

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2025

10.30 AM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Ian Selby Chairman
Councillor Anna Kelly Vice Chairman

Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Zoe Lane
Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Bridget Ley

Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Habib Rahman
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Rob Shorrock
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)
Chris Prime, Communications Manager
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Tom Amblin-Lightowler, Environmental Health Manager – Environmental Protection & Private Sector Housing
Gary Andrew, IT Services Manager
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer

62. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:

Emma Baker
David Bellamy
Harrish Bisnauthsing
Steven Cunningham
James Denniston
Patsy Ellis
Ben Green
Graham Jeal
Nikki Manterfield
Penny Milnes
Rhea Rayside
Nick Robins
Penny Robins
Vanessa Smith
Peter Stephens
Mark Whittington

63. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

64. Public Open Forum

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

65. Notices of Motion

66. Councillor Sue Woolley

Prior to the introduction of the printed motion, the Chief Executive apologised to Full Council for the identified procedural error when previously considering this motion at the meeting held on 13 October. Motions on notice are required to be tabled in order to become formal motions, through the moving and seconding of the motion. Legal advice had been received, and this meeting has been called to rectify the error.

Councillor Sue Woolley proposed the following motion:

This Council notes:

1. *Currently small HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupancy) (3-4 occupants) can be established without planning permission under permitted development rights, meaning no community consultation.*

2. *There is a widespread perception that HMOs cause over-intensive use, noise disturbance, traffic problems, and negative impacts on property values.*
3. *Many councils have successfully introduced comprehensive HMO regulation through Article 4 directions and additional licensing schemes. Rushcliffe has recently passed a resolution to commence a consultation around an Article 4 direction for all HMOs.*
4. *Whilst HMOs can often be a valuable addition to an area's housing stock the government's strategy of moving asylum seekers from hotels to HMOs has tarnished this type of accommodation in the eyes of many residents.*
5. *There have been 16 new HMO licences issued across Grantham in 2025 so far, totalling 100 permitted occupants. Serco are the licence holders of 5 of these properties.*

This Council believes:

1. *All residents deserve to know about and have input on HMO developments that could affect their neighbourhood.*
2. *Comprehensive regulation through both licensing and planning control provides the best protection for communities while ensuring legitimate housing needs are met.*
3. *Current gaps in regulation allow problematic HMOs to operate without proper oversight or community input.*

This Council resolves:

1. *To commence a public consultation as required by law to determine if an Article 4 Direction should be introduced across South Kesteven to:*
 - a. *Removing permitted development rights so that all HMOs (small and large) require planning permission and to*
 - b. *establish mandatory HMO licensing covering all HMOs regardless of size, with robust standards including fire safety, room sizes, parking, noise management, and waste arrangements.*
2. *To bring a report as an Item to the Full Council on the results of the Consultation on 28th February 2026 in order for Full Council to make a determination on if an Article 4 Direction should be made.*
3. *To immediately revoke the Officer Delegation to issue any HMO licences and assign this responsibility to the appropriate Committee, thereby protecting officers from having to make politically sensitive decisions and ensuring proper democratic accountability.*
4. *To immediately add the current list of HMOs properties and licence holders onto the SKDC website for transparency with our residents.*

In introducing the motion, Councillor Woolley identified what she believed was a gap – in the past HMOs with less than 6 occupants were allowed to be converted through permitted development rights without being subjected to the same procedure as larger HMOs.

She asked colleagues to agree to the same process for smaller HMOs, with a wish that members considered putting this issue to various committees, making sure the issue of smaller HMOs was covered.

The motion was seconded.

An amendment to the motion was proposed and seconded – this version had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting for information. There were no amendments to the ‘This Council notes’ or ‘This Council Believes’ sections, but there were amendments to the section ‘This Council Resolves’:

This Council resolves:

1. *To establish a cross-party working group to review the evidence and data relating to all HMOs in Grantham. The working group scope can look at any measure to support greater transparency and public engagement for all small HMOs including but not limited to:*
 - a. *Remove permitted development rights so that small HMOs require planning permission (Article 4 direction)*
 - b. *mandatory HMO licensing for all HMOs regardless of size*
2. *Report the evidence gathered by the working group to the relevant OSC’s within 4 months to determine whether there is enough evidence to recommend to the relevant decision body that an Article 4 direction and /or Mandatory licensing is served following the statutory process.*
3. *To request that the Governance & Audit Committee, at its next meeting, reviews the policy framework for HMO licensing decisions and makes a recommendation to Full Council.*
4. *To request that Officers ensure the statutory register of licensed HMOs is published on the SKDC website at the earliest opportunity, ensuring full compliance with data protection requirements, and to explore options for publishing additional non-personal HMO information to enhance public transparency.*

This amendment was accepted and became part of the substantive motion. The following points were highlighted during debate on the substantive motion:

- It was possible to ‘call-in’ a planning application, but this mechanism was not available for smaller HMOs as they fell under permitted development. Officers had confirmed there is no accurate way to know where all HMOs are.
- Companies could buy family properties and convert them into HMOs.
- According to Building Control records, 18 small HMO conversions had been reported over the past 3 months, with 14 of these being within Grantham.
- A number of HMOs across the district were being used by government to house asylum seekers. HMOs of all sizes needed proper oversight.
- Planning Committee had a defined role with regard to HMOs.
- Approval of the motion could impact on officer time and the time of Planning Committee members.

- Nottingham City Council had a targeted 'Article 4' direction which also required an annual review of all HMOs. Landlords had to pay a significant fee.
- Increased HMOs could lead to the loss of family homes and quality cared for buildings. In order that HMOs could be looked after their number needed to be limited.
- It was important for the district to maintain an environment to attract visitors, whereas HMOs in general led to increased noise, and issues with parking.
- Stamford had Article 4 directions in place already.
- An HMO was a property that had at least 3 tenants living there, forming more than 1 household. Given the simplicity of forming a small HMO, it would be difficult to regulate them. are we going to regulate this and enforce it.
- In larger towns and cities there were concerns in specific areas around HMOs taking over whole streets.

A procedural motion that the question be now put was proposed and seconded, and following a vote this was **AGREED**.

In summing up, Councillor Sue Woolley responded to points that had been made in the Council Chamber:

- There was a legal definition of an HMO.
- If passed, this motion would be the start of a process. There were a number of other authorities across England that were raising HMOs as an issue, across different political parties.
- The issue was not party political.
- Further evidence was required that HMOs were an issue for residents in Grantham.

A recorded vote was requested – the results of the recorded vote were as follows:

For: Councillors Matt Bailey, Pam Bosworth, Helen Crawford, Gloria Johnson, Gareth Knight, Zoe Lane, Robert Leadenhams, Paul Martin, Susan Sandall, Sarah Trotter, Sue Woolley (11)

Against: Councillors Rhys Baker, Ashley Baxter, Richard Cleaver, Phil Dilks, Paul Fellows, Anna Kelly, Philip Knowles, Virginia Moran, Charmaine Morgan, Chris Noon, Habib Rahman, Max Sawyer, Rob Shorrock, Lee Steptoe, Paul Stokes, Elvis Stooke, Jane Wood, Paul Wood (18)

Abstentions: Councillors Tim Harrison, Bridget Ley, Ian Selby (3)

Therefore, the motion **FELL**.

67. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 11:25am.