

# Minutes

## Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 6 December 2022, 10:00

Council Chamber – South  
Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,  
Grantham. NG31 6PZ



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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### Committee Members present

Councillor Judy Stevens (Chairman)  
Councillor Penny Robins (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Paul Fellows  
Councillor Jill Thomas  
Councillor Mary Whittington  
Councillor Richard Cleaver

### Other Members present

Councillor Kelham Cooke (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Adam Stokes (Deputy Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew (Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy)

### Officers

Nicola McCoy-Brown (Director of Growth and Culture)  
Karen Whitfield (Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure)  
Jon Hinde (Head of Economic Development)  
Debbie Roberts (Head of Policy, Performance and Corporate Projects)  
Amy Pryde (Democratic Services Officer)

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## 27. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Amanda Wheeler.

Councillor Richard Cleaver substituted for Councillor Amanda Wheeler.

## 28. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

## 29. Public Speaking

There were no public speakers.

### **30. Minutes from the meeting held on 6 September 2022**

It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED** the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **31. Updates from the previous meeting**

All actions had been completed from the previous meeting.

One Member highlighted their disappointment on the figures (180 businesses and 800 consumers) provided around the 'Hello SK' App. It was noted that 800 consumers was a low figure in relation to the whole population of South Kesteven.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that further promotion of the App would take place following purdah. Promotion of the App was included in the next edition of 'SK Today'. Businesses were encouraged to sign up to the App and residents were urged to download the App.

It was noted that recent social media posts included information in relation to Markets and that figures had improved.

The Head of Economic Development notified the Committee that figures from the dashboard would be included at the next meeting, where Markets would be discussed.

### **32. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

The Leader of the Council announced that the Council had been given approval for a bid into the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and further information would be forthcoming.

It was queried as to how much money had been approved for the bid.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the financial figure approved was £3.8 million over a 3 year period, which was revenue and capital funding.

### **33. Mid-term performance indicators**

The South Kesteven Corporate Plan 2020-23 was approved by Council on 1 October 2020. It was agreed by Council that actions, key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets were to be developed by the relevant overview and scrutiny committee. These actions and indicators were presented to this committee and agreed on 17 November 2020.

The report provided an update on performance to the mid-year point of the 2022/23 financial year and incorporated the changes recommended by the last KPI review to

outline areas of the council's performance which were successful and to advise where challenges may lay.

The report summary was as follows:

2 of the actions are rated Green. These are actions which are on or above target as planned.

2 actions are rated as Amber. These are those off target by less than 10% or where milestone achievement is delayed but with resolution in place to be achieved within a reasonable timeframe.

0 actions are rated Red. These are those falling significantly below target or overdue with no specific resolution date planned.

There were no areas of significant under performance identified in this report.

One Member sought clarification around the Visitor Centre in Stamford:

- Whether the Visitor Centre was going to be moved into the Arts Centre.
- That an action relating to improving and investing in local Arts and Cultural venues across the District contradicted a previous decision made at a previous Full Council meeting to remove £69,000 of capital money from Stamford Arts Centre due to the priority outlining ongoing capital improvement works at the Arts Centre.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Stamford Visitor Centre was run by volunteers, and they would require accessibility to the Arts Centre and how the volunteers would operate in terms of insurance would be explored. Officers were working on the potential move.

It was highlighted that Stamford Arts Centre had received a lot of investment; £400,000 was due to be spent on the roof, alongside previous refurbishment of the ballroom and toilets. The Committee were reminded of the holistic approach of the Council in terms of the capital programme, and that spending would be prioritised on essential works rather than 'nice to have' projects.

#### **AGREED:**

**1. Noted the contents of the 2022/23 Mid-Year performance report.**

**2. Members to consider if any concerns highlighted by the report required additional investigation to be added to the work programme.**

#### **34. Development of Visitor Economy Strategy**

Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) was a tourism economic impact modelling process which enabled measurement of tourism using local data,

tourism performance and visitor survey data. As reported to this Committee on 6 September 2022, in 2021 the annual study by STEAM revealed:

- An upturn in tourist numbers had helped to boost South Kesteven's visitor economy by 3.5% to £168.63 million.
- There were 2,232 full-time equivalent people employed in the sector.

The district is rich in assets with national and global visitor appeal and was a popular destination for day visiting. 2.72 million people visited in 2021, equating to 3.41 million visitor days.

With events taking place throughout the year, all indicators pointed to significant future growth in South Kesteven's visitor economy. It is in this context, there was a need to prepare a Strategy that defines shared priorities and collaborative interventions by the public and private sectors to grow the visitor economy in South Kesteven.

The intention was to produce the Strategy, to a timetable ready for approval to adopt in March 2023, based on three strategic priorities of:

- creating compelling places to visit
- building private sector marketing capacity, and
- extending the benefits of tourism

One Member raised concern as to why a specialist consultant was necessary for the whole procurement exercise. It was suggested that the procurement income be spent on current resources and meaningful workshops with Community Groups and Councillors to aid the development of the Visitor Economy Strategy for building projects and increasing the number of visitors.

It was noted that the cost to the Council of appointing a qualified consultant would be in the region of £10,000. A query was raised on whether the Council was committed to spending the money on the consultant and whether the Council had the funding to do so.

The importance of the Visitor Economy was emphasised, alongside the engagement across the whole District. It was encouraged that Members visit each town across the District to engage with communities, inviting local stakeholders to have their say in terms of a Visitor Economy Strategy and to encourage works with Destination Lincolnshire. It was confirmed that the monies would be available to carry out the procurement.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that a specialist would be required to 'draw up' the Visitor Economy Strategy and assisting with engagement work.

**ACTION: For the Chief Executive of Destination Lincolnshire to be invited to the next Committee meeting on 28 February 2023.**

The Chairman noted that successful workshops were held through lockdown restrictions via Zoom where meaningful conversations took place with different communities, however, the virtual workshops were dropped when restrictions were lifted. It was suggested that a program be created in order for Members to follow in terms of engaging with the population.

The Leader of the Council noted that dates would need to be set in each of the towns, where stakeholders would be invited to attend and engage with local Members to put across their views.

It was queried as to whether the workshops would be officer-led, and structures of consultation would be provided for each of the towns in the District. It was further suggested that a conversation takes place with Officers to discuss possibility and administrative structure that enables workshops to happen.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy suggested that the cross-council working group be established to put ideas forward, then Officers can become involved.

The Director of Growth and Culture expressed that the Council should go out to the market to secure an independent consultant, then group meetings could be arranged to gain feedback, which would be separate from the Cultural Strategy.

The Leader of the Council noted that there were already informal groups within the private sector in terms of visitor attractions around the District that meet to discuss what could be done to encourage more people to visit the District.

A query was raised on whether the Council would provide the appointed consultant with a targeted approach on what they were required to do.

One Member raised concern around writing another strategy which sits on its own, as clear interrelationships could not be ignored. For example, attracting people for staycations would be supported via the local plan to outline a policy on change of use of buildings to allow rooms above shops to be converted. Other policies relating to car parking, transport, cooperation across Councils.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that the Future High Street Funding in Grantham allowed units above retail shops to be converted. Current cooperation with Council's was noted in relation to work with Melton Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council on the Grantham Canal. A query was raised at a previous meeting with Destination Lincolnshire on their engagement with Lincolnshire County Council and South Kesteven District Council.

Clarification was sought on where a cross-council working group would come into the development of Visitor Economy Strategy and whether this would be established ahead of the appointment of a consultant or after.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy confirmed that Officers would arrange a cross-council working group meeting in January 2023.

The Committee confirmed that they would prefer a cross-council working group for people be able to contribute to the discussion process.

**ACTION: For a cross-council working group to meet in January 2023 ahead of the appointment of a consultant to work around the Visitor Economy Strategy in the region of £10,000.**

**AGREED:**

**1. Agreed there was a need to develop a Strategy to grow South Kesteven's visitor economy**

**2. Endorsed the commencement of a procurement exercise to appoint a suitably qualified consultant to work with Officers and Members of the Committee to develop the Council's Visitor Economy Strategy**

**3. Considered the appropriateness of drawing together a cross-council working group to support the development of the Strategy ahead of the appointment of the consultant.**

### **35. Refresh of the Cultural Strategy - Consultant (Verbal Update)**

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure provided a verbal update to the Committee that highlighted the recent procurement to find a suitably qualified consultant to assist in the development of a refreshed Cultural Strategy for the District.

The Council had received 30 expressions of interest, to which 10 tenders were received and evaluated in terms of the price submitted, quality of responses and experience of the consultants.

The Council had appointed Red Quadrant as the preferred contractor, and work had commenced.

A Committee working party and workshops in each of the market towns were planned to follow the Committee meeting, however, these had been delayed until January 2023 due to an extended period of purdah.

A resident survey was due to be circulated, as well as a specific survey for all Members to contribute.

One Member suggested that the workshop with Red Quadrant take place the same day as the cross-council working group for the visitor economy strategy.

It was confirmed that the Council had regular update meetings with Red Quadrant and dates were being secured for the workshop in line with consultation events taking place in the market towns.

### **36. Work Programme 2022-2023**

The Committee noted the Work Programme 2022-2023.

One Member highlighted that concern was raised at the previous meeting in relation to Grantham Market and the level of subsidy required. It was requested that this be included in the update on markets at the next meeting.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that all the markets within South Kesteven would be reviewed with a holistic approach with all aspects considered.

Members discussed the benefit that the markets provided to the local communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was requested that the update on markets included a lot of detail on how they could be improved and expanded.

One Member noted that 16 pitches at Grantham market cost the Council £84,000, meaning each pitch cost £5000 per pitch, per year. It was suggested that this may be unsustainable and should be reviewed.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy highlighted the importance of supporting traders and visitors of all the markets to review and explore options to make markets a viable visitor economy attraction.

The Head of Economic Development confirmed that the Council had to pay business rates with no discount for Grantham market. The Committee were reassured that a colleague was currently assessing original charters of the markets dating back to 1600 ahead of the report coming to Committee on 28 February 2023.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure confirmed that a report on Arts Service Transitional Funding would be brought to the next Committee meeting. The Council, as part of a collaborative bid were unsuccessful for the next national portfolio organisation funding from the Arts Council.

The Head of Economic Development confirmed that a report on Plaque Guides and Information Trails would be brought to the next Committee meeting. The report would outline that the Shared Prosperity fund would be utilised for the project.

The Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure noted that the previous Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Action Plan six-monthly update was discussed in June 2022, therefore, this would be brought to a future meeting.

The Chairman requested that the Development of Visitor Economy Strategy and Refresh of the Cultural Strategy would be incorporated within the Work Programme.

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

There were none.

**38. Close of meeting**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10:58.