



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**



**Finance, Economic Development and  
Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**

23 February 2021

**Report of:** Councillor Graham Jeal

Chairman of Finance, Economic  
Development and Corporate Services  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Grantham Town Centre Review

This report outlines potential options for a detailed examination of Grantham Town Centre, by means of a focussed inquiry over a series of Committee meetings.

### Report Author

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
<b>Growth</b>	<b>Administrative</b>	<b>Two or more Wards</b>

<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Shelley Thirkell, Acting Principal Democratic Officer	8 February 2021
<b>Approved by:</b>	Shahin Ismail, Director of Law and Governance	8 February 2021
<b>Signed off by:</b>	Councillor Graham Jeal, Chairman of Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10 February 2021

### Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

- 1. Approves the addition of a standing agenda item to the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, for the duration of the inquiry into Grantham Town Centre**
- 2. Defines the Committee's aims for the review, including a specific area of focus**
- 3. Identifies a list of external groups/attendees to be invited to provide evidence**

# **1 The Background to the Report**

- 1.1 A review into Grantham Town Centre has been included within the Work Programme for the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee since the latter part of 2019. The Committee had requested that the item was included as a means to consider business occupancy and survival rates in Grantham.
- 1.2 Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, this item was deferred to allow for more urgent reports to be considered. The Chairman has now requested that this item is moved forward.

# **2 Defining the Objectives and Desired Outcomes**

- 2.1 For the Committee's review of Grantham Town Centre to add value within the context of a short term inquiry, it will need a defined focus. The Council is also undertaking work to improve Grantham Town Centre through InvestSK Ltd, its economic development and regeneration company. A key factor for consideration in this review is ensuring that the work undertaken complements the ongoing work of InvestSK Ltd, avoiding duplication and working collaboratively to make improvements.
- 2.2 InvestSK Ltd has been working over the past year to secure a Future High Street Fund (FHSF) funding bid. A report was presented to Cabinet on 2 February 2021 providing an update on this project (please see Background Papers to this report) and Cabinet approved a final proposed scheme.
- 2.3 The funding agreed has been allocated to three specific capital projects in Grantham Town Centre: Station Approach Public Realm Improvements and Mixed-Use Development Stage 1, Conversion of the Vacant Upper Floor Units to Residential and Public Realm Improvements to the Grantham Market Place.
- 2.4 The Future High Street Fund proposals do not address the medium-term downturn in the retail provision on Grantham High Street. It is therefore suggested that the Committee focuses on this key issue. Other potential areas of focus are:
  - How Grantham Town Centre needs to look post Covid-19 and how this can be achieved
  - How the projects undertaken using the Future High Streets funding can be interlinked with the rest of the town, to create an overall more desirable place to live, work or launch a business
  - The potential for a new Business Improvement District bid
  - The potential for supplementary planning guidance for Grantham Town Centre

# **3 Evidence Gathering**

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committees hold approximately six meetings in a municipal year (subject to change at the Chairman's discretion). It is suggested that, starting on the 27 April 2021 meeting of the Committee, an item is added to the agenda for the 'Grantham Town Centre Review' item at each meeting, for the duration of the 2021/22 municipal year.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution makes provision for external attendees to be invited to provide evidence to support the Committee's investigations. Members are asked to consider who they would like to invite to give an account of their experience relating to Grantham Town Centre. Potential invitees may include:

- Local business groups
- Community groups that have been successful in promoting businesses
- Businesses that have recently left Grantham Town Centre
- Stakeholders with future plans for Grantham Town Centre

## **4 Drawing Conclusions**

- 4.1 When evidence gathering has been completed, a report will be produced for the Committee's consideration at its last meeting in the 2021/22 municipal year. This report will outline the Committee's overall findings and put forward recommendations to Cabinet, as appropriate.

## **5 Consultation and Feedback Received, Including Overview and Scrutiny**

- 5.1 This review is intended to consult external business groups and stakeholders to inform any recommendations put forward, when the inquiry is complete.

## **6 Available Options Considered**

- 6.1 Other options to explore this topic include:

- A task and finish group - a small group of Members could conduct the evidence gathering over a series of meetings, specifically arranged for this purpose
- The Committee could request that an officer produces a report into the topic, with recommendations for Members' consideration

- 6.2 Alternatively, the Committee could decide that it no longer wishes to include a review of Grantham Town Centre on its Work Programme.

## **7 Preferred Option**

- 7.1 That the Committee conduct the review by means of a standing agenda item over the 2021/22 municipal year, gathering evidence from local businesses and stakeholders.

## **8 Reasons for the Recommendation (s)**

- 8.1 Including the Grantham Town Centre review as a standing agenda item for a specified time will ensure that all Members of the Committee have the opportunity to input into the investigation, whilst keeping the evidence gathering focussed and time limited.

- 8.2 Inviting external attendees to provide evidence will allow local businesses to make their voices heard and contribute to the discussion. Engaging local businesses and stakeholders will be essential to secure the success of any projects to improve Grantham Town Centre.

## **9 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision**

- 9.1 If the Committee agrees to go ahead with the Grantham Town Centre Review for the duration of the 2021/22 municipal year, external attendees will be invited to attend meetings to provide evidence. This will commence with the meeting held, 27 April 2021. Further arrangements will be made once the annual programme of meetings has been approved at Annual Council.

## 10 Financial Implications

10.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Interim Director of Finance**

## 11 Legal and Governance Implications

11.1 This type of review is welcomed, as a way for the Committee to add value to an important aspect of the Council's work. The Committee should focus on the outcomes it wishes this review to achieve.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Shahin Ismail, Director of Law and Governance.**

## 12 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

12.1 In line with the Constitution at Article 6.8.2, the investigation shall be conducted fairly and those assisting the Committee by providing evidence will be treated with respect and courtesy.

## 13 Risk and Mitigation

13.1 No risks identified.

## 14 Community Safety Implications

14.1 None identified.

## 15 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council's declaration of a climate emergency?

15.1 The recommendations identified will have a carbon neutral effect on the Council's declaration of a climate emergency.

## 16 Background Papers

16.1 [Report on the Future High Streets Fund considered by Cabinet on 2 February 2021](#)

<b>Report Timeline:</b>	Date of Publication on Forward Plan (if required)	Not applicable
	Previously Considered by: Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Not applicable
	Final Decision date	23 February 2021