



# Cabinet

11 September 2023

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside,  
Cabinet Member for People and  
Communities

## Refreshed Corporate Values

### Report Author

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### Purpose of Report

To provide Cabinet with an update on the refresh of South Kesteven District Council's corporate values and the activity that has taken place to identify potential new values. The report seeks approval from Cabinet of the proposed new values, as recommended by Employment Committee.

### Recommendations

**That Cabinet approves the new Corporate Values of Trust, Empowerment, Accountability, Making a Difference, Supportive to All and Kindness.**

Decision Information	
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	High performing 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 financial implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles (Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive)

### ***Legal and Governance***

1.2 The suggested values do not conflict with any legal obligations or current decision-making processes. The implementation of new corporate values may require a review and alignment of existing policies and procedures within the Council, e.g., codes of conduct.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

### ***Diversity and Inclusion***

1.3 The suggested values reinforce our commitment to diversity and inclusion by encompassing an inclusive and equitable environment, attracting and retaining diverse talent and building stronger connections with our community.

The process to establish the proposed values has included collaborating across the Council to encourage diverse perspectives and encourage active engagement in the changes.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt, Interim Head of HR

## ***Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing***

- 1.4 Organisational values impact employees' and members' mental health and wellbeing as they set the tone for our culture and help create a unified direction for the workforce of what matters to the Council and our people. The proposed values support a culture of appreciation, psychological safety and self-care. These are all components of mentally healthy work cultures.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt, Interim Head of HR

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1 Proposed corporate values were discussed by Employment Committee on 29 June 2023. The Committee unanimously voted to recommend the proposed values to Cabinet.
- 2.2 Our current corporate values are: Accountability, Flexibility, Agility, Equity, Networking, Always learning and Talent. Feedback from colleagues and members highlighted that many are not aware of what our current values are and did not feel connected to them or feel they are a true reflection of our culture.
- 2.3 SKDC's values should be a fundamental part of our identity. They should be meaningful to our people and lay the foundation for what we care about most. They should be used in our attraction and recruitment so individuals starting with the Council are aligned to our values. They should provide the backbone of policies, strategy and ways of working.
- 2.4 On 24 September 2022, Employment Committee asked for the current values to be revised with feedback from employees and members. The committee asked for all members to be invited to workshops to discuss their views on values.

## **Approach taken to developing the new corporate values**

- 2.5 We took an organisation-wide, employee and member led approach.
- 2.6 To start to develop the conversation about what values would be meaningful, the People Panel held group discussions covering:
  - A quiz on values at other organisations
  - What makes them proud to work for SKDC.
  - What is important to SKDC and what are our strengths as an organisation.
  - What is important to them at work.

2.7 The People Panel is made up of 25 colleagues from departments across the Council who give feedback on lots of topics that affect colleagues at work. The role of the group is to:

- Be a forum to get feedback and involvement on issues of strategic importance and decisions that will affect colleagues.
- Communicate with their teams to get opinions and views from across the Council.
- A forum for employees to raise issues of interest or concern affecting them at work.
- Provide an opportunity for representatives to get more involved in how the Council runs and develop their skills and knowledge.
- Aim to find solutions and collectively work around obstacles.

2.8 From this People Panel discussion, we picked out key themes and created a survey for individuals to vote on which values are most meaningful to them.

2.9 Following the session, the People Panel members took the discussion back to their teams to get input from as many employees as we could. They had a brief which provided positioning on why we are refreshing the values, questions to start a debate with their teams and then the online survey which asks employees to vote on values.

2.10 All Members were invited to attend one of two sessions held earlier this year which followed the same format outlined above and asked Councillors what they thought the corporate values should be.

2.11 A workshop also took place with the Senior Leadership Team in April 2023.

2.12 In total, more than 200 individuals have been involved in providing feedback on Corporate Values and this feedback has been consolidated into the proposed values.

2.13 The proposed values are:

- Trust
- Empowerment
- Accountability
- Making a Difference
- Supportive to All
- Kindness



2.14 Below is a summary of discussions on these proposed values from employees and Members:

### #TeamSK as the acronym

- “They need to be memorable to resonate – having TeamSK as the acronym does this.”
- “TeamSK is itself an important value to us so should be included. It’s about working together and being one team to make a difference to our community.”

#### Trust

- “Trust is an important guiding principle in the Council’s operations and decision-making processes.”
- “Trust needs to be in every relationship – between employees, trust with management, trust between Officers and Members, and our residents trusting us.”
- “Trust is about integrity and ethics. It implies that we are all carrying out our roles with integrity, honesty and transparency. It’s about fostering a culture of honesty and openness.”

#### Empowerment

- “Having Empowerment” as a corporate value means SK is committed to creating an environment where employees are encouraged and supported to take initiative and contribute to the betterment of the community.”
- “This includes skills development, training and continuous learning so people are empowered to excel in their roles.”
- “We have a culture of collaboration and teamwork here but empowerment is encouraging everyone to share ideas, contribute to discussions and work together. Being inclusive is relevant here too – being a Council that values diverse perspectives.”

#### Accountability

- “Accountability is about being transparent in our actions and decisions, and recognising the impact we have.”
- “Providing clear information about the Council’s activities, policies and outcomes to residents. This allows for scrutiny on the Councils’ actions”
- “This implies taking ownership and ensuring that tasks are completed in a timely and effective manner.”

### **Making a Difference**

- “Reflecting that the Council is driven by a purpose to create a positive impact and improve the lives of residents and the community of South Kesteven.”
- “Service excellence.”
- “Addressing the complex challenges we face with innovative solutions.”
- “Setting goals and measuring the impact our initiatives have. This is about working together too – to really make a difference it often requires collaboration and partnerships with local businesses and other organisations.”
- “Committing to sustainability initiatives and reducing environmental impact allowing the Council to actively make a positive difference to the District.”

### **Supportive to All**

- “Putting the residents at the heart of everything we do.”
- “Being an inclusive Council with an inclusive culture that embraces and celebrates diversity.”
- “Having an environment where everyone feels respected, valued and supported.”

### **Kindness**

- “Empathy and understanding of others.”
- “Actively listening to residents and employees to understand their perspectives, needs and concerns.”
- “Treating everyone with respect.”
- “Going the extra mile to help individuals.”
- “Positive and constructive communication.”

## **3. Key Considerations and reasons for recommendation**

- 3.1 The proposed values combine feedback from the employee and member workshops.
- 3.2 A new set of values would form the basis of recruitment, policies and processes as a consistent focus on nurturing the desired culture.

## **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 Other popular options for proposed values included:

At #TeamSK:

- We care
- We're fair
- We make it happen

And:

- We're positive

- We trust
- We make a difference
- #TheTeamSKWay

4.2 The consensus was that the chosen proposed values encompassed SKDC most accurately and the acronym style made the values memorable.

## 5. Consultation

5.1 Over 200 employees and Members have been consulted with in the development of these new values.

The Trade Union have also been involved in giving their perspective and consulted with on the proposed new values.

## 6. Background Papers

6.1 'Refreshed Values' Employment Committee Report, 29.06.23

<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=638&MId=4492&Ver=4>