrix to allow enforcement options to be flexible and proportionate. Any fly tipping above 20 tonnes was the responsibility of the Environment Agency, and this would usually result in prosecution.
- It was confirmed that additional funding had been requested for cameras in common rural fly tipping areas.
- It was queried whether different departmental interpretations would cause inconsistency in the enforcement actions. The Head of Service (Public Protection) noted that the vast legislation meant that an overarching approach had to be taken. However, reassured Members that internal processes were in place to ensure consistency.
- It was noted that SKDC officers had been leading a Lincolnshire-wide response to fly tipping via the Environmental Crime Partnership.

- A Member highlighted the issue of anti-social behaviour in public parks by individuals aged under-18. They queried whether a multi-agency approach was being taken to tackle this. The Head of Service (Public Protection) confirmed that individual processes were in place to deal with these instances such as the Young Persons Protocol.
- It was confirmed that the penalties for Landlords renting out sub-standard properties were set by central government.

The Corporate Enforcement Policy was noted by the committee.

25. Work Programme 2025 - 2026

It was requested that the Armed Forces Champion be invited to the 10 December 2025 meeting for the Armed Forces Update.

The Chairman confirmed their intention to liaise with the Chairman of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to ensure they were happy with Members of the Rural and Communities OSC being invited to their 13 January 2026 meeting to observe the presentation by the Grantham Canal Partnership.

The Head of Service (Public Protection) requested for the following to be added to the Work Programme:

- Updated Street Trading Policy,
- Food Health and Safety Enforcement Workplan.

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

A Member noted that a number of reports within the agenda pack had only been for noting and suggested that alternative wording should be considered within the recommendation to lean into the scrutiny function of the committee.

The Chairman concluded the meeting at 11.20am.

Action Sheet

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Actions from meeting of 16 October 2025, carried from the 9 July 2025.

Min no	Agenda item	Action	Assigned to	Comments/Status	Deadline
8	South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan & Age Friendly Communities Update	For an Officer from Housing to provide how the Council were prioritising which empty homes (voids) would be brought back into use and whether any targets could be implemented on the number of homes aimed to be brought back into use.	Alison Hall-Wright (Director of Housing)	Update to be given at the 10 December meeting	
8	South Kesteven Health and Wellbeing Action Plan & Age Friendly Communities Update	For the Economic inclusion actions be brought back to Committee once the new Head of Economic Development had started their role.	Head of Economic Development Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning and Growth)	Update to be given at the 10 December meeting	

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Rural Crime Action Team

RCAT – meet the team



Make-up of the Team

- ▶ Establishment – 1x Police Sergeant and 6 x Police Constables (Currently holding x2 vacancies) +1 x Wildlife Crime Officer. Small size dictates shifts.
- ▶ Current Breakdown:
 - ▶ 1 x PS
 - ▶ 4 x PC with specialisms. Vehicle examiner, drone pilots, heritage, wildlife etc.
 - ▶ 1 x DC Force Wildlife Crime and Dog Legislation Officer

Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT)

SPECIALIST OPERATIONS



AGRICULTURAL

- Theft of agricultural GPS systems and devices
- Criminal damage and arson to crops and agricultural production
- Theft and criminal damage of agricultural and plant machinery
- Theft of trailers and UTVs
- Dealing with identified rural organised crime groups



WILDLIFE

- Badger crime
- Bat crime
- Bird of prey crime
- Fishing crime
- CITES
- Hare coursing
- Lamping
- Poaching
- Fox hunting
- Equine crime
- Livestock crime



ENVIRONMENTAL

- National infrastructure metal thefts (cable)
- Policing of anti-social behaviour on by-ways (off road bikes)
- Fly tipping (supporting the council)
- Illegal waste disposal (supporting environmental agency)
- Illegal scrap collectors
- Offences on sites of special scientific interest



HERITAGE

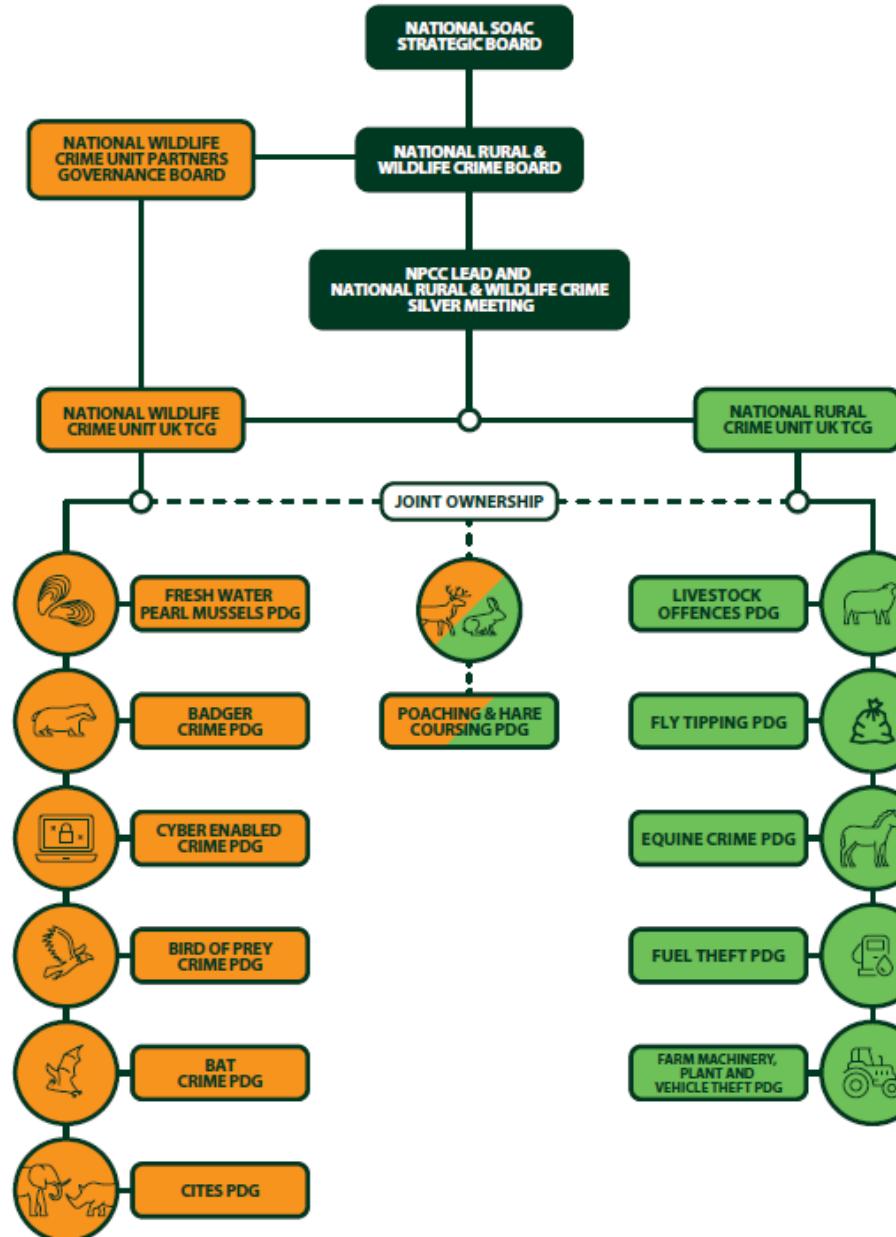
- Theft of lead from historic places of worship
- Criminal damage to historic places of worship
- Theft of cultural property
- Illegal metal detecting



Priority Delivery Groups (PDG's)

We have one single point of contact for each PDG which discusses good practice Nationally.

National Rural and Wildlife Crime Governance Structure

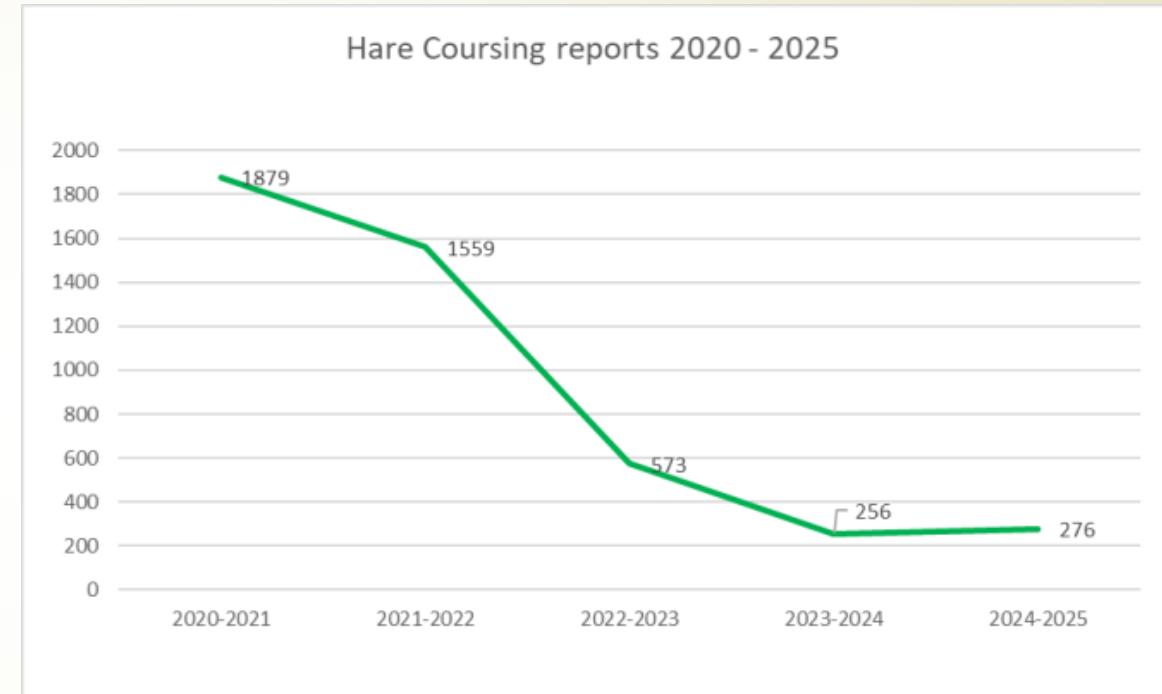


Cross Border : brief overview – One Team

- The focus for the RCAT remains working regionally and nationally for Agricultural / Plant Thefts and Op Galileo
- We maintain the wider specialist operations approach to preventing criminals the use of our roads and continue to identify rural thefts of vehicles and trailers that are being taken out of county/country, ensuring follow-up contact where possible.

Current Picture

- Op Galileo
 - Calls for service up 8% (256 to 276)
 - 10 case files for season 2024-2025
 - 29 offenders released under investigation (RUI)
 - 14 vehicles seized
 - 12 dogs seized
 - 3 cases are already summonsed to court



Current Picture

- Op Close. Theft of BT underground cable. Offender identified and ongoing investigation
- Op Liquids (now Op Sunfire). Theft of agricultural/plant equipment and machinery has been linked with nominals from out of force, items located and recovered May 2024 to May 2025.
 - Circa £300k of vehicles
 - Circa £150k of plant
 - Circa £70k of trailers
 - Circa £50k of farm equipment (ATV's, bowser, etc)
 - Circa £80 of caravans
- Boston and South Holland, and The Kestevens are currently the area where we are seeing an increase in the theft of tools and smaller machinery. Security measures such as padlocks have been cut and removed from the scene, fencing cut and gates broken offenders approaching across land behind addresses, potentially using drones to scout the area.
- Op Firefly. Theft from wind turbines. A team working Nationally has been identified and regions are working together to build a case file. Op Firefly has been adopted as the National name
- Op Crowned. Heritage crime, awaits sentencing.
- Op Gunpowder, Overhead powerline thefts – team involved arrested and on bail, offences stopped.

Court Results

- Bird of Prey Poisoning - Defendant found guilty of Bird Poisoning and trap offences, West Ashby – multiple birds of prey including Red Kites and Buzzards Total court costs £7449. A good multi-agency job.
- Op Galileo – Policy of arrest and seizure of dogs, vehicles and equipment – numerous good results with court costs and compensation enforced payment with court orders. Result includes forfeiture of Dogs, Vehicles and Equipment and also CBO's banning them from the region with long dogs, in some cases total bans on keeping dogs.

Under reporting and analysis

As a Police Force we understand that not everything is reported to us

- ▶ How to contact us when it is not a '999' call
 - Call 101 by phone
 - On-line reporting via the Lincolnshire Police website
[Report | Lincolnshire Police \(lincs.police.uk\)](http://Report | Lincolnshire Police (lincs.police.uk))
- ▶ Information can also be given to Crimestoppers anonymously

Every piece of information that is given to Lincolnshire Police informs our Analyst who can then inform of trends, series and the threat and risk to the people living and working in Lincolnshire. Resources can then be deployed to the right place at the right time with the right resources

Property and identification

- When property is stolen it can be placed on the Police National Computer (PNC). This allows all the agency, not just Police Forces to be able to identify found/seized stolen property
- It is essential when placing this on PNC that we can record
 - Vehicle Registration Marker (VRM) / number plate
 - Serial numbers
 - Fleet numbers
 - Any identifying marks ie: scratches/dints
 - Unique marking that have been added ie: letters/numbers on the roof of a tractor to assist in identification when using a police drone or helicopter
 - Photographs of equipment and machinery



Remember:-

- ▶ Mark It – Use of tagging systems CESAR, Data-Tag etc. Cheap Tags online, UV markings or personal markings, welds, etched, grinded etc.
- ▶ Record It – Photograph the item, ensure ID Plate visible along with any markings specific to your vehicle (that dent that only you know of), keep a list of serial numbers, markings etc somewhere safe, use your phone to photograph all of the above.
- ▶ Secure it – Relevant security for your plant / machinery, ground bolts, isolators, secure locations, CCTV, alarms etc.

What is fly-tipping?

"The illegal deposit of any waste on to land that does not have a license to accept it"

It is a serious offence for which a person can end up with a criminal record, an unlimited fine and up to five years in prison.

What are the effects of fly-tipping?

The most immediate effect of fly-tipping is its unsightly appearance, blighting areas of Lincolnshire.

Depending on the type of waste dumped, fly-tipping can also lead to the pollution of watercourses and land as well as being harmful to wildlife, livestock and the public.

In 2022/2023 there were 12,382 fly tips reported in Lincolnshire!

What are we doing?

In 2020, the Environmental Crime Partnership was set up.

This includes all Lincolnshire councils who are committed to working in partnership with other relevant bodies and organisations such as the police, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Environment Agency, National Farmers Union and others. Information and resources are shared through this partnership, increasing the likelihood of identifying those responsible.



We need your help!

Act as our eyes and ears and report fly-tipping

If you see fly-tipping, assess the incident

Without going through the waste yourself, gather as much information as you can about:

The circumstances

Did anyone witness the fly-tipping? Do you know the date and time it happened? Can you describe the vehicle involved?

The location

Was it a highway verge, back alley, railway embankment or river? What3Words can help you provide a precise location.

The waste

How much waste has been fly-tipped? What type of waste is it?

Fly-tipping investigation and clear up is the responsibility of each district council.

If you see any fly-tipping or witness it taking place, contact the relevant district council using the contact details provided in this leaflet.

Tip-off!

Stop fly-tipping in Lincolnshire

A guide to reporting and preventing illegal dumping in Lincolnshire



How can I stop my waste being fly-tipped?

As a householder, you have a duty to ensure that your waste is only given to an authorised waste carrier to dispose of or is taken to a licensed waste site. You must take all steps reasonable to ensure your waste isn't illegally dumped. You can be prosecuted if you pass your waste to an unlicensed waste carrier which is then fly-tipped.

The best way to stop organised fly-tipping is to make sure that only authorised waste carriers take your waste away.

Follow the S.C.R.A.P code:

Suspect all waste carriers

Do not let them take your waste away until they have proven themselves to be legitimate. A professional waste carrier should happily answer reasonable questions.

Check their waste carrier's registration details

Verify them by searching on the Environment Agency's website. Note down the registration number of the vehicle used to take your waste away.

Refuse unexpected offers to have rubbish taken away

If you do not trust that someone will be disposing of your waste legally, report their vehicle registration and name to the Environment Agency.

Ask what will happen to your rubbish

Seek evidence that it is going to be disposed of appropriately.

Paperwork should be obtained

Make sure you get a proper invoice, waste transfer note or a receipt. This should give a description of the waste and provide the waste carrier's contact details.

How else can I dispose of my waste?

Lincolnshire Recycling Centres

There are eleven recycling centres in Lincolnshire, operated by Lincolnshire County Council. Check the council's website for opening times and restrictions www.lincolnshire.gov.uk.

Bulky waste

Many local authorities provide a bulky waste collection service, taking away and disposing of items such as furniture and white goods for a reasonable cost.

Garden waste

Most councils operate a reasonably priced garden waste collection, often in separate bins. Otherwise, take your garden waste to your local recycling centre for composting.

Commercial waste

If you run a business, you must have a contract with a registered waste carrier to ensure that your waste is being taken away and disposed of correctly. You will also need to keep a record of waste transfer notes/receipts.

Someone has fly-tipped on my land

If you are a private landowner, it is your responsibility to safely dispose of the fly-tipped waste.

However, you should still **report the fly-tipping to your local authority** as they can still investigate where relevant evidence is found (e.g. name and address).

Think about why your land has been targeted.

Is the area easy to access?

Once you have established this, you may want to make steps to make your land less vulnerable.

Is the area out of public sight?

Local authorities in Lincolnshire

Boston Borough Council

01205 314200

www.boston.gov.uk



City of Lincoln Council

01522 881188

www.lincoln.gov.uk



East Lindsey District Council

01507 601111

www.e-lindsey.gov.uk



North Kesteven District Council

01529 414155

www.n-kesteven.gov.uk



South Holland District Council

01775 761161

www.sholland.gov.uk



South Kesteven District Council

01476 406080

www.southkesteven.gov.uk



West Lindsey District Council

01426 676676

www.west-lindsey.gov.uk



This leaflet is a guide to the law. It does not constitute legal advice and may be misleading if relied upon as a complete explanation of the legal issues involved.



Any Questions?

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SOUTH
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Rural & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 10 December 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 remit 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?	Connecting communities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Implications

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

Finance 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 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 that 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 28 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 eight 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 Seven of the actions are rated Green. These are actions which are on or above target as planned.
- 3.4 One action is 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 Zero actions are rated as N/A. These are actions for which work has not yet meaningfully commenced e.g. being sequenced on the completion of other items, or where data 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 next four years. This improvement will be prompted by the needs of decision makers and the Committees, and further consideration of how to best meet those needs by officers.

4. Other Options Considered

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

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

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

6. Appendices

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

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Corporate Plan 2024-27: KPI Summary Report 2025/26 – Rural & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee							
Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Quarterly Overall Status			
				2024/25		2025/26	
				Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
COM1	Connecting Communities	Deliver the Local Health and Wellbeing Action Plan	Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
COM7	Connecting Communities	Deliver the Community Engagement and Development Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)	On Target	On Target	Below Target	Below Target
COM8	Connecting Communities	Continue to deliver an accredited, effective and legislatively compliant CCTV service in partnership with Lincolnshire Police.	Head of Service (Public Protection)	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
COM11	Connecting Communities	Continue to support our Armed Forces Community and, as a Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS) Gold Award holder, advocate for the Armed Forces Community Covenant.	Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
COUN1	Effective Council	Continue to work in partnership with relevant partners to deliver and support targeted initiatives across the district to help communities.	Head of Service (Public Protection)	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
COUN2	Effective Council	Ensure the administration of licenses and approvals relating to both national legislation and discretionary, are effective, efficient, timely and consistent.	Head of Service (Public Protection)	Below Target	Below Target	Below Target	On Target
COUN5	Effective Council	Deliver the refreshed Customer Experience Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service & Community)	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target
HOUS2	Housing	Ensure services to support residents to remain living in their community with as much independence as possible, ideally within their own home, with the right support.	Head of Service (Public Protection)	On Target	On Target	On Target	On Target

Corporate Plan 2024-27: KPI Summary Report Q2 2025/26 – Rural & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee							
Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
COM1	Connecting Communities	Deliver the Local Health and Wellbeing Action Plan	Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)	Deliver 100% of the Local Health and Wellbeing action plan actions.	100% of task and finish actions	On Target	Ongoing work remains with the refreshed actions. Some were carried across from the previous set of actions due to the nature of them being considered as 'ongoing.' Officers continue to attend the Health and Wellbeing Officer Working Group and the Healthy Weight Operational Partnership Group. The Councils work on Age Friendly Communities continues to be reported alongside the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. A survey to all older adults (considered as 50+) will be circulated towards the end of 2025. The refreshed actions are currently being reviewed within each of the lever areas and an update will be provided at the next update report to Rural and Communities OSC in early 2026.
COM7	Connecting Communities	Deliver the Community Engagement and Development Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)	% of total actions on target/complete	96%	On Target	All of the 22 Community Engagement actions listed within the Community Engagement and Development Action Plan are either complete or active. The Strategy and Action Plan will now be reviewed and updated. This indicator provides numbers on events directly delivered by the Community Engagement Team and those it attends to promote the service to the voluntary and community sectors. The figure reported is down on previous years, but the Team has been operating with reduced capacity since February 2025, which has impacted the amount of engagement events attended. The Team are now fully resourced and back up to capacity.
				Number of Community Engagement events held across the district (15 cumulative)	2 (cumulative total 6)	On Target	
				£ levered by the SK Community Fund (£37,000 cumulative)	£569 (cumulative total £2,595)	Below Target	This indicator remains low compared with this time last year, however, it relies on community project values when using the Council's community funding to support larger bids. As larger bids, which can be for 100% of funding requirements, have been made to UKSPF from groups within the district the request for smaller, supporting grants have reduced. It is anticipated that this could rise within Q3 and Q4 as UKSPF is now closed to applications. Applicants who were unsuccessful for UKSPF funding are being encouraged to apply for the Community Fund should they meet the criteria.

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
COM8	Connecting Communities	Continue to deliver an accredited, effective and legislatively compliant CCTV service in partnership with Lincolnshire Police.	Head of Service (Public Protection)	% Public Realm CCTV cameras working at all times (Monthly)	99.8%	On Target	The target for public realm cameras working for 90% of the time is being achieved and is above the target. The audit was undertaken in December 2024 and SKDC were found to be compliant and received a certificate of registration, the next audit is due in December 2025.
COM11	Connecting Communities	Continue to support our Armed Forces Community and, as a Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (DERS) Gold Award holder, advocate for the Armed Forces Community Covenant.	Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)	% of total actions on target/complete (Armed Forces Covenant Action of Community Engagement and Development Strategy)	87%	On Target	Two actions remain outstanding on the Action Plan which is reflected in the reported percentage. All other actions are in progress or complete
				Number of engagement events delivered annually that raise awareness of the Armed Forces community and bring together business, community and the defence sector (7)	2 (cumulative)	On Target	The figure reported for this indicator shows the target has been exceeded. This is, in part, due to commemorations during May to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day and D Day in June, VJ Day in August and Arnhem commemorations in September.
				Number of events delivered within the district that mark national commemorations relating to the Armed Forces community (1)	5 (cumulative)	On Target	

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
COUN1	Effective Council	Continue to work in partnership with relevant partners to deliver and support targeted initiatives across the district to help communities.	Head of Service (Public Protection)	Attendance at partnership meetings (75%)	93%	On Target	Partnership working is prioritised by the Public Protection Service. This is essential to maintaining strong relationships with partners.
COUN2	Effective Council	Ensure the administration of licenses and approvals relating to both national legislation and discretionary, are effective, efficient, timely and consistent.	Head of Service (Public Protection)	% of Regulatory Services service requests with an initial response within a defined timescale (5 working days) 95%	Service Average: 97.6% Neighbourhoods Team: 98% Commercial Team: 100% Licensing Team: 99.7% Environmental Health, Environmental Protection, Private Sector Housing: 93%	On Target On Target On Target On Target Below Target	Performance is assessed by the percentage of services requests with an initial response within five working days. The target is 95%. Overall the Public Protection Service operated at an average of 97.6% in Q2 2025/26.
COUN5	Effective Council	Deliver the refreshed Customer Experience Strategy and accompanying action plan.	Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service & Community)	Approval of refreshed Customer Experience Strategy	Post-Consultation	On Target	The Customer Experience Strategy 2025-2029 (which includes the customer charter and service standard) has been finalised and was presented to Cabinet on 7 October 2025. The action plan was presented to Rural and Communities Committee on 16 October 2025, and 6 monthly thereafter.

Index	Priority	Action	Owner	Target/s	Q2 Value	Q2 Status	Manager Commentary
HOUS2	Housing	Ensure services to support residents to remain living in their community with as much independence as possible, ideally within their own home, with the right support.	Head of Service (Public Protection)	100 completed per year	81 (cumulative) 49 were completed in Q2.	On Target	For Q1 and Q2 the number of adaptions completed is 81 (which is 81%) and on target for the final target of 100 at the end of the financial year.

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 10 December 2025

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

Customer Service Update - Quarter 2 (2025/26)

Report Author

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

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Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update regarding customer interactions within the Customer Service team and high contact service areas for Quarter 2 during 2025/26.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Note the report and invited to ask questions regarding its content;**
- 2. Note the Customer Experience Strategy action plan and invited to ask questions regarding its content.**

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities? **Connecting communities
Effective council**

Which wards are impacted? **All Wards**

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are currently no direct budget implications associated with this report.
- 1.2 Any actions associated with the Customer Experience Strategy will be met from existing budgets or, where required, additional budgets will be requested.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 There are no significant legal or governance implication arising from this report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to Connecting Communities and being an Effective Council. This report, and the service provided through the Council's Customer Service Team and high contact service areas strives to deliver these priorities.
- 2.2 A customer service update quarter one (2025/26) report was presented to the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025. The report focused on the customer interactions during this quarter.
- 2.3 The Customer Experience Strategy was presented to the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2025. The report focused on the introduction of the new Strategy and associated action plan.
- 2.4 The Customer Service Team handle customer interactions in various ways for 17 high contact service areas, as well as general public enquiries. This report provides an update regarding customer interactions for these service areas for Quarter 2 (2025/26).

Customer Interaction

- 2.5. **Appendix 1** shows the number of customer interactions so far during 2025/26, and comparison to Q2 2024/25. These interactions include all methods of contact.
- 2.6. In comparison to Q1 2025/26, all contact has increased slightly (1,415) with website contact increasing significantly by 155,621.
- 2.7. In comparison to Q2 2024/25, all contact has increased slightly (2,097) with website contact increasing significantly by 300,071.
- 2.8. The increase in website contact is as a result of increased use of online forms, online portals (such as Benefits and Council Tax) – with the portal seeing over 90,000 transactions since it was launched. In addition, the waste round review resulted in an increase in contact for waste services pages, particularly during September 2025.
- 2.9. The Customer Service Team and individual service areas continue to promote the portal. For Council Tax, this is the most efficient way to contact the team, with customers receiving updated Council Tax bills within 24 to 48 hours from point of contact.
- 2.10. It is important for the Council to provide a variety of methods of contact for its customers. It is appreciated one contact method may not be suitable for all. Therefore, the method for customer contact provided by South Kesteven will continue to include all methods as shown in appendix 1.

Call answering – 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025

- 2.11. During Q2 2025/26, 94% of calls were answered, with just 6% of calls being 'abandoned' to other service channels. This is an improvement from Q2 2024/25, where these figures were 81% and 19% respectively.
- 2.12. Call handling statistics continue to be produced and issued by the Performance and Change Improvement Lead on a monthly basis to the Council's Corporate Management Team and service areas. The information includes number of calls offered, answered, abandoned and average speed of answer.
- 2.13. Performance clinics with service areas are continuing on a monthly basis which enable both the Customer Service Team and service area to analyse call handling performance and for the service area to advise of changes in service activity and any upcoming activities which may impact on the number or nature of customer interactions.

Ability to contact the Council

- 2.14. Customer feedback via the Council's corporate feedback process is monitored with headline information being reported to Governance and Audit Committee. The feedback specifically in relation to this report is where the customer has indicated an issue regarding the "ability to contact the Council".
- 2.15. During Quarter 2 2025/26 there was a total of 345 feedbacks received, of which, only one had a 'root cause' identified as 'ability to contact the Council'.

Website – feedback and improvements

- 2.16. Each page on the Council's website has a 'was this page useful?' function. A customer can choose 'yes' or 'no' by clicking on the relevant 'happy or sad face' icon at the bottom of the page. In doing this, the customer is given the option to provide and submit their comments, along with their name and email address.
- 2.17. A report is produced each month by the Performance and Customer Improvement Lead. For the purpose of this report, the information provided is from April 2025 to September 2025.
- 2.18. During this period, there have been a total of 452 individual 'was this page useful' interactions and this is broken down as follows:

Was this page useful				
	Yes	No	Total	% Yes
Total interactions	119	333	452	29%

- 2.19. Customers are also able to provide comments regarding their feedback and can leave their contact details which enables officers to provide a response as to the actions taken. Of the 333 respondents which advised the page was not useful, 276 provided comments.
- 2.20. All comments are reviewed and actions taken where required. Of the 276 comments received, 33 (12%) resulted in actions being taken. The common areas for feedback and reasons for changes not being taken are:
 - Customer did not provide enough details for action to be taken
 - Information requested is already on the website
 - Customer had a service enquiry, not a comment on the page

2.21. Officers have analysed the feedback and actions taken since 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025 – these are detailed in **appendix 2**.

Customer Experience Strategy 2025-2029 – Action Plan

2.22. The Strategy was introduced and ensures all services and staff provide an effective and positive customer experience who are aware of and understand their responsibilities in fulfilling the Customer Charter, Service Standards, Priorities and Vision to a high level.

2.23. An action plan has been developed which will support the Strategy and its priorities – this is detailed in **appendix 3**. Those areas updated since the last committee are shown with comments and have been rated red (overdue), amber (due and updated) and green (complete).

2.24. The plan focusses on Year 1 (October 2025 to 31 March 2026) – which covers the 'Explore' activities. The activities for 2026/27 and beyond will move from Explore to Implement, with a new action plan being devised for this period. These activities will be appropriately linked to relevant Service Plans, staff appraisals and will detail financial implications of proposed actions.

2.25. The Customer Service Management Team will be responsible for the strategic direction of the action plan, collaborating with the Customer Experience Steering Group who will have oversight of the Strategy to enable effective co-ordination of delivery of the actions.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. These are included throughout the report and members of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

4.1. The recommendations are made to ensure Members are aware of, and are able to provide feedback regarding the level of Customer Service being provided and the progress being made towards the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy and its action plan.

5. Appendices

5.1 There are three appendices included in this report:

- Appendix 1: Customer Interactions
- Appendix 2: Website Feedback
- Appendix 3: Customer Experience Strategy 2025-2029 action plan

Table 1 – telephone calls and face to face

2025/26				
Contact Type	Q1	Q2	Difference	Direction
Virtual Operator	29,481	22,236	-7,245	
IVR	12,055	12,613	558	
Total	41,536	34,849	-6,687	

	Q1	Q2	Difference	Direction (Q1 to Q2)
CS calls exc Switchboard	33,706	33,223	-483	
Switchboard calls	3,418	4,224	806	
Other teams calls	13,588	13,840	252	
Total Calls	50,712	51,287	575	
Grantham walk-in	1,225	1,409	184	
Bourne walk-in	98	129	31	
Total Walk-Ins	1,323	1,538	215	
Grantham appointments	248	249	1	
Bourne appointments	97	81	-16	
Total Appointments	345	330	-15	
Bourne library	7,107	7,747	640	
Total Interactions	59,487	60,902	1,415	

Comparison 2024/25 to 2025/26				
	Q2 2024/25	Q2 2025/26	Difference	Direction
Virtual Operator	23,671	22,236	-1,435	
IVR	12,965	12,613	-352	
Total	36,636	34,849	-1,787	
	Q2 2024/25	Q2 2025/26	Difference	Direction
CS calls exc Switchboard	31,892	33,223	1,331	
Switchboard calls	4,129	4,224	95	
Other teams calls	14,037	13,840	-197	
Total Calls	50,058	51,287	1,229	
Grantham walk-in	831	1,409	578	
Bourne walk-in	104	129	25	
Total Walk-Ins	935	1,538	603	
Grantham appointments	142	249	107	
Bourne appointments	62	81	19	
Total Appointments	204	330	126	
Bourne library	7,608	7,747	139	
Total Interactions	58,805	60,902	2,097	

Table 2: Digital channels – Emails, Online Forms and Website

2025/26				
Contact Type	Q1	Q2	Difference	Direction (Q1 to Q2)
Emails	4,366	4,574	208	
Website	509,164	663,162	153,998	

Total digital Interactions	513,530	667,736	154,206	
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Total Contact (Table 1 and Table 2)	573,017	728,638	155,621	
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Comparison 2024/25 to 2025/26			
Q2 2024/25	Q2 2025/26	Difference	Direction
4,901	4,574	-327	
363,091	663,162	300,071	

367,992	667,736	299,744	
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426,797	728,638	301,841	
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Table 3: Digital channels – Emails, Online Forms and Website – 2025/26

Contact Type	Q1		Q2		Direction of volume	Direction as % of contact
	Volume	% of total contact (573,017)	Volume	% of total contact (728,638)		
Telephone calls (table 1)	50,712	8.85%	51,287	7.04%	↑	↓
Face to face – walk in (table 1)	1,323	0.23%	1,538	0.21%	↑	↓
Face-to-face – appointments (table 1)	345	0.06%	330	0.05%	↓	↓
Bourne Library (table 1)	7,107	1.24%	7,747	1.06%	↑	↓
Digital (table 2)	513,530	89.62%	667,736	91.64%	↑	↑
Total Contact	573,017		728,638		↑	↑

Table 4: Digital channels – Emails, Online Forms and Website – Q2 2024/25 to Q2 2025/26

Contact Type	Q2 2024/25		Q2 2025/26		Direction of volume	Direction as % of contact
	Volume	% of total contact (426,797)	Volume	% of total contact (728,638)		
Telephone calls (table 1)	50,058	11.73%	51,287	7.04%	↑	↓
Face to face – walk in (table 1)	935	0.22%	1,538	0.21%	↑	↓
Face-to-face – appts (table 1)	204	0.05%	330	0.05%	↑	↔
Bourne Library (table 1)	7,608	1.78%	7,747	1.06%	↑	↓
Digital (table 2)	367,992	86.22%	667,736	91.64%	↑	↑
Total Contact	426,797		728,638		↑	↑

Website Feedback: Analysis of feedback and actions taken since 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
Club premises certificate	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/business-trade-and-licensing/licensing/club-premises-certificate	Licensing	Gives the reasons why a Club Premise License is required, but there is no application form or any information regarding how to apply.	Application form now on the page. www.southkesteven.gov.uk/business-trade-and-licensing/licensing/club-premises-certificate
Local Plan Review	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/localplanreview	Planning & Building Control	You've made this confusing and convoluted so people can't object to things	Changes now made and a key is already on the map
Local Plan Review	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/localplanreview	Planning & Building Control	Not user friendly - very difficult to navigate, especially maps. No key given with individual maps.	Changes now made and a key is already on the map
About your council tax	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/about-your-council-tax	Revenues	How much is the council tax????	Page archived as new page now on the website (Council tax charges) https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-charges

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
Council Tax - Frequently Asked Questions	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-frequently-asked-questions	Revenues	Looking for a copy of my tax bill/form	Link on the page to the Citizens Access Revenues online portal. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-and-benefits-self-service-portal
Council tax charges	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-charges	Revenues	How do I set up direct debit for council tax	Link on the page to the Citizens Access Revenues online portal. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-and-benefits-self-service-portal
Council tax charges	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-charges	Revenues	Where do I register to pay tax?	Link on the page to the Citizens Access Revenues online portal. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-and-benefits-self-service-portal
Moving house and your council tax bill	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax-benefits/moving-house-and-your-council-tax-bill	Revenues	There's no form or instruction on who should be informed.	Link on the page to the Citizens Access Revenues online portal. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-and-benefits-self-service-portal

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
Additional bins and newly-built housing	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/additional-bins-and-newly-built-housing	Waste	Bin has split in wall due to age how to replace	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page Bin and bag services South Kesteven District Council
Additional bins and newly-built housing	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/additional-bins-and-newly-built-housing	Waste	Does state how to order to new bins just that you can?	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page Bin and bag services South Kesteven District Council
Additional bins and newly-built housing	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/additional-bins-and-newly-built-housing	Waste	What is the criteria!	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page Bin and bag services South Kesteven District Council
Bins, street care, recycling and commercial waste	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins	Waste	I want to report a missed bin collection but request says no collection was due. I've tried calling 6 times but keep getting cut off	Missed bin process now working No contact details so unable to determine date/time of call to track
Find your bin collection day	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/binday	Waste	What are the light blue and dark blue bin days on the new Green bin schedule?	Wording updated to make this clear

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
Food Waste Recycling - coming April 2026	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/food-waste-recycling-coming-april-2026	Waste	The page is not useful because there is no information on it - 'Coming April 2026' is not very helpful. A summary of the proposed service supported by the presentation given to Councillors would be informative.	This page has now been updated with relevant information. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/foodwaste
Food Waste Recycling - coming April 2026	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/food-waste-recycling-coming-april-2026	Waste	No information	This page has now been updated with relevant information. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/foodwaste
Food Waste Recycling - coming April 2026	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/food-waste-recycling-coming-april-2026	Waste	Are we having to pay for another bin.	This page has now been updated with relevant information. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/foodwaste
Food Waste Recycling - coming April 2026	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/food-waste-recycling-coming-april-2026	Waste	No info given as to whether biodegradable bags are used, bin size, how often the collection.	This page has now been updated with relevant information. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/foodwaste

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	Finding where to order a new bin is too hard, would expect link from this page at least, but cannot be found	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	How do I order new bins for a new build home?	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	There are no instructions of how to order a new bin	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	No information about obtaining refuse sacks (pink)	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	Does not have section for pink bags	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	Doesn't tell me how do get any of the services	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	I'm trying to get a replacement bin where the bin was damaged after collection and not by me	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	Typical council website useless	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	Shows fees but not how to contact	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	Doesn't tell me how to order a new bin	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
recycling sacks				https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	I want to order a replacement bin for one damaged during collection	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	How do I get a replacement black bin. The bin men broke mine today and snapped the lid off. So now I have a lidless bin and need a new one	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
New bins, replacement parts and recycling sacks	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins/new-bins-replacement-parts-and-recycling-sacks	Waste	Where is link to order bins?	Link to the Bin and Bag Services page https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/bin-and-bag-services
Reporting a missed refuse collection	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/missedbin	Waste	Site would not admit that new collection had taken place.	Missed bin process now working
Right Thing Right Bin:	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/rightbin	Waste	How to dispose of car wiper blades	Updated the list with car wiper blades.

Web page	URL	Service Area	Feedback	Action Taken
What can I put in my bin?				
SKDC Garden Waste FAQs	www.southkesteven.gov.uk/gardenwasteFAQs	Waste	I need to cancel green bin payment for next year	Put a link onto the main Garden Waste page. https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/bins-street-care-recycling-and-commercial-waste/garden-waste-collections

Customer Experience Strategy 2025 to 2029 – Action Plan

The Customer Experience Strategy is underpinned by an action plan that runs from 2025 until 2029.

The action plan currently focusses on Year 1 of the strategy (October 2025 to 31 March 2026) – which are the “Explore” activities.

The activities for 2026/27 and beyond will move from Explore to Implement, with a new action plan being devised for this period. These activities will be appropriately linked to relevant Service Plans and staff appraisals

Each action will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through the performance framework and ongoing customer consultation and engagement to ensure it meets current needs and is developed further to accommodate future requirements.

Priority 1	Our commitment to a customer first ethos
Priority 2	Access to multiple service channels
Priority 3	Accessibility and Inclusion
Priority 4	Regular staff training
Priority 5	Technology

Priority 1: Our commitment to a customer first ethos

Our commitment:

To ensure customers are advised when their enquiry is passed on to another member of the team or service area for resolution

Purpose:

We will ensure that the customer voice is central to our decision making when we look at how our services are designed in the future. We'll also share learning and best practice across the organisation.

To be transparent and keep residents informed throughout their customer journey. Being clear, respectful and responding in a timely manner.

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Work with service areas to continually review the customer journey, measuring, monitoring and providing feedback regarding performance against service standards	Review service area feedback with the relevant Customer Experience Champions; focussing on the feedback provided, query resolution and any remaining actions.	Monthly	31 March 2026	
	Monthly performance clinic meetings between the Performance and Customer Improvement Lead and service areas to continue, with focus on the Customer Charter, Service Standards and action plan	Monthly	31 March 2026	
	Monitor peaks and troughs in customer interactions throughout the day / week and respond to these accordingly to ensure a high level of service is provided	Daily	31 March 2026	
	Monitor call handling against the 80% service level standard for calls being handled by the Customer Service Team respond to these accordingly to ensure 80% call handling is maintained	Monthly	31 March 2026	

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 2: Embed existing customer champions across service areas, which will be linked to the launch of the strategy 50	Initial meeting with the Customer Experience Champions to introduce them to the Customer Experience Strategy, Customer Charter, Service Standards and action plan Updated 13 November: Initial meeting took place 9 October 2025	One off	31 October 2025	Completed 9th October
	Meet regularly with the Customer Experience Champions to embed the above and received feedback regarding actions being undertaken within their teams	Monthly	31 March 2026	
	Undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys through a variety of methods Updated 13 November: This is currently being investigated and meetings have been arranged to review technology available, along with the investigating of use of Microsoft forms.	Every 6 months	30 December 2025	Updated
	Undertake exit satisfaction surveys for customers visit the Bourne and Grantham Customer Service Centres	Daily	31 March 2026	
Outcome 3: Produce a clear handover of communication between teams when transferring enquiries and expectations on response times	Awareness to all staff: Information regarding handover to be clearly recorded on relevant software system Updated 13 November: Meeting planned for November 2025 to address and move forward	One off	31 October 2025	Overdue November 2025
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
	<p>Awareness to all staff: When handing over a communication, that they are to update the customer as to who it is being handed to (officers name and department) and why</p> <p>Updated 13 November: Meeting planned for November 2025 to address and move forward</p>	One off	31 October 2025	Overdue November 2025
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	
8	<p>Awareness to all staff: Out of office notifications to be standardised across all teams, providing the customer with key information such as date of return and who to contact in the officers absence</p> <p>Updated 13 November: Meeting planned for November 2025 to address and move forward</p>	One off	31 October 2025	Overdue November 2025
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	
	<p>Voicemail training to be provided to all staff; to ensure customer are able to leave a message and know this will be picked up and listened to, with the appropriate action being undertaken.</p> <p>Updated 13 November: This is linked to the rollout of the new telephony solution for non-agent staff. This project has been delayed slightly to December 2025</p>	One off	31 October 2025	Overdue December 2025
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	

Priority 1: Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
	<p>Ensuring the corporate feedback system is used correctly and understood by all service areas – how to record feedback, how to use the feedback system, responding to feedback and analysing information to improve services.</p> <p>Updated 13 November: Investigating best ways forward due to system changes. To be discussed with Amber as there is an opportunity to reissue a net consent with the feedback policy and some procedural notes. However, the Meritec process has recently been updated and changed slightly so unsure on the training notes update.</p>	One off	30 November 2025	Updated
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	
<p>Outcome 5: Ensure consistency of messaging via phone, email, online form or in person. Implement Training and development plans to respond to feedback and improve our offer. Embed the customer voice into our performance appraisals across the authority</p>	Undertake a review of supporting documents relating to telephone, email and online to ensure consistent information is provided	Quarterly	30 November 2025	Updated
	Inclusion of Customer Charter and Service Standards in appraisal process to ensure requirements are understood and training needs identified	Annual	28 February 2026	
	Review training and development in line with front facing needs – such as handling difficult situations and managing difficult conversations	Quarterly	30 November 2025	Complete
	Updated 13 November: Conflict resolution training being completed by CS and officers managing face to face enquiries. Operating procedure and lock down process reviewed and tested and will continue to be.			

Priority 2: Access to multiple service channels

Our commitment:

Ensure customers have access to multiple service channels to support their needs and type of enquiry.

Purpose:

To enable customers to choose their preferred communication channel at every touchpoint.

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Each of our processes will continue to be reviewed in detail, and where necessary, remodelled to support digital interactions in the future	Ensure customers have access to multiple service channels to support their needs and type of enquiry	Monthly	31 March 2026
	Where possible, staffing levels will be reviewed to complement peak activities	Monthly	31 March 2026
	Analyse the data available to understand whether service channel access needs to be reviewed	Monthly	31 March 2026
	Discuss with service area Customer Experience Champions to review processes and potential remodelling other methods of interaction Updated 13 November: Planned for the next customer Experience Champion meeting to be discussed November/ December	One off	November 2025
	Encourage customers to notify the council of changes promptly so we can respond to this change in a positive way	Monthly	31 March 2026
Outcome 2: Focus on the core channels our customers prefer			

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status	
Outcome 3: The customer will get an improved outcome and will have greater choice in how to access a service	<p>Review access channel use for service areas – most / least used, at what time of day is the service accessed and how</p> <p>Updated 13 November: Discussions taking place with regards to gaining data to give us greater insight into the web usage.</p>	One off	January 2026	Updated
	<p>Active promotion of all service channels available to customers for each of the service areas – highlighting the benefits of each service channel</p> <p>Updated 13 November: This is promoted across the Customer Service team over the 17 areas we manage. However, this will be discussed in the Customer Experience Champions Meeting during November / December.</p>	One off	November 2025	Updated Part complete
	<p>Ongoing promotion of service area channels (once appropriate method has been identified)</p> <p>Updated 13 November: Performance data is being looked into by the Performance and Change Development Lead with potential to display on the website and in the TCs in the two customer service centres</p>	Monthly	31 March 2026	
Outcome 4: The council will see lower operating costs through greater levels of automation and a reduction in repeat contacts from customers.	Activities link to Priority 5: Technology			

Priority 3: Accessibility and Inclusion

Our commitment:

We will ensure our services are accessible and inclusive for everyone regardless of ability, background, or circumstance.

Purpose:

To comply with legal requirements and a commitment to supporting all customers equitably.

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: We will aim to identify any and all barriers to accessing our services (e.g language, literacy, digital inclusion), reducing these through continued working across all teams	To undertake activities which ensures all those involved understand accessibility is not just about place – but always about people	Immediate	31 March 2026
	Customer Service section on SKDC website to include all relevant information regarding people and place accessibility and inclusion	Immediate	November 2025
	Promotion and advertising of translation service on request of any document (except a form)	Every 6 months	December 2025
	Consider (with relevant service areas) providing easy read versions of documents / advice / instructions for those customers who have limited literacy, whose first language is not English Updated 13 November: Performance and Change Improvement Lead to discuss this with service areas in monthly performance clinic meeting on their approach and way forward with this.	Every 6 months	January 2026

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
CG	Review of feedback and demand as to whether outreach is needed within Deepings and Stamford.	Every 6 months	January 2026	
	Review accessibility for people who are deaf and hearing impaired – such as hearing loop and text relay. Updated 13 November: Looking at the cost of portable hearing loop units that can be utilised in multiple locations across both offices.	Immediate	November 2025	Updated
	Ensuring we include within our location on the website that both Customer Service Centres can be access on one level Updated 13 November: Website will be updated and access promoted during discussions with customers	Immediate	October 2025	Overdue November 2025
	Ensure all staff are aware of "Language line" and how to use this service Updated 13 November: Customer Services Manager has spoken to relevant teams recently about this and is looking to put a document out to all staff on net consent on how to use.	Immediate	October 2025	Updated
	Liaise with SKDC IT Team and external provider to undertake a review of Website accessibility	Every 6 months	December 2025	
	All service areas to work together to understand what the needs of our vulnerable customers are. To be undertaken up as part of the regular meetings with Customer Experience Champions	Quarterly	31 March 2026	

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
	Liaison with third sector support organisations to better understand the barriers customers have when accessing our services	Ongoing	31 March 2026	
Outcome 2: 100% of our staff to receive training in accessibility and continuous learning in this area to increase staff confidence and capability	To ensure all staff are aware of the support available in Outcome 1	Ongoing	31 March 2026	
	Liaise with HR to explore the potential of customer facing (front-line) staff being trained in disability awareness - not just physical disabilities – but to also include insights into neurodivergent conditions, dementia, mental health etc	Immediate	November 2025	
	Liaise with HR to explore the potential of customer facing (front-line) staff receiving British Sign Language training Updated 13 November: This is an issue with single point of failure if limited number of staff receive train. The training is intensive and its advised to practise daily. This is not a quick win. Look to see what AI is available as alternative options	Immediate	November 2025	Updated
Outcome 3: Satisfaction scores from consultation with groups who may have previously experienced inaccessibility will be improved	Introduce exit surveys at Bourne and Grantham Customer Service Centres Updated 13 November: This is currently being investigated and meetings have been arranged to review technology available	Immediate	December 2025	Updated
	Work with our Community Engagement Team colleagues to ensure we engage appropriate. The team have contacts for groups that work with people with varying disabilities and also those who work with people whose first language isn't English.	As required	Ongoing	

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
<p>To work with the Community Engagement Team to ensure in person consultation is considered with those groups who support the people whose first language is not English. The consultation could form part of the feedback process from any interaction.</p>	As required	Ongoing	
	Quarterly	31 March 2026	

Priority 4: Regular staff training

Our commitment:

We will ensure our staff receive regular training to enable them to respond to enquiries with accurate information.

Purpose:

To ensure all staff have knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver excellent customer service across all service areas.

To stay current with changes in policy and procedure and service area updates.

Our aim is to support all residents effectively across all contact channels.

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Development of staff learning plans to increase staff confidence through training	Ensure relevant staff training is identified through the appraisal and 1-1 processes (2025 appraisals)	One off	31 October 2025
	Review of current training needs and ensure our staff receive regular training to enable them to respond to enquiries with accurate information Updated 13 November: Ongoing in regular check ins	Quarterly	31 December 2026
Outcome 2: Develop our knowledge-base for use by customers, staff and virtual assistants	Performance and Change Improvement Lead to liaise with service areas as part of monthly performance clinics to identify gaps in information, to produce FAQs online and consider these activities as part of developing Virtual Assistants (see technology action)	Monthly	31 March 2026
Outcome 3: Training to better improve staff	Monitor customer feedback through variety of methods: We have asked customers to engage positively and give honest & constructive feedback to help the Council understand how services can be improved.	Monthly	31 March 2026

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
understanding and response to feedback	Provide relevant training as a direct result of the feedback from our customers			
Outcome 4: Embedding a learning culture about customer service across our teams	Ensure all services are aware of their responsibilities within this strategy – customer service is an ethos, a culture, not just one team Updated 13 November: This was highlighted at the Customer Experience champions meeting and is referenced regularly during the performance clinic meetings with service areas.	One off	31 October 2025	Complete
	Regular review of above activity to ensure actions are being undertaken as required	Monthly	31 March 2026	

Priority 5: Technology

Our commitment:

To review the provision of technology to improve services – such as customer contact, keeping customers up to date with progress of enquiries, website information.

Purpose:

To provide user friendly technology that enhances the customer experience and improves efficiency to access services. We want to ensure our customers can easily access information and services when and how they need to via our website, online portals, telephones and offices. Technological advancements are moving faster than ever and have a significant impact on customer expectations. There is no such thing as standing still. If we don't invest then in reality our services will be going backwards and won't be moving at the pace our customers expect. We need to fundamentally review the type and configuration of technologies used to deliver services across each channel.

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Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
Outcome 1: Evaluate and consider the procurement and implementation of a new digital engagement / CRM platform Meet with other Councils to understand what digital engagement / CRM platforms are used to understand the capabilities and benefits Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	
Outcome 2: Evaluate the deployment of new booking solutions to provide greater customer choice, Explore the technology which is currently available to us (if new technology if needed) to enable customers to undertake self-booking Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2	One off	31 March 2026	

Activities to be undertaken		Frequency	Deadline	Status
independence and automation	<p>Review use of desk bookings by service areas to understand whether this is officer or customer led. To review improvements to ensure the contact channel is known to all staff and customers and is being used to its full potential</p> <p>Updated 13 November: Management to undertake a review of desk bookings in both offices to identify need, demand and peak times.</p>	One off	30 November 2025	Updated
Outcome 3: Evaluate deployment of chat technologies, including chatbots in high volume, repetitive environments	<p>Research to be undertaken to understand how technology is being used by our customers to engage with the Council – platforms for access etc</p> <p>Meet with other Councils who are using this technology to understand the objectives they have set, whether these are being met and the outcomes from deployment of the technology</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2</p>	One off	31 March 2026	
	<p>Telephone system – text message and chat bot</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2</p>	One off	31 March 2026	
Outcome 4: Continue to improve digital access - 24/7, portals, online forms, support in offices for the less digitally confident	<p>Promotion of online and self service portals during National Customer Service Week (6 to 10 October 2025)</p>	One off	6 to 10 October 2025	Complete
	<p>Review existing online / feedback – working with service areas to review specific customer feedback to ensure digital access continues to be developed and relevant technology is considered to move the Council forward</p>	One off	31 March 2026	

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
	<p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2</p> <p>Work with Third Sector organisations to understand the technological barriers faced by residents of South Kesteven</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2</p>		
Outcome 5: Ensure fast efficient updates through online portals, phone system, online, text message	<p>Review available technology can provide proactive messaging to customers.</p> <p>Where existing technology is not available, consider alternative requirements.</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2</p>	One off	31 March 2026
Outcome 6: Procure and deploy a new telephone system (September 2026)	<p>Review the specific improvement requirements for new telephone system (replacement in September 2026) and include in tender specification</p> <p>Outcome will determine next steps and activities for Year 2</p> <p>Updated 13 November: Priority requirements list completed and visited to another Lincolnshire District Authority with IT team review their telephony system and AI.</p>	One off	November 2025
Outcome 7: Continued development of our website – using feedback and improvements to our web	<p>Review resources available to undertake activities directly associated to the website, co-ordination of web champion, regular review of website content, liaison with service areas for improvement, review of customer feedback</p>	One off	October 2025
			Overdue

Activities to be undertaken	Frequency	Deadline	Status
<p>pages from customer engagement. Also identifying gaps in our online information and update regularly</p>	Continue to monitor monthly website feedback and report improvement requirements to service areas	Monthly	31 March 2026

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 10 December 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,
Cabinet Member for Housing

Welfare and Financial Advice Team Update – review of activities 1 July to 30 September 2025

Report Author

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

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Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update regarding the support issued as part of the Household Support Fund during the period 1 July - 30 September 2025 and the wrap around support provided by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team.

The report will also provide an update on the Crisis and Resilience Fund which will be introduced from 1 April 2026.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the report and invited to ask questions regarding its content.

Decision Information

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

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Enabling economic opportunities
Effective council

Which wards are impacted?

All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The report sets out the specific schemes that are being implemented to support residents with the cost of living – both statutory and national initiatives. The Household Support Fund scheme identified in the report is not directly funded by the Council. The Welfare and Financial Advice team was added to the permanent staffing structure from 1 April 2025 and the work priorities will reflect both local and national issues that are facing the community.

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

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no specific governance implications connected with this report. Decision-making associated with financial support schemes should follow an agreed process and should demonstrate strong governance arrangements to support their implementation.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Human Resources

- 1.3 The increasing impacts of low economic activity is having a big impact on mental health and emotional wellbeing, and support in this area will therefore form a big part of the Welfare and Financial Advice Team workplan. There will be links to the Mental Health Working Group, and these are being picked up internally as part of the actions for the new Welfare and Financial Advice Team.

Completed by: Sam Fitt, Senior HR Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to ensuring healthy and strong communities and being a high performing council. This report, and the service provided through the Council's Welfare and Financial Advice Team strives to deliver these priorities.

2.2. The second Welfare and Financial Advice report was presented to this committee on 16 October 2025, which can be found here at item 21: [Agenda for Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 16th October, 2025, 10.00 am | South Kesteven District Council](#)

2.3. Previous Cost of Living reports being present prior to this date. These reports have provided background regarding the responsibilities of the team, the allocation of Household Support Fund (HSF) funding across the county and the development of the Household Support Fund.

Household Support Fund – 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2025

2.4. The initial amount of funding for SKDC is £458,452. This could be subject to change as the year progresses if other districts within Lincolnshire are unable to allocate their funding. If this occurs, there will be a re-distribution to the remaining districts by Lincolnshire County Council.

District area	% of District allocation	Approx Allocation (£)
East Lindsey	24%	£785,917
Boston	10%	£327,465
South Holland	12%	£392,958
Lincoln	16%	£204,379
North Kesteven	11%	£360,212
South Kesteven	14%	£458,452
West Lindsey	13%	£425,705
Total	100%	£9,631,345

Delivery plan and funding distribution for SKDC Residents

2.5. The delivery plan and funding distribution as of 30 September 2025 is detailed below.

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Q1 Update	Q1 value awarded (£)
1	£9,000	2%	Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)	Contribution towards Warm Packs for 2025 – as part of county-wide 'Warm	Funding has been retained by LCC and warm pack distribution	£9,000 On track

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Q1 Update	Q1 value awarded (£)
				welcome' working group This will be removed at source with LCC making payment direct to LCF	will begin November 2025 County communications will be developed in readiness for distribution	
2	£22,922	5%	SKDC Administration + Preventative Measures	Various administration costs of the scheme – such as printing and posting of vouchers + costs towards Preventative measures workshops.	This is ongoing with various spend throughout the administration of HSF April 2025 to March 2026	£5,731 On track
3	£45,845	10%	3 rd party Referrers	This will be set aside for referrals that have come from 3 rd party organisations distributed throughout the year.	Vouchers available during period Household Support Fund referrals are closed October to December 2025	
4	£59,598	13%	Outreach Work/ Pensioners	Vouchers will be distributed as an outcome of outreach visits depending on the needs. Priority will be given to pensioners.	Vouchers available during period Household Support Fund referrals are closed October to December 2025	
5	£91,690	20%	HSF7 Vouchers –	Support for residents not in	Round 1 funding has been issued	£45,845 issued in Round 1

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Q1 Update	Q1 value awarded (£)
			Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)	receipt of an income related Benefit that are struggling financially. The payment will be made in two instalments in July and December.	to LCF (£45,845) Referrals opened 4 August and will close on 26 September Second round funding (£45,845) to be issued for January to March 2026 referrals	£45,845 remaining for Round 2
6	£229,236	50%	SKDC HSF7 Vouchers – Welfare & Financial Advice Team	Support for those specifically in receipt of an income related benefit that are struggling. This will be split over 2 intensive periods.	Target for distribution from 4 August to 26 September 2025 (Round 1) is £114,618 Target for distribution from January to March 2026 (Round 2) is £114,618	£118,369 issued in Round 1 £110,867 remaining for round 2

2.6. The distribution for **method 1 (warm packs)** has changed for 2025. The packs will be produced by Charis Grants Ltd who will send the pack directly to the resident. The pack will be requested by an approved referral partner within the District, there are currently 33 from various organisations, including SKDC. Referrals are limited to a £100 spend limit to ensure the fund is managed effectively. Items available for purchase are Heated Throws, Rechargeable Hot water bottles, heated underblanket, self-heated mattress topper, 15 Tog Duvet, Heated Bodywarmers , Heat the home pack (light bulbs, insulation tape , Radiator heat reflector panels, Winter warmth bundles (Fleece blanket (non-electric), water bottle, Hat Scarf and gloves) and Complete warmth Pack (Energy efficient light bulbs, Insulation tape, Radiator heat reflector panels, Rechargeable Hot Water Bottle, Thermos Flask and Heated Throw).

2.7. A total of **961 vouchers** have been issued during the 7 week period from 4 August 2025 to 22 September 2025, to the **value of £170,364**. The details for distribution methods 3, 5 and 6 above are as follows.

2.8. **Method 3:** Third Party Organisations have requested the following vouchers which have been administered by SKDCs Welfare and Financial Advice Team.

Category	Number	Value
Food	55	£6,150
Energy	0	£0
Wider Household Essentials	0	£0
Total	55	£6,150

2.9. **Method 5:** Lincolnshire Community Foundation have issued the following vouchers.

Category	Number	Value
Food	265	£45,845
Energy	0	£0
Wider Household Essentials	0	£0
Total	265	£45,845

2.10. **Method 6:** SKDCs Welfare and Financial Advice Team have issued the following vouchers.

Category	Number	Value
Food	620	£115,470
Energy	3	£201
Wider Household Essentials	19	£2,698
Total	642	£118,369

Timeline for voucher distribution

2.11. The timeline for voucher distribution continues as follows:

- October 2025 to December 2025 - open for third party referrals from support agencies and low-income pensioners.
- January 2026 to March 2026 - open to public application until funding ends. Assistance will be predominantly by supermarket vouchers and Energy Vouchers.

Welfare and Financial Advice Team – additional wrap around support (Q2) - £99,180

- 2.12. The team have received 1,028 referrals during Q2 (972 were processed), with £99,180 support provided.
- 2.13. From 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025, the team have received 1,422 referrals, of which, 1,362 have been processed. The total value of financial support identified and awarded was £222,485.
- 2.14. Each referral requires an initial 30 to 60 minute appointment with the resident to discuss their personal and household financial circumstances, to determine whether they are receiving all support available to them.
- 2.15. Following this, the officer will undertake further appointments and identify the wrap around support which is available – this can take the form of:
 - Charity grants
 - Council Tax Support
 - Discretionary Council Tax Payments
 - Discretionary Housing Payments
 - Foodbank vouchers
 - White Goods
- 2.16. The team will also liaise with tenancy support (if they are an SKDC tenant, they will be referred into the Tenancy Support Team) and other wider support such as referrals into Citizens Advice. The support provided is in-depth and is always tailored to the individual's needs.
- 2.17. Once the referral has been completed and the triage discussion has been undertaken with the resident, details are then passed to the HSF Officer (within the Welfare and Financial Advice Team) who will process the HSF voucher. The vouchers are processed in bulk and issued on a weekly basis (unless urgent need has been established).

Crisis and Resilience Fund – April 2026 to March 2029

- 2.18. The government has announced a £1 billion funding package for crisis support from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029, with £842 million allocated for England. This will be known as the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF). The funding will be provided directly to Local Authorities as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.
- 2.19. This will replace Household Support Fund (in place since October 2021), along with Discretionary Housing Payment (April 2029) and will combine emergency and preventative approaches to help communities and households become more efficient.

- 2.20. The Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments allow councils to deliver discretionary local support to residents who are at risk of financial and material hardship.
- 2.21. The CRF aims to provide effective immediate crisis support and help people build long-term financial resilience, reducing the need for repeated assistance. The aim is to help households avoid immediate and future hardship, offering multi-year, locally delivered support.
- 2.22. Whilst full details of the scheme are not expected from the Department for Work and Pensions until January 2026, it has been confirmed that Local Authorities will deliver the fund by working in partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector to better support people in a more holistic way. An update will be provided at the next meeting of this committee in January 2026.

Action plan – 2025/26

- 2.23. The action plan for additional activities to be undertaken by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team during 2025/26 is detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.24. The plan will be monitored throughout 2025/26, and a further update as to the progress and outcome of the activities will be provided to this committee at the next meeting in January 2026.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Members of Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.
- 3.2. It is recommended to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Welfare and Financial Advice Team continue to review the financial impacts of cost of living and implement activities within the action plan to support residents of South Kesteven

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 4.1. The recommendation will ensure Members are aware of the advice and financial support available to all residents of South Kesteven

5. Appendices

- 5.1. Appendix 1 – Welfare and Financial Advice Team action plan.

Welfare and Financial Advice Team (W&FA Team) – Action Plan

This action plan shows the activities to be undertaken by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team during 2025/26. It is made up of key areas of activity

Action 1	Administration
Action 2	Awareness
Action 3	Proactive – internal & external
Action 4	Proactive Support
Action 5	Preventative

Activity 1: Administration

1a) Case Management	Purpose: Ensure Case management is up to date and provides clear outcomes – such as number of residents supported, value of support	
	Activities to be undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed case management to be available on all financial support provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrap-around support Household Support Fund (HSF) – administered by SKDC Household Support Fund (HSF) – administered by Lincolnshire Community Foundation <p>September 2025 position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 683 HSF vouchers have been issued during the 7 week period from 4 August 2025 to 22 September 2025, to the value of £94,898 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administered by SKDC = £71,898 Administered by Lincolnshire Community Foundation = £23,000 Wrap-around support = £123,305 <p>November 2025 position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 961 HSF vouchers have been issued during the 7 week period from 4 August 2025 to 22 September 2025, to the value of £170,364 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administered by SKDC = £118,369 Administered by Lincolnshire Community Foundation = £45,845 Administered by 3rd party organisations = £6,150 Wrap-around support = £222,485 	Status Updated November 2025

Activity 2: Awareness		
2a) Website update	<p>Purpose: Ensure the website is up to date, referencing the Welfare and Financial Advice Team</p>	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	<p>Update all "Cost of Living pages"</p> <p>Existing pages can be found here: Cost of Living help and support South Kesteven District Council</p>	Complete 30 June 2025
	Remove reference to old schemes	Complete 30 June 2025
	Include Food Support leaflets: Help and Support South Kesteven District Council	30 June 2025
2b) Co-Ordinate responses to government support initiatives	<p>Purpose: Ensure awareness of announcements and initiatives, understanding the impact for the Council and residents</p>	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Continue to attend Lincolnshire Working Group to collaborate with County and District colleagues	Ongoing
	September 2025 update:	

Activity 2: Awareness

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings are taking place – recent discussions regarding Criss Resilience Fun where one attendee is part of the national working group. Further updates are expected between now and December 2025 		
	Promotion and launch of Household Support Fund (HSF) from April 2025 to March 2026	Complete 30 May 2025
	<p>Use of Emergency Fund - £71k</p> <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been fully utilised, awarding to those referrals received between 1 April and 3 August 2025 (prior to the start of Household Support Fund on 4 August 2025) 	Complete 3 August 2025
	<p>Overview: Winter Fuel Payment: Overview - GOV.UK</p> <p>For winter 2025 to 2026, a Winter Fuel Payment is available to people born on or before September 21, 1959, who lived in England or Wales during the qualifying week of September 15-21, 2025.</p> <p>Value of payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a person does not get Pension Credit or another qualifying benefit, the payment is £100. If a person does get Pension Credit, the payment is £200 or £300 depending on their age (and if they live with others). Payments are made to households, but if a person's income is above £35,000, the payment will be clawed back by HMRC through their tax. <p>When and how payment will be made:</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Immediate (deadline 31 March 2026)</p> <p>Awareness for all staff supporting residents of qualifying age</p>

Activity 2: Awareness		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most eligible people will receive an automatic payment in their usual bank account in November or December 2025. They should receive a letter in October or November 2025 confirming the amount they will get and how it will be paid. <p>Those who need to claim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a person does not get the State Pension or another DWP benefit, or if they have deferred their State Pension. The deadline for claiming the 2025-26 payment is March 31, 2026. The claim form is available at GOV.UK. 	
	<p>Awareness: Paying back the Winter Fuel Payment - GOV.UK</p> <p>To ensure staff are aware of the requirement to paying back the Winter Fuel Payment – directing residents to GOV website</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>12 November 2025</p>
	<p>Crisis and Resilience Fund - replacing HSF and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announcement during the Spending Review 2025 on 11 June 2025 Para 3.21: Cost of living: the government is providing direct assistance to families most at risk of poverty through the Healthy Start scheme, and establishing a new Crisis and Resilience Fund supported by £1 billion a year (including Barnett impact) through the SR period to replace the Household Support Fund <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance is expected to be released by December 2025 	<p>Updated</p> <p>November 2025</p>

Activity 2: Awareness

	<p>November 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key staff have attended webinar updates regarding CRF – receiving information regarding the intended objectives of the fund. • Further guidance is expected from the Department for Work and Pensions in January 2026 	
2c) Liaison with internal teams	<p>Purpose: Ensure awareness of support and related</p> <p>Activities to be undertaken</p> <p>Provide updates regarding changes to the team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arrange attendance at team meetings ○ Updating on HSF stages – launch, referral period, award period ○ Referral process for HSF and general support ○ Presentation of Food Support leaflets ○ Overview of outreach activities and areas within the district these are taking place <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at team meetings have taken place with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council Tax ○ Income Recovery (SKDC Rent Team) ○ Repairs ○ Housing 	Status
	Spotlight session to be organised	December 2025
	September 2025 update:	

Activity 2: Awareness

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The team will undertake a 'Team Spotlight' introducing themselves to all members of TeamSK, advising of their role and support available to residents.	
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Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external		
3a) Single Point of Contact	<p>Purpose: Be the Single Point of Contact for Welfare and Financial Advice enquiries via the Welfare and Financial Advice email address</p>	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Welfare email box to be set up: welfare@southkesteven.gov.uk	Complete
	Online referral form for Household Support Fund (for internal referrals from SKDC Officers and Members)	Complete
	Inclusion of W&FA Team in SKToday (Autumn edition) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An article was included in the Summer edition of SKToday 	Summer 2025
	All SKDC staff are aware of W&FA Team and how to contact	Ongoing (See action 2c)
	External support organisations are aware of W&FA Team and how to contact	Ongoing
3b) Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership Group	<p>Purpose: Actively contribute to the Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership Group</p>	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and contribute to the quarterly meetings. Share any information to appropriate SKDC teams. Assist the organisers with the arrangements for the upcoming Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership Conference. 	Ongoing

Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external		
3c) Foodbanks	Purpose: Develop and maintain a positive relationship with all foodbanks across SKDC	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Visits to Foodbank Coordinators within the district to share ideas on how best to help clients. September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referrals are being made and received from the foodbanks. The service is much in demand and the team have noticed the impact of DWP no longer issuing vouchers for parcels. Various SKDC staff have been trained on the use of the voucher system so they are able to support the W&FA Team The Deepings Foodbank is moving location and is closed for the first 2 weeks of September. Discussions taking place between the Head of Service and the Community Engagement Manager regarding Foodbank funding 	Ongoing
	Actively seek referrals for clients that have used foodbanks that may benefit from additional financial advice.	Ongoing
3d) Warm Spaces	Purpose: Actively contribute to the Welcome Warm Spaces Working Group	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Attend and contribute to the meetings for actions relating to the warm spaces for 2025/26 November 2025 update: The packs will be produced by Charis Grants Ltd who will send the pack directly to the resident. The pack will be requested by an	Updated November 2025

Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external		
92	approved referral partner within the District, there are currently 33 from various organisations, including SKDC. Referrals are limited to a £100 spend limit to ensure the fund is managed effectively. Items available for purchase are Heated Throws, Rechargeable Hot water bottles, heated underblanket, self-heated mattress topper, 15 Tog Duvet, Heated Bodywarmers , Heat the home pack (light bulbs, insulation tape , Radiator heat reflector panels, Winter warmth bundles (Fleece blanket (non-electric), water bottle, Hat Scarf and gloves) and Complete warmth Pack (Energy efficient light bulbs, Insulation tape, Radiator heat reflector panels, Rechargeable Hot Water Bottle, Thermos Flask and Heated Throw).	
	Visit warm spaces to offer Welfare and Financial Advice as part of outreach	Winter 2025
	Actively share ideas with the working group to improve the 2025/26 warm spaces	Autumn/winter 2025
	Promote and ensure full communications are issued in relation to warm packs November 2025 update: Communications will be issued to ensure all staff and Members are aware of the referral process	Updated November 2025
	3e) Information sharing Purpose: Develop and manage information sharing protocol between SKDC and Support Organisations / advice agencies	
92	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Develop and maintain relationships with support organisations by attending events, seminars and providing Welfare and Financial Advice updates / talks. • The team have undertaken visits to the following locations <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ St Annes Church	Ongoing

Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stamford Foodbank ○ Bourne Foodbank ○ Grantham Foodbank (not face to face) ○ St Georges – Stamford – SHEP Project & Christians Against Poverty ○ National Grief Charity ○ Bhive Grantham ○ Don't Lose Hope Café ○ Bourne Library and customer service area ○ Grantham JobCentre 	
	<p>Sharing information and ideas to improve delivery of service to our residents within the legal guidelines</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Attend community engagement events in the form of Welfare and Financial Advice Clinics in Library's, Jobcentres, children's centres.</p> <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team have attended the following community engagement events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grantham Partnership meeting (monthly) ○ Volunteering Everywhere (Dysart Park) <p>November 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team have attended the following community engagement events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grow Your Skills Event, Jubilee Conference Centre, Grantham –Wednesday October 15th, 2025 - This was hosted by DWP and was well attended by Job centre Attendees with approx. 50 people coming through the door. Individual conversations were had with 8 people. 	<p>Updated</p> <p>November 2025</p>

Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget Cookery Class, Bourne United Charities 14th October 2025. This was hosted by Bourne United Charities .A total of 12 applicants attended this event, a group discussion was done before the cookery course discussing budgeting , priority bills etc Individual calls were then completed in the following days to discuss the participants individual needs. 	
	<p>Promote Talk Money Week – 3 to 7 November</p> <p>November 2025 update: Over the week the team ensure communication regarding the support available and the positive message of speaking about money. SKDC communications team issued messages on social media to support the Money and Pension Service. The services of the Welfare and Financial advice Team have also been advertised in the Customer service Centre with use of the banner screen advertising our services. Emails were sent out to all staff through the Wellbeing Team with key links put together by the welfare Team to check their financial wellbeing</p>	Complete
3f) Liaison		Purpose: Liaison with partners and external support organisations
Activities to be undertaken		Status
Maintain relationship with those already established: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Neighbourhood and Wellbeing Teams • Grantham Mental Health Partnership • NACRO officers • Foodbanks • Bourne United Charities 		Ongoing

Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread & Butter Thing • Grantham College • Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Services • Lincolnshire District Councils – Warm Packs 	
	<p>Meet with partners during 2025/26 to understand future support and explore opportunities to work together</p> <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning is underway for the Winter Warm Packs, which will include a 'Homeless Pack' this year • The team will be planning visits to the Warm Welcome Spaces across the district, promoting the advice and support which is available • The location of the Welcome Warm Spaces can be found here, clicking on "Find a space": Warm Welcome Campaign <p>November 2025 update: Communications will be issued to ensure all staff and Members are aware of the referral process</p>	<p>Updated November 2025</p>
	<p>Meet regularly with local Job Centre and Department for Work and Pension (DWP) colleagues to discuss emerging issues and agree a joint up approach for support and potential resolution</p> <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with DWP taking place in September 2025 <p>November 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting in September took place with DWP sharing information regarding events in the District 	<p>Updated November 2025</p>

Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaison between the DWP and Welfare & Financial Advice Team is ongoing with specific discussions taking place as and when needed• The next meeting will take place in December 2025	
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- Liaison between the DWP and Welfare & Financial Advice Team is ongoing with specific discussions taking place as and when needed
- The next meeting will take place in December 2025

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support		
4a) Warm Spaces	Purpose: Increase the number of warm welcome spaces across the district	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Liaison with Members, Parish Clerks and potential warm welcome spaces venues November 2025 update: Communications will be issued to ensure all staff and Members are aware of the referral process	Updated November 2025
4b) Digital Inclusion	Purpose: To increase digital support and inclusion for vulnerable and elderly residents	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Assisting residents with digital forms such as pension credit checks and discretionary housing payments September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none">To be promoted as part of National Customer Service Week (6-10 October 2025)	Ongoing
4c) Community Outreach	Purpose: To ensure support can be provided across all towns within the district and where possible, rural areas	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Arrange events within the community at libraries, warm spaces, Children centres, jobcentres to offer budgeting skills, benefit checks and basic financial education i.e. pension credit checks: Bourne:	June 2025 – April 2026

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support

	Bourne Foodbank	2 North Road, Bourne, PE10 9AP	One to one	
	Don't Lose Hope	4 North Street, Bourne, Lincs. PE10 9EB.	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Bourne United Charity (AI Houses)	The Red Hall South Bourne	One to one	
	Len pick	5 Granby Court, Hereward Street, Bourne PE10 9AD	One to one	
	Salvation Army	5a Manning Road Bourne, PE01 9ET.	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Bread and Butter Thing	5a Manning Road Bourne, PE01 9ET.	One to one	
	Deepings:			
	Foodbank	63 Hereward Way, Deeping St James	One to one	
	The Green School Community Café	24 Church Street, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire, PE6 8DA,	One to one / preventative workshop	

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support

	Bread and Butter Thing	Markt Deeping Scout and Guide Hall, Wellington Way, Deeping PE6 8LF.	One to one	
	Open Door Baptist Church	5 Spalding Rd, Deeping St James, Peterborough PE6 8NJ	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Community Centre	2 Douglas Rd, Peterborough PE6 8PA	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Deeping United Charity	38 Church Street, Deeping St. James, PE6 8HD	One to one	
	Age Concern	21 Tyghes Cl, Deeping St James, Peterborough PE6 8NS	One to one	
	Odd Fellows	57 Church St, Market Deeping, Peterborough PE6 8AN	One to one	
	British Legion	The Goat Inn, Frogmire, PE6 8SA	One to one	
Grantham:				
	Jubilee Church	5 London Rd, Grantham NG31 6EY	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Alive Church	Castlegate, Grantham, NG31 6SQ	One to one / preventative workshop	

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support

	Church Of Ascension	Harrowby Lane , Grantham	One to one / preventative workshop	
	The Passage	Grantham Passage Resource Centre	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Bread and Butter	Harrowby United Football Club, 13 Dickens Road, Grantham, NG31 9QY	One to one	
	Bread and Butter	West Grantham Community Centre, Grantham	One to one	
	St Johns Church	Station Road East, Grantham	One to one	
	Job 22	High St Grantham	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Bhive	11a Finkin St, Grantham	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Grief Charity	The Malting , Warf Rd , Grantham	One to one	
	Stamford:			
	2nd Helping	Orion House, 11 Barn Hill, Stamford, PE9 2AE.	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Georges Hub -	St Augustine's School, Kesteven Road PE9 1SR	One to one / preventative workshop	

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support

101	<p>Georges Hub -</p> <p>Malcolm Sergeants School, Empingham Road, PE9 2SR</p> <p>St Georges School, Kesteven Road, Stamford, PE9 1SX</p> <p>Bread and Butter Thing</p> <p>Christ Church, Green Lane, Stamford, PE9 1HE</p> <p>SHEP</p> <p>27-29 St George's Street, Stamford</p> <p>Broad St, Stamford</p> <p>Stamford Market</p>	Free church, Kesteven Road, Stamford, PE9 1SU	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Malcolm Sergeants School, Empingham Road, PE9 2SR	One to one / preventative workshop	
		St Georges School, Kesteven Road, Stamford, PE9 1SX	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Bread and Butter Thing	One to one	
		Christ Church, Green Lane, Stamford, PE9 1HE	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Broad St, Stamford	One to one	
	Stamford Market			
	<p>Support the Housing Roadshow which will be taking place across the District</p> <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27/08/25: Earlsfield Community Centre roadshow will be 10:00- 2:30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 people attended ○ None of them spoke to WFAT team ○ One of the attendees Emma is following up with and will be advising about our team and the HSF 	<p>Complete</p> <p>August & September 2025</p>		

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 04/09/25: Manor Court Community Centre Bourne roadshow will be 10:00- 2:30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5 people attended ○ The team spoke to one person – completed HB, CTS and HSF form • 10/09/25: Edmonds Close Community Centre Stamford roadshow will be 10:00 -2:30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10 people attended ○ The team spoke to one person – completed HSF form and benefits calculator (with various actions arising from this) • 25/09/25: Deepings Community Centre Market Deeping roadshow will be 10:00 2:30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Event has not taken place at the time of writing this report • 30/09/25: Greyfriars Community Centre Grantham roadshow will be 1:00-6:00 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Event has not taken place at the time of writing this report 	
102	<p>4d) Furniture Aid</p> <p>Purpose: Review ways to source assistance from other organisations to help residents in need of furniture</p> <p>Activities to be undertaken</p> <p>Maintain relationships with charities and 3rd Party Organisations to continue to source grants to be able to assist help for residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percy Bilton • BBC Children in Need • Bourne United • Len Pick • Family Fund (advise only) <p>September 2025 update:</p>	Status

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circa 30 grants of various levels of support have been • Action for next update: To provide a breakdown of the amount and type of support 	
4e) New tenants	<p>Purpose: To produce a new tenant Welfare and Financial Advice pack</p>	
	<p>Activities to be undertaken</p> <p>Liaise with Housing colleagues to ensure this complements the new tenant pack already given at sign up</p> <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations have started to take place with Housing colleagues • The team are working on the Welfare & Financial Advice pack • This action will be extended to March 2026 	<p>Status</p> <p>March 2026</p> <p>(was September 2025)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting Advice / referrals to external organisations for new tenants (appropriate additional support to that being provided by SKDC Tenancy Services Team) • Tick list of key actions for new tenant / budgeting 	March 2026
4f) New residents	<p>Purpose: To produce a new resident information pack (to include Welfare and Financial Advice)</p>	
	<p>Activities to be undertaken</p> <p>Include the same information as in the tenant pack</p> <p>Welcome to SKDC information:</p>	<p>Status</p> <p>March 2026</p> <p>March 2026</p>

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support

4g) Leaflet of the support available	Purpose: Production of leaflets for each Town within the District to provide key food support information	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Issue to Cabinet Member, Members and Parish Clerks for distribution	Completed
	Inclusion within Council Tax reminders September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the volume of reminders issued (between 600 and 1000 per month, it was felt the team may be overwhelmed with contact. • The decision was taken to review the information issued and reconsider either a targeted approach or issue general advice • This action has been amended to December 2025 	December 2025 (was July 2025)
	Inclusion within Council Tax summonses September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the volume of summonses issued (between 400 and 800 per month, it was felt the team may be overwhelmed with contact. • The decision was taken to review the information issued and reconsider either a targeted approach or issue general advice • This action has been amended to December 2025 	December 2025 (was July 2025)
	Inclusion within rent statements September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the volume of rent statements issued (up to 5,500 per quarter, it was felt the team may be overwhelmed with contact. 	December 2025

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision was taken to review the information issued and reconsider either a targeted approach or issue general advice This action has been amended to December 2025 	(was July 2025)
	Inclusion on intranet and staff notice board	Ongoing
4h) Credits on rent accounts	Purpose: To be reviewed to maximise tenant income	
	Activities to be undertaken	
	Liaise with Income Recovery Team Leader to ascertain those accounts with credit and contact the tenant to arrange refund or transfer	March 2026
4i) Credits on council tax accounts	Purpose: To be reviewed to maximise resident income	
	Activities to be undertaken	
	Liaise with Business Rates and Council Tax Enforcement Team Leader to ascertain those accounts with credit and contact the resident to arrange refund or transfer	March 2026

Activity 5: Preventative

5a) Consider the formation of a Welfare and Financial Advice Strategic Working Group	Purpose: To provide a collaborate cross-team approach to the welfare and financial issues facing our residents	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status
	Invitations to be issued to relevant officers: W&FA Team, Communications, Community Engagement, Community Safety, Housing, Revenues & Benefits	December 2025
	To revisit the original key themes which were introduced by the original Cost of Living Strategic Working Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communication ○ Food insecurity and poverty ○ Fuel & Energy Poverty ○ Financial – Benefits, Debt Support and Funding ○ Health & Wellbeing (inc Welcome Warm Spaces) ○ Prevention of homelessness ○ Skills, Employment & Businesses 	December 2025
Produce a holistic action plan, with the inclusion of all relevant SKDC Teams		March 2026
5b) Consider budgeting workshops for residents	Purpose: Identify the specific financial challenges faced by attendees, such as debt, low income, or lack of financial literacy	
	Activities to be undertaken	Status

Activity 5: Preventative

	Every day conversations with regards to general wrap around support, HSF application	Ongoing
	Liaison with relevant external organisations to discuss support in facilitating a budgeting workshop	March 2026
	Increase access to debt advice: Expand the reach of debt advice services to individuals facing financial difficulties, ensuring timely access to help and support	March 2026
	Emergency Assistance programmes: Provide financial assistance to those facing immediate financial hardship, such as food or housing support.	March 2026
	Welfare Benefit Support: Assist individuals in maximizing their welfare benefits and accessing other available support	March 2026

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 10 December 2025

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks
Cabinet Member for Planning

Armed Forces Covenant Report 2025

Report Author

Debbie Nicholls, Armed Forces and Communications Officer

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Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the Council's actions to meet its responsibilities under the Armed Forces Act and the Armed Forces Covenant Duty. It provides an overview of achievements under the Council's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award; highlights progress in the delivery of major projects, engagement and advocacy activity, and includes plans for the coming year.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the draft Armed Forces Covenant update and offer comment on the content.
2. Recommend the Cabinet Member for Planning publishes this information at the earliest opportunity.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting Communities Enabling Economic Opportunities Housing Effective Council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no specific financial comments arising from this report. The Council provides funding for the post of Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Officer alongside the other seven district councils of Lincolnshire along with the Integrated Care Board.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Attached to this report at Appendix A is an Armed Forces Covenant update. This provides information on how the Council ensures compliance with its Armed Forces Covenant responsibilities.
- 2.2 Within the update provided at Appendix A, information is provided on the work of the Council's Armed Forces Officer, supported by the Council's Armed Forces Champion, to deliver the Council's advocacy and engagement commitments under its Gold Award status within the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

- 2.3 Appendix A also provides an overview of events and activity which have taken place during 2025 and includes actions for delivery during 2026.
- 2.4 To accompany this report Members of the Committee will receive a photographic power-point presentation illustrating the year's highlights.
- 2.5 In addition to the work undertaken by the Council's Armed Forces Officer, the Council also benefits from support provided by the Lincolnshire Armed Forces Officer. This role is currently funded collaboratively by the seven District Councils of Lincolnshire and the NHS.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Appendix A provides an overview of actions taken to date and outlines forthcoming projects, activities and engagement opportunities. Members are asked to consider the content of this document and provide comment.
- 3.2 Members are also asked to note that the actions outlined within this report are delivered in support of the Council's current Gold Award status under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and will also provide evidence toward its re-application in 2027.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 This report is for information therefore no other options were considered.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 To inform Members of action taken to ensure the Council complies with its responsibilities under the Armed Forces Act 2021 and on actions taken to advocate for the military community under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A – Draft Armed Forces Covenant Report 2025.

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Armed Forces Covenant Update 2025

A report and actions on compliance, engagement and advocacy

Introduction

This report summarises work undertaken to ensure the Council's compliance with its Armed Forces Covenant responsibilities, external advocacy required under the Council's Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award status, and Government initiatives impacting veterans living and working within South Kesteven.

Also included is a report on delivery of our Soldiers from the Sky airborne forces heritage trail, an ambitious programme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Council's signature to the Armed Forces Covenant requires it to have 'due regard' for legislation in the Armed Forces Act 2021.

This ensures that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, including the bereaved, should face no [disadvantage](#) compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services.

Due regard means that organisations in scope of the Covenant Duty, including the Council, need to consciously consider the unique obligations and sacrifices made by the Armed Forces; that it is desirable to remove disadvantages faced by the Armed Forces community and that special provision may be justified in some circumstances.

The Council is therefore required to actively consider the Covenant when developing, delivering and reviewing policies and decisions that may impact the Armed Forces community.

The Council's Armed Forces Officer is part of the Community Engagement Team, with four key areas of activity: Compliance, Heritage, Advocacy and Engagement.

As the only local authority in Lincolnshire to hold the Ministry of Defence Gold Award, the Council continues to take the lead within the Lincolnshire Community Covenant Partnership.

The 2021 Census identified 8693 military veterans living in the district - 7.37 % of the population aged over 16 - putting South Kesteven seventh on the national league table. This is the second highest number of veterans in any district of Lincolnshire.

Since coming to power, the current Government has made key changes relevant to veterans, including:

- removing the former local connection need for housing applications
- a change in the law to allow Veteran Cards to be used as evidence of identity for elections

- introducing a ‘Forces First’ approach, ensuring that veterans will go to the front of the queue for new homes built on selected, surplus defence sites
- expanding the elements covered under the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) to cover all UK Government Departments
- the launch of a new Veterans Strategy in November 2025

Two recent announcements will affect veterans living and working in the district.

Operation VALOUR is designed to provide veterans across the UK with easier access to multiple services. It is being overseen by the Office for Veterans’ Affairs (OVA) within the Ministry of Defence.

VALOUR centres will be established across the UK, with one in the East Midlands as the base for two field officers tasked with building strong regional networks with councils, public services and charities.

VALOUR will strengthen the existing network by:

- improving coordination between services
- building on what’s already working well
- helping local services align around veterans’ needs.

Although VALOUR is starting with a focus on veterans, it is being designed to grow to support the wider armed forces community to include families.

[VALOUR: information and next steps - GOV.UK](#)

Veterans Strategy was launched in November and sets out the Government’s new vision for armed forces veterans across the UK, [Veterans Strategy - GOV.UK](#). It underpins Operation VALOUR and aims to ensure that veterans are:

- empowered to realise their full potential
- provided with the support they deserve to achieve this.

Built around the pillars of Celebrate, Contribute and Support, the strategy provides a framework for the whole of society to adopt, recognising and celebrating the sacrifices of veterans while ensuring they have every opportunity to succeed in civilian life.

It also recognises the security and growth challenges faced by the UK, addressed in a new [Strategic Defence Review](#) as a core response plan.

The Council’s Armed Forces Officer and Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Officer **will work to support Operation VALOUR and the Veterans Strategy in 2026.**

COMPLIANCE

The three main pillars of the Act are housing, health and education. Currently our main responsibility is with housing.

As an in-scope organisation, we must ensure that serving personnel, reservists, veterans, and their families have the same equality of access to public services as civilians.

All housing applicants are asked if they have served or have military connections, thereby taking into account specific family circumstances such as a requirement to leave military accommodation in the event of family breakdown.

Due regard is especially important for those that have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and the injured (whether that injury is physical or mental).

This approach recognises the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces and the fact that for many the return to civilian life can pose problems, including:

- veterans may find it hard to engage with and trust professionals who have no military background
- many leaving the military have no lived experience of civilian life
- veterans take longer on average than others before asking for help.

We also have a legal duty to help any homeless veteran, and good links have been established with partner agencies such as SSAFA and the Royal British Legion.

The Lincolnshire Community Covenant Partnership – chaired by Cllr Bridget Ley – contributes to a wider appreciation of compliance issues and challenges through national and local updates on best practice and discussion of issues arising.

It meets quarterly with 30+ regular attendees representing local authorities, health, police, charity sector, military sites, support networks and hosts guest speakers.

Its membership also includes the Department of Work and Pensions and Operation NOVA – working with former military in the penal system – resulting in direct lines of communication in these and other important areas.

Within the Council, Officers are identified as Armed Forces 'champions' and continue to be active across Housing, Revenues and Benefits and the Welfare and Financial Advice Team, which deals with cost of living enquiries should veterans present themselves.

Customer services staff have also been briefed on how to identify veterans, handle military-related queries and where to signpost.

Compliance with Covenant responsibilities has been greatly enhanced thanks to the Council's co-funding of the Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Officer.

As a Gold Award holder, the Council has helped shape the direction of county-wide work and funded print of the new Armed Forces Community Directory, which is also easily accessible through the Connect to Support website.

The post of Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Officer is co-funded by the seven district councils of Lincolnshire along with the Integrated Care Board. The work of this officer benefits Armed Forces personnel, veterans and their families at a local and county-wide level. Lincolnshire County Council will help co-fund this post from April 2026.

As an example of the work undertaken, issues identified within the Armed Forces Covenant Partnership around families who face eviction from military quarters prompted an awareness session with all housing officers.

In summary, the Lincolnshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Officer's work includes:

- a weekly email round-up of MOD / Covenant updates
- identification of all eight Local Authority Armed Forces Elected Member Champions
- co-ordination of county Armed Forces Covenant Partnership meetings
- relationship building / collation of best practice from elsewhere
- liaison with Office for Veterans' Affairs

New Task and Finish Groups are exploring:

- mobile Support Hub for Veterans'
- veterans' Housing initiative
- armed forces drop-ins/surgeries/senior staff presentations for all military sites
- a second Lincs Armed Forces Information booklet - for families
- feasibility of support network for Armed Forces community carers
- identifying dispersed military families

Future actions include:

- the development of online Military 'Welcome to Lincolnshire' Information
- the feasibility of in-person Befriending Service
- wider promotion of the Defence Employer Recognition scheme
- development of a Veterans into Business Guide – working with SKDC

For South Kesteven District Council, **actions for 2026 include** an Armed Forces Covenant re-affirmation and Covenant aims update, elected member training and planning for Mission Business 2026.

HERITAGE

Victory in Europe Day was celebrated with an exhibition in Grantham House, a beacon lighting in Wyndham Park and military heritage exhibits in the park's Visitor Centre.

Victory over Japan Day was commemorated with a video reflecting Deepings resident and Navy veteran Peter Foxon who saw action on Atlantic convoys, the Normandy Landings and in the Far East war with Japan.

His subsequent award of the French Legion d'Honneur was presented by Council Officer Mark Whitney, a fellow former Naval wireless operator and Falklands veteran.

Work has continued on the delivery of the Soldiers from the Sky airborne forces heritage trail project, funded by a grant of £147,550 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The project was also awarded £15,000 in match funding from the UKSPF, allowing the Council to tell the backstories of airborne forces from three nations - Britain, America and Poland - in the district in the build-up D Day and Operation Market Garden (Arnhem).

It has delivered an engaging and informative programme of events, walks, talks, volunteering opportunities, storyboard design, cycling and driving routes and a comprehensive website. www.soldiersfromthesky.co.uk

The website, which was launched in September 2025, has also defined a new visitor trail of international importance, thereby delivering economic benefit to South Kesteven and promoting visitor sites with airborne links, accommodation and rural retailers.

A Poppies on Pebbles schools programme engaged Key Stage 2 (7-11 year olds) pupils across eight schools to include:

- educational materials (on the website)
- funded workshops
- poetry and artwork
- painting of 500+ pebbles with inscription
- final Remembrance pebbles display at Saltby Airfield on 10 November.

Project events included:

- a series of D-Day hosted walks at RAF North Witham
- a Celebration of Valour event at Easton Walled Gardens honouring an Arnhem VC holder
- a Soldiers from the Sky exhibition at Grantham House.

Actions going forward include a celebration of Armed Forces Week 2026, collaboration with tourism colleagues to promote the new visitor trail, support for visitor centres to maximise visitor impact and relationship building with heritage sites / museums to promote the trail.

ADVOCACY

‘Mission Business’ has been a significant focus of the year, promoting the skills of ex-military to the business community.

Held at Prince William of Gloucester Barracks (PWOG) in Grantham, the event drew 120 delegates with more than 70 businesses attending.

The event was part of South Kesteven District Council’s continued drive to support its military communities alongside helping the local economy through an injection of skilled personnel.

Ex-military personnel, now running successful businesses, shared their journeys from deployment to employment, and serving military personnel illustrated the range of talents and skills they offer.

Business development was high on the agenda, with speakers on strategy, leadership, planning and branding.

It delivered on the Council’s Defence Employer Recognition Scheme commitments under advocacy, plus encouraged signature to the Armed Forces Covenant as a gateway to employment of ex-military personnel.

Flag raising events have included Armed Forces Day, Merchant Navy Day, Victory in Europe and Victory over Japan commemorations.

New waste freighters have delivered an opportunity to support the defence community, with a new, branded, Royal British Legion refuse lorry encouraging anyone in need to contact the Legion.

Black History Month was commemorated with a salute on social media to African and Caribbean troops, whose service with the British 1st Airborne Division was discovered through the Soldiers from the Sky project.

Looking forward to 2026, there are plans for a Remembrance schools programme encouraging pupil engagement and a new waste freighter carrying Help for Heroes messaging and employer engagement through Mission Business.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with Prince William of Gloucester Barracks has resulted in a far higher local profile for the site, wider recognition of the units serving there and what the Army presence contributes to the town.

The Officers' Mess has been made available free of charge to accommodate Covenant Partnership Meetings and events such as Mission Business, and military personnel attendance has increased at council-organised events.

In terms of civilian and ex-military volunteer engagement and event attendance, opportunities have been delivered through the Soldiers from the Sky.

A volunteer and ambassador event in Wyndham Park Visitor Centre drew 12 interested members of the public, mostly local but two people attended from the West Country to establish links with their own airborne heritage.

All were given project background and sources of research and information to encourage further research in their own villages with the aim of updating local history groups / parish councils.

The project has also given several volunteers the chance to display and extend their personal memorabilia collections at project exhibitions and events and inspired others to research airborne forces history.

Exhibits on RAF North Witham, RAF Barkston Heath, RAF Folkingham and the Carlton Scoop mid-air collision have been on display at Grantham House for the VE/D-Day event, Caythorpe Gala, Wyndham Park Beacon Lighting, the Harlaxton Manor 40's Weekend and the Soldiers from the Sky exhibition at Grantham House in late November.

Eight schools took part in the project's Poppies on Pebbles programme, directly engaging some 350 KS2 pupils. The resource is being promoted to all schools in the district, with the potential for pupils to repeat studies in future years.

An Airborne Research group meeting every two months consists of volunteers from the UK, Poland and America, with historians, charities, serving and veteran – all contributing valuable information, ideas and source material for the project.

Members of the group will continue to stay in touch as valuable contacts and sounding boards for the project, rather than attend formal meetings – helping to keep the project alive and identifying possible future engagement opportunities.

Quarterly meetings of the Lincolnshire Armed Forces Covenant Partnership engage a wide range of organisations and stakeholders, from health to education, charities and heritage groups.

Its achievements include:

- a strategic housing officers group meeting quarterly, ensuring that the military, local authorities and Armed Forces charities work together to ensure housing policies align.
- education sector representatives, LCC, military welfare officers and Families Federations are collaborating to assist and support military moving to Lincolnshire facing challenges of school placements, SEN considerations and any other issues.
- working cross border with Op VALOUR to help applications for different funding streams
- collaboration between SSAFA, the Veteran Support Service and Op COURAGE, ensuring Lincolnshire is supported in its funding bid for a planned mobile Armed Forces hub (the county is too big to have a single static resource).

The Council's Armed Forces Officer regularly supplies information on events, jobs within the Council and appropriate military updates to the Grantham HIVE, Prince William of Gloucester Barracks information channel which is then shared across all UK military sites.

Plans for 2026 include working with the Council's events team to develop programme of walks with military connections, engaging landowners for community military archaeology digs and further engagement with schools to increase poppy initiatives.



Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 10 December 2025

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

Small unmanned aircraft (Drone) Policy

Report Author

Phil Swinton, Head of Health, Safety, Compliance and Emergency Planning

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Purpose of Report

Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) / Drone use is growing at a rapid rate in the UK. Drone usage will provide a safer option for certain work streams, and this Policy sets out the controls required to implement Drones and their use for Council activities.

Recommendations

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to recommend this Policy to Cabinet for approval.

Decision Information

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

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Sustainable South Kesteven
Effective council

Which wards are impacted?

(All Wards);

1. Implications

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

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 Whilst there are some minor costs associated with training designated drone operators and the drones themselves it is expected these will be offset by savings from reduced working at height costs such as not incurring scaffolding costs.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no additional legal or governance implications that aren't already reflected within the report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 The Council will be asking for its Public Liability insurance to be endorsed to include the use of drones. It is important that full risk assessments are completed to ensure the drone is suitable for purpose; full training is provided; and that the drone is **only** used in connection with Council business.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.4 This policy has been designed to establish the safe and compliant use of drones. It clearly sets out the requirements necessary to meet the controls required under the CAA guidance and best practices and supports a reduction in risk profile.
- 1.5 The Policy also ensures compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations including the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment 1998

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

Climate Change

- 1.6 Implementing the Small Unmanned Aircraft (Drone) policy offers potential for efficiencies for a variety of tasks that South Kesteven District Council complete as a landlord or for other property maintenance duties. These efficiencies could include a reduction for contractors to travel to survey properties, where these tasks could be carried out by appropriately qualified staff, or through issues with a property being identified and resolved more quickly through authorised use of drones.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The use of drones is a rapidly growing area which can provide real time benefits to organisations. The primary benefit being a reduction in risk profile through the removal of work at height requirements.
- 2.2 Drones can be deployed with little preparation or need for scaffolding and mobile towers to be erected to support building inspection and maintenance across the Housing and Corporate Property portfolio. In addition they have potential applications in planning enforcement, emergency response, waste management and identifying areas of illegal waste tipping.
- 2.3 The use of drones is strictly controlled and the policy clearly outlines the requirements established to ensure compliance with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) guidance on drone usage in the UK.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Introducing a policy which allows for drone use provides several benefits as outlined and supports climate change aspirations with a reduction of carbon footprint
- 3.2 The policy is designed to ensure compliance with the CAA guidance and increase the safety of officers consequently reducing the risk profile of the organisation.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council could continue to utilise scaffolding and mobile towers with current safety mitigations or engage contractors to undertake the works and inspections

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. To ensure that the policy for drone use is clear and receives the appropriate scrutiny and challenge.

6. Appendices

- 6.1. Appendix 1 - Drone Policy



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA)(Drone) Policy

Version 1



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Appendix 1: Aerodrome Traffic Zones (ATZ) and Flight Restriction Zones (FRZ)

Figure 1: East Midlands Airport ATZ & FRZ

Figure 2: Heathrow Airport ATZ & FRZ

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this policy is to ensure that employees operating SUA/Drones on behalf of South Kesteven District Council have the information they need to ensure that whilst operating their devices, they are not posing a risk to any other aircraft or people and that they are complying with the relevant legislation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of South Kesteven District Council (SKDC), to, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health, safety and welfare of all who may be affected by its undertakings, acts or omissions. The Council will:

- Ensure a safe working environment for all employees, contractors and the public.
- Operate SUA in a safe and responsible manner, in accordance with the legislation and the conditions detailed in the manufacturer's guidance.
- Ensure that all personnel are suitably trained, current and competent to participate in operations.
- Plan, assess and execute all operations in accordance with the procedures outlined within.
- Manage risk and implement suitable mitigations where required.
- Ensure personnel do not deviate from any documented procedures.
- Report any accident, serious incident, reportable occurrence in a timely manner.
- Conduct equipment maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Keep up to date with changes in legislation by means of the CAA website and SkyWise platform, ensuring this document always remains compliant.

3. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to set out minimum standards for ensuring the safety of persons using and those affected by SUA/Drone activity undertaken by SKDC. Activities include SUA/Drone use for inspection of housing properties, including private sector housing, new build inspections and property related maintenance/damage review works. This is designed to reduce the risk of works at height and reduce the time and cost of works.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Heads of Services / Responsible Managers

Ensure all SUA use in respect of SKDC related activities is undertaken:

- in compliance with this policy, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) legislation and guidance Drone Operations Manual and all related procedures;
- on completion of suitable and sufficient risk assessments and safe systems of work;
- by suitably competent persons and,
- with the necessary public liability insurance cover.

4.2 Head of Health & Safety Service

- Ensure the SUA/Drone policy is reviewed and updated regularly. Including whenever legislation changes and no longer than every 2 years.
- Provide advice and guidance to SUA/Drone operators and approve, where appropriate, SUA use subject to satisfactory compliance with this policy, CAA regulations and guidance, including suitable and sufficient risk assessments.
- Ensure the Council's Insurance Officer is informed of the use of drones and the drone policy.
- Audit records of use and compliance with the policy.
- Lead on all incident/accident reviews in relation to drone use and compliance.

4.3 SUA/Drone Operations Coordinator **named officer/s**

- Apply for, and upon issue by the CAA, hold and maintain the Permission for operations (Operators licence) and regularly review and maintain any associated SUA Operations Manual.
- Advise on the appropriate procedures for complying with the relevant legislation and guidance on safe management of SUA.
- Advise SUA Operators as necessary regarding training, flight planning, risk assessment etc.
- Operate SUA in compliance with this policy, CAA legislation and guidance, on completion of suitable and sufficient risk assessments and having obtained suitable Public Liability insurance.

4.4 SUA/Drone Operators

- All SUA/Drone Operators will be responsible for ensuring that their flights are carried out safely and that all risks are controlled to an acceptable level in accordance with CAA Code of Practice for Drone use
- All SUA/Drone Operators will be required to have registered their devices with the CAA and to have taken an online training course and test. This will be an annual registration, and a charge will be levied by the CAA.

- While not required for drone use under 250grams in weight with a camera, all pilots will be required to complete the online training and register for flyer ID.

5. DEFINITIONS

- Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) system; Defined as remotely operated aircraft and all the control, launch and landing systems required for their operation. Sometimes referred to as 'Drones', Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), and "Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems" (RPAS). All are covered by the scope of this policy.
- Operator (or pilot) – the person operating the SUA / Drone.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1 Regulation of aviation in the UK

The primary legislation is the Air Navigation Order (ANO) 2016 (as amended). ANO is enforced by the CAA, which has enforcement powers.

The ANO does not distinguish between different types of aircraft. It covers ALL aircraft, of all sizes. The CAA grants "exemptions" from certain provisions of the ANO. If there is no explicit exemption, then the provisions of the ANO apply.

The ANO does not regulate the use of SUA's/Drones indoors. Workplace health and safety legislation applies to indoor use.

6.2 Commercial Aviation

ANO defines a 'commercial operation' as:

"...any operation of an aircraft other than for public transport—

- (a) which is available to the public; or*
- (b) which, when not made available to the public, is performed under a contract between an operator and a customer, where the latter has no control over the operator, in return for re-numeration or other valuable consideration."*

Any commercial operation requires the operator to meet all of the legal requirements of a commercial operator that apply to their type of aircraft.

Any SUA use must be risk assessed. This will include the risk to persons who might be affected by malfunction, as well as operators, for example, where there may be manual handling and hazardous substance hazards..

6.3 SUA/Drone Operations around airfields

In March 2019 the Flight Restriction Zone (FRZ) around airports and airfields changed. Boundaries of FRZ around airports are now set at a minimum distance of **5km**. Air Traffic Control (ATC) approval is required for any SUA/Drone flight within the FRZ.

SUA/Drone Operators are required to ask permission from the local airport's Air Traffic Control (ATC) to fly within the Aerodrome Traffic Zone (ATZ). The ATZ is a 4.6km radius circle centred at an Aerodrome Reference Point (ARP). The ARP is the geographical location of the aerodrome and the centre of its traffic zone where an ATZ is established.

In addition, a zone has been introduced, 5km by 1km starting from the point known as the 'threshold', at the end of each of the airfield's runways. Both zones (FRZ and ATZ), extend upwards to a height of 2,000 feet above the airfield.

A map depicting the restricted areas at East Midlands Airport and Heathrow Airport are included as examples at Appendix 1 and are available at
<https://dronesafe.uk/restrictions/>.

Where appropriate, Operators must provide written evidence of their permission to operate inside the FRZ / ATZ to the Health & Safety team upon request and in any case, to the local Air Traffic Control prior to any flying in the FRZ / ATZ.



7. SAFETY LEGISLATION

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 sets out that Employers have a legal obligation to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all employees and others who may be affected by their work. This includes:

- Ensuring that the workplace is safe and without risks to health, and that employees are adequately trained and supervised.
- Employers are required to assess and control risks in the workplace, including identifying potential hazards and taking steps to eliminate or minimize them.

The Act is an enabling act, and we must also consider additional regulations. SUA/Drones are considered to be work equipment, as defined by the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. They must therefore be:

- suitable for the intended use;
- safe for use, maintained in a safe condition and inspected to ensure it is correctly constructed and does not subsequently deteriorate;
- used only by people who have received adequate information, instruction and training;
- accompanied by suitable health and safety measures, such as protective devices and controls. These will normally include emergency devices, adequate means of isolation from sources of energy, clearly visible markings and warning devices.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a number of duties on the Council in its undertakings, including:

- identifying what could cause injury or illness in your business (hazards);
- decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk);
- take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk;
- provide information and training for employees.

7.1 Safety Requirements

- SKDC SUA/Drone Policy requires that all SUA/Drone operators must have, before flying, a current registration certificate for the devices they intend to use and their Operators training certificate. (Please refer to the following website for details: [CAA website](#) including exemptions.
- Will only be operated by trained and competent persons as identified in the risk assessment.
- Equipment must be serviced and maintained as identified in manufacturer's guidance, undergo regular (at least twice per year) Portable Appliance (PA) testing.
- Undergo pre and post use flight inspection checklist and suitable safe storage.

Will follow all CAA code of practice guidance including:

- The person responsible for the flight must maintain direct, unaided visual contact. First Person View (FPV camera use) flights must operate with an observer.
- Flights above 400ft (c.120m) are prohibited (unless prior CAA approval is obtained).
- Operators must not fly within 50m horizontal distance (150ft) of a person.
- Operators must not fly within 150m (500ft) of crowds and built-up areas. The 400 feet maximum height applies in all cases.
- During landing/take off the SUA/Drone must not fly within 30m (100ft) of any person, except those who oversee the aircraft.
- Always comply with the manufacturer's instructions for your SUA / Drone.
- SKDC operates a zero tolerance drink and drug policy at work and this includes the use of drones. The policy can be located at [HR Policies](#)
- Since 30th November 2019, it has been a requirement for SUA/Drone Operators to register their devices with, and undertake an online training course provided by, the CAA. The Police have powers from the same date to deal with offenders. These include powers to enter and search premises under a warrant where there's a reasonable suspicion that there is a SUA/Drone which the Police reasonably believe to have been used in the commission of an offence.
- Police will be able to issue fixed penalties of up to £100 for minor SUA/Drone related offences. Such as failing
 - to produce registration documents and/or proof of registration for SUA/Drones between 250g and up to and including 20kg in mass.
 - failure to produce evidence of any other relevant permissions required by legislation (e.g. proof of Operators Permission for Commercial Operations (PfCO) or exemption issued by the CAA from the ANO.
 - failing to comply with a Police officer's instruction to land a SUA/Drone.
 - flying a SUA/Drone without a valid acknowledgement of competency or evidence of meeting that competency when requested.

7.2 Permissions required for Commercial Operations

In the UK, commercial drone use can mean using a drone for any business or income-generating purpose, such as aerial photography, surveying, inspections, or delivery services. This requires specific permissions and licensing from the Civil Aviation Authority, including demonstrating sufficient aviation knowledge and passing practical flight assessments.

7.3 The Operations Manual

The Operations Manual document is not required for drones under 250 grams; however all pilots must undertake the training and obtain flyer and operator ID to operate a drone for SKDC under this policy.

8. DATA STORAGE AND GDPR COMPLIANCE

Drones are likely to collect personal information during their operations. This includes:

- personal information programmed into the drone prior to operational flight;
- audio, video or photos of people, captured either when on the ground or in flight; and
- information that may point to an identifiable person, such as their number plates or address details.

Some of these activities may involve capturing personal information of employees working in the vicinity of the drone, people in public spaces, or people within the boundary of their private property.

Due to their bird's eye nature and wide aspect, drones also have the potential to collect large volumes of information, some of which may be personal information. This raises concerns about transparency and facilitating people's rights, including the right to be informed if their personal information is being processed. Our guidance on video surveillance clarifies that organisations should consider switching on and off any recording system when appropriate, and unless necessary and proportionate any recording should not be continuous.

The use of optical sensors or any other personal data processing sensor is governed by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and as such, the Remote Pilot and Cam-Op must carefully consider the application of any payload in relation to an individual's privacy. Article 5(1) requires that personal data shall be:

- a) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals ('lawfulness, fairness and transparency');
- b) collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes ('purpose limitation');
- c) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed ('data minimisation');
- d) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay ('accuracy');
- e) kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed; personal data may be stored for longer periods insofar as the personal data will be processed solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals ('storage limitation');

- f) processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures ('integrity and confidentiality').

Prior to using drones at properties, households should be notified of the use of drones and the purpose of the use/data being collected. As other passing individuals may be affected, officers should also take the following actions where possible:

- Use signage indicating a drone is in use, clearly labelled as belonging to SKDC.
- Wear high visibility clothing or uniform indicating that they are operating a drone and are working on SKDC's behalf.

In addition, all SKDC staff engaged in drone use are responsible for the appropriate handling, storage, transmission, retention and disposal of personal data. Any data captured must be:

- Appropriately stored using a resilient system; Suitably secured using encryption, or another form of protection;
- Protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction or damage.
- Transferred to SKDC systems at the earliest possible opportunity
- Deleted in line with the Council's retention policy or, as soon as the purpose for its collection i.e. surveys and damage inspection/ maintenance works are completed, and the information is no longer relevant.

All SUA, and other data storage devices such as MicroSD cards must be securely transported and stored in a manner which prevents unauthorised personnel from access, or otherwise interfering with any element of the system.

Drone footage may be subject to access to information rights under the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 18) and/or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). All requests received for this information should be directed to the Governance Support Team via the FOI@southkesteven.gov.uk mailbox.

9. INSURANCE

The use of SUA/Drones will be covered under the Council's Public Liability insurance policy for works undertaken on behalf of SKDC as outlined in Section 3 of the document. This is for equipment owned and maintained by SKDC only. The use of drones will only be permitted in connection with Council business.

NOTE 1: "Small Unmanned Aircraft" includes systems (or any part thereof) and radio-controlled helicopters (model aircraft).

NOTE 2: The provision of insurance cover does not remove the obligation to adhere to CAA legislation.

The Insurance Officer and Health and Safety Team must be informed of, and consulted on, any other types of SUA/Drone operations beyond those outlined in this document, prior to any activities or purchasing. Information required will include the activity risk assessment and details of the pilot's training and additional accreditation as required under CAA guidance and the ANO 2016.

10. REFERENCES AND DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT TABLE

1. Link to the “Drone Assist” App, “Drone Aware” video and other resources
<http://dronesafe.uk/> :
2. Dronesafe Drone Code; <https://dronesafe.uk/drone-code/>
3. For detailed guidance on all unmanned aircraft and specifically SUA / Drone laws, go to; <https://www.caa.co.uk/Consumers/Unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/>

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT TABLE

Version	Owner	Author	Revised by	Summary of revision	Date of revision
V1	Phil Swinton	Phil Swinton	First draft	N/A	N/A
V2	Phil Swinton	Phil Swinton	Phil Swinton	Review and comments from Insurance, GDPR and qualified drone pilot	01-07-2025

Aerodrome Traffic Zones (ATZ) and Flight Restriction Zones (FRZ)

Permission is required from the local ATC to fly any SUA in the shaded areas. Outside of the FRZ's SUA's must not be flown above 120 meters / 400 feet above ground level.

Figure 1: East Midlands Airport ATZ and FRZ

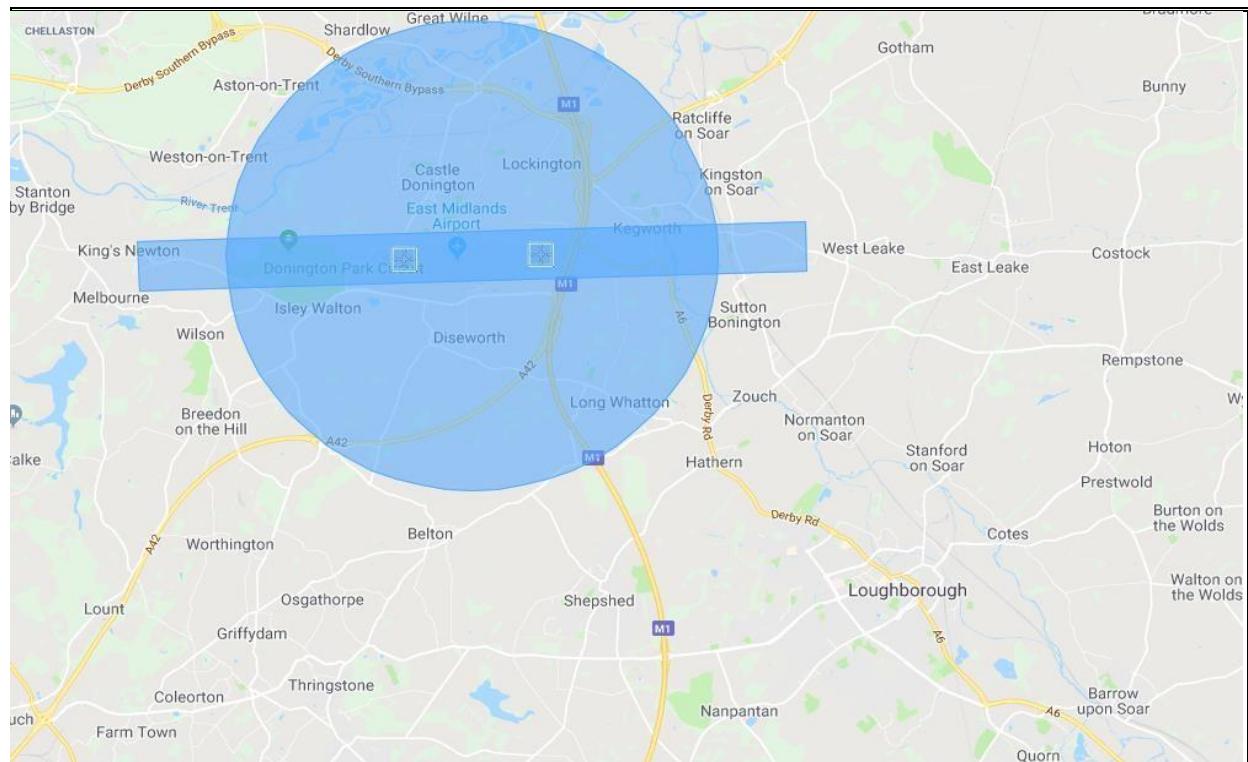
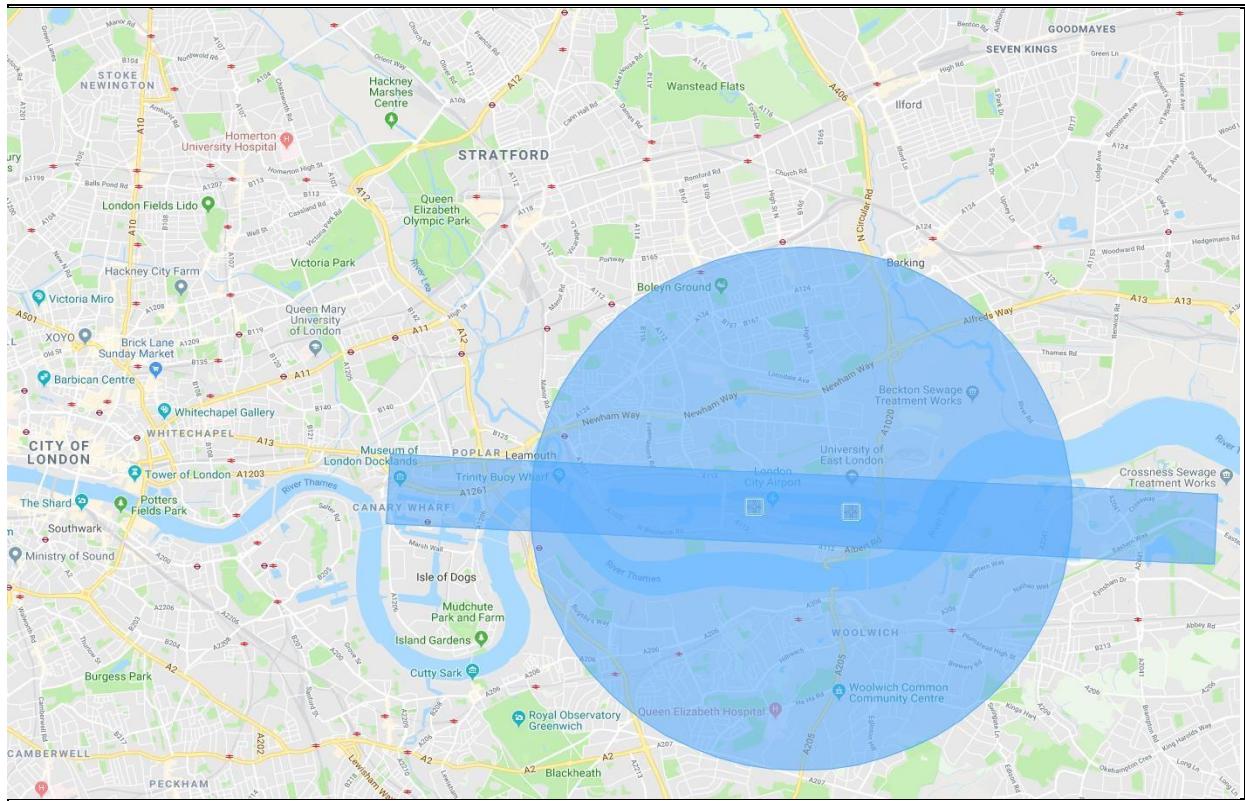


Figure 2: Heathrow Airport ATZ and FRZ



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Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2025/26

WORK PROGRAMME

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE PRIORITY
27 January 2026				
Customer Service Update Q3 2025/26	Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service and Community)	To provide the Committee with an update regarding customer interactions within the Customer Service team and high contact service areas for Q3 2024/25		Effective Council
Welfare & Financial Advice Team update – Q3 2025/26	Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Service and Community)	To provide the Committee with an update regarding the Household Support Fund (Q3 2025/26), and the wrap around support provided by the Welfare and Financial Advice team. This will detail the activity undertaken by the team, number of residents supported, value of support provided and an update regarding District, County and National activities		Enabling economic opportunities Effective council
Community Engagement Strategy Action Plan Update	Carol Drury (Community Engagement Manager)	This report will provide an overview of activities and events which have been carried out to meet the Council's commitment to community engagement as outlined in the Community Engagement and Development		Effective council Connecting Communities

REPORT TITLE	OFFICER	PURPOSE	ORIGINATED/COMMITTEE HISTORY DATE(S)	CORPORATE PRIORITY
		Strategy – Our People, Our Place 2024-2027. The report also provides an overview of plans to review and update the Strategy and its Action Plan.		
Food Health and Safety Enforcement Workplan	Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Service (Public Protection)	To bring the annual workplan to Rural OSC for awareness and noting.		Effective Council
24 March 2026				

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Unscheduled Items

Report title	Issue	Originated	Corporate Priority

The Committee's Remit

The remit of the Rural and Communities 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:

- Allotments
- Anti-social behaviour, community safety and local policing
- Benefit claims
- Community engagement & cohesion
- Community funding and volunteering
- Community right to bid
- Community well-being
- Customer services
- Disabled facilities grant
- Equality and diversity
- Parish and town council liaison
- Public conveniences
- Safeguarding and individual wellbeing
- Shop front designs and funding
- Street furniture

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