

# Minutes

## Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 28 February 2023, 10.00 am

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

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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

### Cabinet Members

Councillor Kelham Cooke (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor Adam Stokes (Deputy Leader of the Council)

### Members present

Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew

### Officers

Nicola M<sup>c</sup>Coy-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)  
Michael Chester (Team Leader, Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces)  
Claire Saunders (Heritage Action Zone Project Manager)  
Beth Goodman (Leisure Officer)  
Sarah Downs (Democratic Services Officer)

Charlotte Goy (Chief Executive, Destination Lincolnshire)

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### 39. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

There was no representative on the Committee from Alliance SK.

**40. Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

**41. Public Speaking**

There were no public speakers.

**42. Minutes from the meeting held on 6 December 2022**

A Member asked for confirmation that Markets were on the Work Programme for scrutiny within a future meeting.

The Director for Growth and Culture confirmed that Markets had been added as a future item.

A Member asked what fee was required by Red Quadrant and whether funds were readily available.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure confirmed that a fee of £16,000 was allocated from an agreed budget.

The contract for the draft Visitor Economy Strategy was expected to be tendered by April 2023.

It was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022 were a correct and accurate record.

**43. Updates from the previous meeting**

The action sheet agreed at the 6 December 2022 meeting was noted.

The Director of Growth and Culture confirmed that a draft invitation to tender for the Visitor Economy Strategy had been issued to the Committee's Chairman and Vice Chairman for their review and comment, before being shared electronically with this Committee where feedback by Members would be welcomed.

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

There were no announcements by the Leader. However, it was acknowledged the second Board meeting of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund (UKSPF and REPF) in the afternoon. The Leader of the Council agreed the work was receiving positive results.

#### **45. Verbal presentation from the Chief Executive of Destination Lincolnshire**

The Chief Executive of Destination Lincolnshire gave a presentation.

Members were informed the Government expected to route funding for tourism through Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). The Government would operate a formal accreditation process and Destination Lincolnshire were able to facilitate the private and public sector to achieve this.

Destination Lincolnshire recommended that a governance structure could be established and every participating local authority could co-fund a Destination Management Plan as part of the process to achieving LVEP accreditation.

It became apparent during the pandemic the destination management structure in England was fragmented, fragile and not fully effective. The tourism sector recovery depended on having the right structures and partnerships in place.

The review into Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) recommended a network of destination professionals would work with Visit England to deliver local and national economy growth priorities.

The accredited network would be:

- A top tier of Destination Development Partnerships (DDPs)
- A second tier of Local Visitor Economy Partnerships
- A third tier of all other tourism partnerships

The LVEP started in 2023 and DDPs were to be developed in 2024/2025.

The Government agreed that DMOs had an important role to play in recovery and Levelling Up and were positive about the tiering system.

Destination Lincolnshire aimed to support Lincolnshire Local Authorities to achieve LVEP status by May 2023 and co-fund a new Destination Management Plan for Greater Lincolnshire. A LVEP application was to be submitted no later than September 2023.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- Disappointment accreditation had to be applied for.
- Lincolnshire was a wonderful county that deserved more recognition.
- The decision to abandon Lincoln Christmas Market was unfortunate and would have a negative impact on the County.

The Chief Executive of Destination Lincolnshire informed Members their organisation, like similar companies was previously funded by Development Agencies. It was frustrating that evidence submitted at a recent review did not

result in automatic funding. Funds were also received from businesses who paid subscription fees. Ultimately, Lincolnshire proving it's worth would be a worthwhile exercise. Greater Lincolnshire was under-marketed and as a large county, efforts to sell it were sometimes fragmented (although at a strategic level there was some positive, collaborative work underway). The county also needed to acknowledge its considerable strengths.

#### **46. Update on Heritage Action Zone shop front improvements in Grantham**

The report was presented by the Leader of the Council.

The Grantham High Street Heritage Action Zone programme was in its third year of delivery and was to run until 31 March 2024. It was split into two main areas of delivery as follows:

- a capital grants programme
- a revenue funding stream which facilitates staffing, engagement activity, resource building, interpretation projects and cultural activity.

Properties had to be located on High Street, Westgate, the Market Place or Watergate (with a priority on Westgate and Marketplace) and must have been built prior to 1939. Applicants were required to have the legal ability to accept the grant funding, typically the property owner or their written permission. There were two projects under delivery through the 'Key Building' scheme and six currently being delivered through the 'Shopfront Regeneration Scheme'.

The single most significant capital project within the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme was the regeneration of Westgate Hall, a grade II listed former corn exchange. Built in 1852, last used as a night club, vacant for five years and currently in very poor condition. On 12 July 2022, Cabinet approved a grant award of up to £300,000 for the regeneration of Westgate Hall with a view to bringing the building back into use as a restaurant and the potential to create approximately 30 jobs. The funding had made it viable for the property owner to carry out works to the building by addressing the conservation deficit on the property – that was the cost required to complete works more than what the property would be worth when the works were completed.

The impact of rapidly increasing prices resulted in the need to scale down the scope of the schedule of works to ensure the project remained deliverable. The grant funded elements of work would focus on structural repairs to the building, the reinstatement of historically appropriate glazing, works to the roof and masonry repairs.

The timeline for delivery also provided challenges to the project. The Heritage Action Zone Programme Manager would continue to work closely with the appointed project architect - and the contractors - to ensure the programme ran to time and coordinated with Historic England as necessary. Encouragingly, works to

the property had now commenced, with the erection of scaffolding having taken place on 30 January 2023.

71 High Street had experienced delays in delivery due to both material and contractor availability. This resulted in the programme significantly over-running its original completion date of March 2022. The Programme Manager was working closely with the property owners and the appointed project architect to monitor the contractors progress to ensure the programme of works was completed within this financial year.

There were currently six shopfront regeneration grant schemes underway, and interest was received with regards to a further four properties. As with the larger key buildings programme, the significant increase in cost of projects resulted in the need to negotiate a change to the original grant programme with Historic England. Inflation had resulted in tenders for shopfront regeneration projects being returned at two to three times the cost seen in previous years. Historic England agreed the maximum cap of £25,000 per project could be waived for new projects as long as the grant intervention rates of 60% of the cost of repairs and 80% of the costs of reinstatement were maintained and the budget was not exceeded. As a result, five shopfront schemes (in addition to 68 Westgate which was an existing project) had been brought forward.

Although this alteration to the grant scheme would result in the delivery of fewer schemes than proposed in the original High Street Heritage Action Zone bid, it had insured deliverable schemes have been brought forward and there had been a significant increase in the level of private sector investment leveraged. The shopfront projects would generate £185,997 in private sector contributions. In addition, private sector contributions to 71 High Street (Key Building) would generate £19,923, and Westgate Hall would contribute £100,000 from the property owner and an additional £200,000 – 250,000 in investment for fitout of the property. This gave an estimate of the private sector investment leveraged by scheme as £505,000.

In November 2022, Heritage Lincolnshire was commissioned to produce an updated Conservation Area Management Plan for Grantham to consider changes in national planning policy and look forward at how opportunities generated through the High Street Heritage Action Zone, Future High Street Fund and other regeneration programmes could be developed upon in the future, should additional funding become available. A draft document was to be completed by the end of March 2023 for consultation with Members and the public as necessary.

Kevin Murray Associates were commissioned to undertake a Community Charette (consultation) in Spring 2022 which asked local residents and stakeholders to participate in the development of a vision for Grantham in 2045. Over three days, participants joined discussions and activity to highlight their priorities for the town. Following on from this work, initial discussions were held with the Woodland Trust to build stronger links and encourage their involvement in potential future street greening projects within Grantham.

Over the previous 12 months Grantham Dramatic Society ran a programme of costumed tours which would continue for the remainder of the programme. The regeneration efforts in Grantham were beginning to garner significant recognition within the industry. This had included Grantham being nominated for the Academy of Urbanism's 'Great Town' Award 2022 and after a competitive assessment process Grantham reached the final of the awards alongside Inverness and Dun Laoghaire (the eventual winners).

Alongside the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme, engagement was underway to support Grantham Museum with their development aims including assisting the Museum Board in developing an application to The Arts Fund 'Reimagine' Grants programme. The Museum were successful in securing £18,600 which would provide for support in building their operational capacity, volunteer development and training, and curatorial support. The funding would be supplemented by £1,500 from the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme to support public consultation into how Grantham residents and visitors would like to see the museum explore, highlight and present the town's history.

Members raised the following points during discussion:

- The schemes encouraged a more harmonious feel. The Council needed to consider the 'feel' of the town.
- There was concern about rising costs of labour and materials.
- Were property owners coming forward as expected and was there the need for a waiting list?
- Were the Chamber of Commerce involved in the process?

The Heritage Action Zone Project Manager confirmed the schemes had been very positive in supporting the town centre and engaging the local community. There was currently no need for a waiting list as the majority of eligible properties were owned by one organisation. Each applicant can submit an expression of interest. Monies were not able to roll from one year to the next and the team were keeping to target. £60,000 was, as yet not allocated and the Council had to consider the increase in costs of commitments already made.

The Head of Economic Development clarified the property owner had to apply and not the occupier. People were seeing the value of their property lift.

The Leader of the Council confirmed their attendance at a meeting to discuss collaborative working with the Chamber of Commerce.

**It was proposed, seconded and AGREED that Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- a) **Agreed to receive a copy of the Conservation Area Management Plan for Grantham at a future meeting to consider recommendations made within it.**

#### **47. Arts Service Transitional Funding (Verbal Update)**

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure gave an update on the Arts Service Transitional Funding.

The Officer confirmed the Arts Council National Portfolio funding was due to end in March 2023. Following a meeting with representatives from the Arts Council it was confirmed their ethos on funding had changed and a fresh application had not been successful.

The Council had been encouraged to submit a funding application for transition funding to support the future of the Arts Programme and identify opportunities to attract funding in the future. If the bid for transition funding was successful the equivalent of six months of funding would be received.

For future opportunities South Kesteven District Council had the option of proceeding alone or continuing to work as part of a consortium.

A Member asked if the Council shared a good collaborative relationship with neighbouring local authorities.

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure confirmed there were advantages to a consortium as this approach was well supported by the Arts Council, however there were complications if the Council continued to be the accountable body for funding and the other authorities did not deliver the grant conditions.

#### **48. Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Action Plan six-monthly update**

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report.

A review of the Council's website and social media activity had been undertaken with a view to continuing to support a variety of stakeholders and organisations with their events and to provide residents with physical activity opportunities across South Kesteven. This included a link to the Slow Ways initiative which was discussed at the previous Committee meeting in June 2022.

Physical Activity initiatives for Council employees were implemented in January 2023, starting with the #TeamSK step challenge in which 120 participants enrolled. A range of other activities also commenced such as the Wednesday Walk, which averages eight walkers per week and weekly 'Let's Get Physical' information packs which were distributed to all staff and included diet and wellbeing advice. A week of free fitness classes at Bourne and Grantham took place during January 2023 where 11 Council employees trialled fitness classes to kickstart a new habit. Positive feedback was obtained about the wellbeing initiatives and a total of 288 views were recorded on the digital information packs.

Officers continued to develop strong collaboration with our partner organisations, stakeholders and communities, without them achieving the Council's corporate ambition of Healthy and Strong Communities would not have been possible.

Officers from the Council's Leisure Team had actively been attending:

- Monthly leisure leads meetings with Active Lincolnshire
- Monthly UKActive webinars
- Workshops with Sport England and the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA)
- The Ageing and Physical Activity network meetings, led by The University of Lincoln to stay up to date with the latest trends and remain up to date with the regional and national picture.

In November 2022, Officers attended the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Sports and Leisure Seminar which looked at a range of leisure specific challenges including decarbonisation, ageing facilities and the rise in local authority trading companies managing leisure facilities. The 'Activity Finder' developed by Active Lincolnshire, now boasted an impressive 260 activities or clubs on the website, providing residents in South Kesteven with an online tool to find activities in their local area. In collaboration with Active Lincolnshire and the Council's Housing Team, work began to identify opportunities for physical activity and wellbeing for residents living in sheltered housing and council houses within South Kesteven. As part of a workshop, emphasis was placed on gaining a better understanding of the lives of the residents, the places they live and the connection points for residents within various council services.

Council Officers had been working in partnership with 'We are Undefeatable', which was a campaign consisting of fifteen leading health and social care charities, funded by the National Lottery in conjunction with Sport England. The aim is to support people living with a range of long-term health conditions to move more in a way that works for them. One You Lincolnshire was the county's free health and wellbeing programme designed to help residents to become healthier with a variety of free activities. Support was provided to help individuals make small, sustainable changes to improve their health and wellbeing and live a longer, happier life. In January 2023, the Council supported One You Lincolnshire with the launch of their new programme 'Heart & Sole', using Wyndham Park Visitor Centre as the hub for the launch. A total of 57 residents registered for the 12-week programme targeted to get residents moving who were not completing the desired 150 minutes of physical activity per week.

LeisureSK Ltd benefitted from an increase on registrations for their Exercise on Prescription programme, a 12-week structured physical activity programme following referral by a health care professional and was aimed at those doing less than 150 mins of physical activity a week. There are currently 50 participants on the programme across South Kesteven, with a further 51 on the waiting list.

Since the adoption of the Strategy in December 2021, the latest Active Lives Survey data had been published including data on both adults and young people. The survey results for adults (16 years+) showed that during this period, 54.7% of

adults in South Kesteven were considered active, completing at least 150 minutes of activity a week. 15% were considered fairly active, completing 30-149 minutes of activity per week. However, 30.2% adults were considered inactive, completing less than 30 minutes activity a week. The results demonstrate a 6.8% decline in those considered active from the data available November 2019 – November 2020. The data showed across England 47.2% of children and young people (3.4 million) were meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines of taking part in sport and physical activity for an average of 60 minutes or more every day. Meanwhile, 30.1% (2.2 million) do less than an average of 30 minutes a day. In comparison, the results for South Kesteven for the same period demonstrated 46.4% of children and young people were considered to be active, which is up by 0.9% on the previous year. 25% of children and young people were considered to be fairly active, which is up by 4.8% on the previous year, whilst 28.9% of children and young people were considered to be less active, which represented a reduction of 5.4% compared to the previous year.

Members welcomed the report.

**It was proposed, seconded, and AGREED that the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- a) **Considered the results of the latest Active Lives data available for South Kesteven and agreed to consider the results of future Active Lives survey data as part of the regular six-monthly updates provided.**
- b) **No enhancements were suggested at this time to the extent and clarity of the information produced for the next six-monthly update report.**

#### **49. Performance of LeisureSK Ltd**

LeisureSK Ltd had continued to face operational challenges over recent months especially relating to the increase in costs of materials from suppliers and the significant rise in energy costs. This all aligned with the national picture and challenges facing other leisure providers nationally. The recruitment of suitably qualified staff also continued to be challenging. However, the Board of Directors appointed a new Contract Manager who joined the company in April 2022.

Since joining the company, the Contract Manager, with the support of the Board, had reviewed the company staffing structure to try and mitigate the cost increases without impacting upon the levels of service delivery and customer experience. A comprehensive job evaluation of all roles within the company was finalised in April 2022 with job roles being scored and aligned to a pay grading scale which provided consistency across the company and ensured that pay was competitive with other leisure providers.

The Board of Directors have been keen to ensure the employees of LeisureSK Ltd are being invested in and developed. As part of this, Managers have been enrolled

onto a Management Development Course which has been developed and delivered by The HR Branch over a period of six months. In addition to this, LeisureSK Ltd were working with a national apprenticeship provider, Lifetime Training.

LeisureSK Ltd had upskilled two senior Managers onto the Royal Lifesaving Society's (RLSS) National Pool Supervisor Qualification (NPSQ) tutor programme. This training was planned to be delivered to Duty Manager's and Senior Leisure Assistant's during 2023. LeisureSK Ltd continued to develop their programme of community and outreach activities promoting and increasing their health and wellbeing offering.

Other initiatives introduced within the centres by LeisureSK Ltd included 'Exercise on Prescription' in partnership with One You Lincolnshire across all facilities. This was a 12-week structured physical activity programme following referral by a health care professional aimed at those doing less than 150 mins of physical activity a week.

Partnerships continued to be developed between the Council, LeisureSK Ltd and organisations within the county such as One You Lincolnshire, Active Lincolnshire and Inspire+, local GP surgeries and social prescribers and Shine Lincolnshire.

Following approval at Cabinet in September 2022, Bourne Leisure Centre underwent a £137,000 gym refurbishment programme in November 2022. This included brand new equipment, creation of a dedicated studio space, a separate free weights area, and new gym flooring throughout. This resulted in a small uplift in the monthly membership cost and has contributed to an increase in membership sales within the centre.

In November 2022, the decision was made at Full Council to permanently close the Deepings Leisure Centre and not to proceed with the previously agreed refurbishment plans, to hand the asset back to Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and to also transfer the management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields back to LCC.

The Table Tennis Centre (TTC) at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre continued to be used by the National Health Service (NHS) as a COVID-19 mass vaccination centre until they announced its closure in December 2022. During the operation of the vaccination centre, sports hall bookings were successfully relocated into other parts of the centre.

LeisureSK Ltd successfully launched Meres Lives events, securing the acts directly, and with the Council's Arts Team providing ticketing services. Additional gym equipment was installed at Stamford following on from the refurbishment project at Bourne Leisure Centre, utilising some of the outgoing equipment as a result of member feedback.

Following on from customer feedback a programme review was undertaken in October 2022 which resulted in an increase in opening hours at the start of each

weekday. This allowed for additional public swimming, club swimming sessions and Aquafit classes. Further programming reviews were underway to explore the possibility of extending the hours in the evening to allow for additional group exercise classes and lane swimming.

Overall, there had been a marked improvement in cleanliness at Leisure facilities with a reduced number of customer complaints being received by LeisureSK Ltd or made directly to the Council.

The full building condition surveys, carried out across all the Leisure Centres and Sports Stadium between March 2022 and May 2022, were reviewed by the Council's Leisure and Property Teams and presented to an Internal Property Management Group, with works being prioritised for completion based on the severity and risk identified. Major works have been completed across all centres.

The availability of contractors to carry out maintenance tasks and repairs continued to be an issue, resulting in a small back log. However, the site teams were continuing to work with reliable contractors to resolve this. Additionally, the team at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre recruited an in-house part-time Maintenance Assistant for three days per week which had resulted in a noticeable improvement to maintenance issues at both the Leisure Centre and Sports Stadium.

Members raised the following points during discussion:

- Had attendance figures increased at all remaining swimming pools since the closure of Deepings Leisure Centre?
- It was disappointing that as South Holland had received funding, it was expected that some residents of the Deepings would use their facilities.
- The Hydro and aqua exercise classes were welcomed as different and original and would draw in new custom.
- Bourne Leisure Centre gym had recently been upgraded. Had this had a positive effect on attendance?
- Number of accidents logged at The Meres, Grantham was still high. Why was this?

The Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure informed Members that the closure of Deepings Leisure Centre had caused an upturn in attendance at Bourne and Stamford but not at Grantham due to the travelling distance.

The Officer confirmed that attendance at Bourne Leisure Centre Gym had fallen slightly, however, this was expected in December and January which are generally quieter in attendance. Access was also restricted during the refurbishment of the Gym but had been really well received since opened.

The Meres had a higher amount in footfall compared to the other Leisure Centres so it had been expected that accident numbers would be higher.

**ACTION:**

**Latest attendance figures for the swimming pools across the District were to be circulated to Members of the Committee.**

**It was proposed, seconded, and AGREED that the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- a) Noted the contents of this report and suggested any enhancements to the level of information provided for inclusion in the next six-monthly update.**

**50. Work Programme 2022-2023**

Members noted the Work Programme.

It was confirmed an update on Markets was to be heard at the next Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting and the Sport and Physical Strategy Action Plan was to be heard every six months.

A Member requested an update on the Grantham Museum be scheduled for the meeting in June 2023. This was agreed.

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

There was none.

**52. Close of Meeting**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11:57.