



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

# Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Report of: The Chairmen of the Overview  
and Scrutiny Committees

# Annual Report 2023-2024

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 During 2023/2024 South Kesteven District Council had five Overview and Scrutiny Committees, each comprising nine members of the Council.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees are responsible for discharging the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the discharge of functions under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, which require councils to put arrangements in place to designate a committee as a crime and disorder scrutiny committee.
- 1.3 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for monitoring the Council's performance, considering its decisions, questioning how those decisions are made and recommending improvements. The committees may also undertake external scrutiny to examine wider issues that affect the District.

## **2. Role of Scrutiny**

- 2.1 There are four key functions of scrutiny:
  - 2.1.1 To provide a "critical friend" challenge to the Cabinet as well as external authorities and agencies
    - Challenge by scrutiny should be constructive, robust and purposeful
    - Scrutiny should work effectively with the Cabinet and senior management
    - Scrutiny should provide an effective mechanism for the Cabinet to demonstrate public accountability
  - 2.1.2 To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
    - Scrutiny should take a community leadership role by focusing on issues of public concern
    - Scrutiny should have a constructive relationship with the press and media
    - Scrutiny should create the conditions for plural views and concerns to be considered
  - 2.1.3 Scrutiny members should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public
    - Scrutiny should operate with political impartiality
    - Scrutiny should have ownership of its work programme
    - Scrutiny members should have a worthwhile and fulfilling role
  - 2.1.4 Scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services
    - Scrutiny should have access to timely and accurate performance information
    - The scrutiny work programme should be balanced, well co-ordinated and integrated into corporate processes
    - Scrutiny work should be carried out with strategic objectives in mind
    - Scrutiny should contribute to improving local public services

### **3. Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Chairman:** Councillor Bridget Ley

**Vice-Chairman:** Councillor Lee Steptoe

- 3.1 The Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 15 January 2024 to consider the budget proposals for 2024/2025.
- 3.2 The Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered revenue and capital budgets associated with the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. It also included fees and charges proposals and information on reserves and balances.
- 3.3 Other considerations included:
- The timetable for the setting of Council Tax and budgets for 2024/2025
  - Ongoing works on major Council projects, such as the Depot
  - Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)
  - Green waste collection
  - An update on funding for LeisureSK Limited
  - Proposed dwelling rent increases
  - Proposed increases for garage rents and service changes
  - The flooding response effort
- 3.4 As part of its recommendations, the Committee expressed its support for the proposals in the Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development's report in respect of the General Fund (both Revenue and Capital) and the Housing Revenue Account (again, Revenue and Capital). The Committee also recommended to Cabinet the proposed Band D 3% increase in Council Tax.

### **4. Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Chairman:** Councillor Paul Fellows

**Vice-Chairman:** Councillor James Denniston

During the 2023/2024 municipal year, the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions, and there were two further Joint Meetings involving its members. Several update reports and reports for information were considered by the Committee. There were a number of performance reports on LeisureSK Limited throughout the year.

A summary of other key items considered by the Committee is set out below:

#### **Grantham Christmas Lights**

- 4.1 The Committee recommended that £30,800 of the District's UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation was utilised to fund one-off infrastructure costs to enhance the festive lighting offer for Grantham. It also recommended that a three-year hire agreement with Gala Lights was implemented in readiness for the Christmas 2023 period.

## **Cultural Strategy**

- 4.2 At the June 2023 meeting of Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee members recommended the Cultural Strategy to Cabinet, underpinning the corporate priority of Healthy and Strong Communities. The Committee requested six-monthly updates on the topic, as well as raising ideas of how the Cultural Strategy could best be communicated to members of the public in the District.
- 4.3 At its meeting in March, the Chairman suggested that all Committee members took part in a tour of the Arts Centres and met colleagues within those settings.

## **Markets**

- 4.4 An update on markets within the District was presented to the September 2023 Committee. The report was welcomed, and Members sought reassurance that the Council was committed to preserving, protecting and enhancing the markets.
- 4.5 Ongoing dialogue with shopkeepers and car parking charges were raised as areas that needed addressing, particularly in Grantham.
- 4.6 The Grantham Charter Trustees, alongside the Town Councils of Bourne and Stamford were tasked with overseeing a consultation regarding the future of markets, with the support of South Kesteven District Council. The Chairman of the Committee wrote to each of these organisations.
- 4.7 Members of the Committee were praised for the way in which they had rallied their local communities into coming forward with ideas to progress markets. It was recommended that further work be carried out in looking at markets through three small 'task and finish groups'.

## **HelloSK App**

- 4.8 Items on the HelloSK app were considered by the Committee as its September 2023 and March 2024 meetings. Members received a history of the app and how it had been developed.
- 4.9 At the September meeting of the Committee members raised areas where they felt the app could be improved or amended to suit the Council's requirements.
- 4.10 The Committee received a further report on the app in March 2024, and they endorsed the recommendation in the report to cease the use of the HelloSK app and look to offset its features by initiating partnership activities with Destination Lincolnshire. Cabinet took the final decision on the cessation of the app's usage at its meeting in May 2024.

## **LeisureSK Limited Management Fee Request**

- 4.11 The Chairman of LeisureSK Limited presented reports at November and January's Committees requesting a management fee from the District Council to secure the ongoing provision of leisure across the District. The report detailed the restructure and the

significant changes in key income costs that were increasing (fitness, swimming, staffing and utilities).

- 4.12 Concern that the Council was using taxpayers' money to bring the company up to operating standards was raised, along with reference to subsidies, grants and loans – it was confirmed to the Committee that the company was a subsidiary of the Council and was 100% owned by the Council.
- 4.13 Members held discussions and asked questions related to VAT returns, EPC certification and staffing costs and vacancies.
- 4.14 Members of the Committee subsequently recommended to the Governance and Audit Committee that there be a vote of no confidence in the Board of LeisureSK Limited.

### **Council Funded Arts Venues**

- 4.15 Members considered an update on how the arts services had recovered from the impact of the pandemic. Although the behaviour of cultural audiences had changed, it was pleasing to see how the Council's venues had responded. The programmes on offer currently were returning to pre-pandemic levels. As detailed within the report, the Council's arts service was not only centred on the venues themselves, but it also included outreach activity and the provision of high-quality performances within rural areas.
- 4.16 It was suggested the Committee receive a tour of all Council-operated arts venues in the District. One Member informed the Committee of the Deepings short film festival. It was suggested other arts venues may consider the provision of showcasing short films with the assistance from local authorities.
- 4.17 An update on the replacement boiler in the Guildhall arts centre was requested and members wondered whether it would impact ticketed performances.
- 4.18 The Committee decided to support an application to Arts Council England for a project grant to undertake an audience development project.

### **Discover South Kesteven and the Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy**

- 4.19 Members received information on how the Council's Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer collaborated with partners, stakeholders and businesses at a national, regional and local level. They also received an overview of website visits during January 2024.
- 4.20 Committee members fed their comments into the Strategy, which included whether the Council required the use of consultancy services, links with London, and links to Lincolnshire coast authorities to encourage the increase of footfall within South Kesteven.

## 5. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Chairman:** Councillor Ian Selby

**Vice-Chairman:** Councillor Emma Baker

During the 2023/2024 municipal year, the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions, and there were two further Joint Meetings involving its members. During the year, the Committee was visited by the Lincolnshire Environmental Crime Partnership, and the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership, as well as members of the public. A number of update reports and reports for information were considered by the Committee; a summary of the items considered by the Committee is set out below:

### Collection of Paper and Card

5.1 The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which outlined the adoption of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Lincolnshire. The Strategy set out how the seven Lincolnshire District Councils would work together with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) as members of the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership. The Council introduced wheeled bins for the separate kerbside collection of residual waste and mixed dry recyclable (MDR) materials in 2007. All target MDR was currently collected in one silver bin or clear sack which is then sorted at a materials recycling facility.

5.2 Concerns raised by the Committee included:

- residents living in flats, terraced houses and houses with small gardens
- the accommodation of food waste bins in the future
- whether the collection of paper and card would be mandatory, and what education would be available for residents so that they could recycle more efficiently?
- could smaller recycling bins be an option?
- the carbon footprint of the manufacturing of the new purple lidded bins.

### Upgrading Street Lights to LED

5.3 The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste outlined options for the provision of LED street lighting at two meetings during the year. The Council was responsible for 3,893 streetlamps. The Council was not responsible for streetlights on main roads such as the A1 and other highways. It was noted that the options presented in the report demonstrated a positive payback of approximately five years.

5.4 Questions and comments raised by the Committee included:

- the available funding for the upgrade and whether the Climate Change Reserve could be utilised
- more information was needed on the dimming and hours of operation of the lights
- further consultation with Town and Parish Councils was suggested
- costs of public consultation
- safety implications for pedestrians
- clarification on the ownership of street lighting between Lincolnshire County Council and South Kesteven District Council
- concerns over switching off lighting in some rural areas and remote footpaths
- the colour of the lighting and its effects on wildlife

## **A1 Litter issues**

- 5.5 The Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection provided the Committee with an update on the litter issues on the A1 and principles around background work on the matter at two Committee meetings during the year. The District Council was responsible for litter picking on trunk roads, which included the A1. National Highways were responsible for litter picking on motorways and special trunk roads and had the overarching responsibility for the use of the A1 road and its maintenance.
- 5.6 Questions and comments raised by the Committee included:
- could specialist companies be approached to litter pick given that the A1 was an incredibly busy road?
  - a bad impression may be given to motorists passing through the District if there was a perceived drop in cleanliness of the road – could CCTV assist with catching perpetrators?
  - officers should undertake work in liaison with National Highways and provide a business case on costs and options
  - issues were hidden by vegetation on the side of the road
  - lessons learned by other authorities
  - consideration needed to be given to the financial implications of the works, particularly if any issues on the road were to return shortly after any cleaning
- 5.7 Members requested the Leader to lobby National Highways on behalf of the Council to enable possible funding opportunities.
- 5.8 When the report returned to Committee in December 2023 three options had been explored by officers as a result of the initial discussions involving members, and these were volunteer-based litter picking, a contracted service, or collaboration with National Highways.
- 5.9 Agreement was reached to work together as Councillors to identify the worst-hit areas on the A1 so that feasibility studies could be worked out and reported back to Committee.

## **Climate Action Strategy**

- 5.10 On 14 March 2023, the first Climate Action Strategy document had been presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee recommended that the Strategy go out for consultation to gauge public opinion, and for a revised Strategy to be brought back to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.11 The consultation was open for just over four weeks from 10 July. As well as residents of South Kesteven, specific stakeholder groups identified included District Councillors for South Kesteven, Town and Parish Councils, and voluntary and community groups with an environmental focus.

- 5.12 Questions and comments raised by the Committee included:
- The results of the consultation should be integrated within planning policies and the Corporate Plan.
  - The issue of Climate Change should not be party political.
  - Consideration needed to be given to local businesses.
  - Could the Council promote the Climate Action Strategy in the local press?
- 5.13 The Committee recommended the revised South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy to Cabinet whilst undertaking with the wider community to inform the development of the Climate Action Plan.

### **Recycling of Batteries**

- 5.14 Officers had been tasked to look at a number of options in respect of safe battery recycling which also included reviewing the scheme of another local authority who were collecting directly from the householder.
- 5.15 Members discussed the practicalities of any scheme, and how the Council's current recycling fleet would be best equipped to collect batteries from households. During discussion, members raised issues with residents supplying bags, the promotion of any scheme, whether vapes would be included, and whether there was value in collecting old mobile phones.
- 5.16 Members decided to recommend a kerbside collection, with residents providing their own bags as the most cost efficient and sustainable method.

### **Contaminated Land Strategy**

- 5.17 The Strategy was last updated in 2010 following legislative and guidance updates. The revisions of the Strategy were a light touch refresh to reflect the current position across the District and ensure that legislation, addresses, and other details were current. There have not been any significant or major changes to legislation leading to a material change in the Council's approach.
- 5.18 Members of the Committee asked questions related to the inclusion of animal health within the Strategy. They also identified that the Planning process was closely related to considerations involving contaminated land and highlighted the reporting process for reporting contaminated land.
- 5.19 Members recommended that the updated Contaminated Land Strategy be subject to a four-week consultation, and further recommended that the Strategy be approved by Cabinet following any changes as a result of this consultation.

### **Tree and Woodland Strategy**

- 5.20 The Council had identified the need to take further action with regards to enhancing and protecting the trees of the whole District, as well as those directly managed by the Council.
- 5.21 Following recommendations from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee a new Tree Officer post had been established for the 2024/25 financial year, in order to

deliver on the Council's work on trees on land within the ownership of South Kesteven District Council as well as to deliver on the actions of the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy.

- 5.22 Members discussed the draft Tree and Woodland Strategy with comments being made in respect of the amount of land that was available to plant trees having regard to clean energy and the use of solar panels, agriculture and the demand for housing. Comments were made that green spaces were disappearing rapidly, with questions raised as to whether the new strategy linked with the new Local Plan being compiled.
- 5.23 The Committee recommended the new South Kesteven District Council Trees and Woodlands Strategy 2024-2034 to Cabinet for approval.

## **6. Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Chairman:** Councillor Mark Whittington (May 2023-November 2023), Councillor Bridget Ley (from January 2024)

**Vice-Chairman:** Councillor Bridget Ley (to November 2023), Councillor Lee Steptoe (from January 2024)

During the 2023/2024 municipal year, the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on seven occasions, and there were three further Joint Meetings involving its members. The Committee as part of its remit considered a number of Financial Update and Budget Monitoring reports.

Whilst there were in-year changes of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Committee had settled into cross-party working. Members from outside of the Committee had raised items with the Chairman outside of formal meetings which had then been included on future agendas.

A summary of the items considered by the Committee is set out below:

### **Provisional Outturn Report**

- 6.1 This report focused on the more significant variances, a financial threshold of £20k had been followed in order to focus on those variances that were considered material. An overview of the provisional outturn was presented in the main report and there were a number of supporting appendices that provided greater detail in respect of the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.
- 6.2 During discussion, Members raised the following points:
- Were all our investments low risk and actively managed?
  - With interest rates increasing, there was a positive result from holding funds in reserve.
  - It was important to know what the priorities were in reference to Climate issues so the funding for the Climate Reserve could be focussed accordingly. The Climate Action Strategy remained at a consultation stage so further oversight and scrutiny was required.

- It was understood that the Draft Climate Change Strategy was almost at public consultation stage and decisions would, in turn, be made at Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- What was the potential impact in the delay in signing off the 2021/2022 accounts on current balances?

6.3 The Committee recommended to Cabinet and the Governance and Audit Committee a number of balances to be carried forwards.

### **Localised Council Tax Support Scheme - Veterans**

6.4 Consultation on the Scheme had been undertaken in the past using various methods. The Council had written to everyone in receipt of Council Tax support, giving them a link on the website or the opportunity to complete a form if they were unable to access the internet. Last year it was recognised that the response rate of applications received was quite low, so the Council undertook a social media consultation. The requirement of the consultation was set in legislation and required the Council to advise what the current scheme was and to provide details of any proposals. This was required to be set by 31 January of each year.

6.5 During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- As the scheme was successful previously, a Member suggested there should perhaps be no changes.
- A Member suggested that veterans additionally be considered for the council tax discount scheme.
- Were Blue Light Services to be included within the discount scheme?
- The distinction was discussed regarding unpaid volunteers protecting the community and those who provided general volunteering services past.
- There was some support for the move from a 10% discount to a 100% premium on second homes.

6.6 The Committee agreed at its July meeting to extend the consultation of the Scheme to veterans, and officers modelled the financial impact of any scheme. Public consultation began in September 2023 and ran to October 2023; it was held with major precepting authorities, stakeholders and residents.

6.7 At the Committee's meeting in November 2023, members raised a number of further points related to any Scheme for Veterans, such as benchmarking, thoughts from the local community, the Armed Forces Covenant, and other groups that the Scheme could potentially be extended to (Emergency Services). At the conclusion of the item Members agreed to explore the feasibility of providing Council Tax relief exclusively to employed veterans residing in Band A properties, considering relief rates of 5 and 10%.

### **Review of Car Parking Charges – Grantham and Stamford and Car Parking Utilisation and Capacity Study**

6.8 A review was undertaken to look at existing car parking stay bands and charges in the District and to benchmark these against other neighbouring local authorities of similar demographics; a report on this was considered by Committee in September 2023, followed by a set of draft tariffs in November 2023.

- 6.9 Members raised the following points during discussion:
- The Chairman acknowledged the complex process working out the different income levels and the varied needs for parking
  - How much was the survey likely to cost?
  - Bourne and the Deepings didn't have the High Streets that Grantham or Stamford had and charging for parking in those towns would deter custom from the centre of towns. Commuters need to be considered to prevent mass parking in residential streets.
  - Could District-wide season tickets be considered for residents parking?
  - How much was budgeted for the review?
  - The use of apps as that would exclude some residents
  - It was essential that residents were updated with the plans and thanked for their input.
  - The hour free parking in Grantham would reduce a lot of parking in town-centre streets which was welcomed. Lower prices for parking will encourage people to stay longer with the town centre – a necessity for local businesses.
  - It was important to encourage families into Grantham for shopping purposes
- 6.10 Draft car parking tariffs were presented to the Committee at its November 2023 meeting. The report brought forward a number of tariff options, and changes proposed as a result of analysis. After having considered the report, the Committee made recommendations to Cabinet on the preferred charging structure.
- 6.11 Members considered the results of the Car Parking Utilisation and Capacity Study and commented on issues related to timings of the survey, the different needs to the four main towns, accessibility and motorcycle spaces, the Council's income, and futureproofing. The Committee requested further work to be undertaken with respect to future car parking arrangements, as well as supporting the extension of the Cattle Market car park in Stamford.

### **Turnpike Depot Project**

- 6.12 Full Council approved the replacement Depot Project in order to provide a new facility at Turnpike Close, Grantham. At its meeting in November 2023 Committee members were given the opportunity to further scrutinise the progression of the project to ensure there was satisfactory governance in place.
- 6.13 The Committee requested that the working group set up to support the project include a formal Cabinet Member presence, as observers.
- 6.14 Updates in respect of the project were tabled through the 2023-2024 year, and there would be regular updates on the project into 2024-2025.

### **St. Martin's Park, Stamford**

- 6.15 In January 2024, the Committee received a report containing options for the next phase of the project at St. Martin's Park. The report was seeking a way forward, through a recommendation to Full Council.

- 6.16 During the meeting the Committee fully explored all options available to the Council, before recommending an option for all members to discuss at Full Council in February 2024.
- 6.17 Members would continue to receive updates on this largescale project into 2024-2025.

### **Economic Development Strategy**

- 6.18 At its meetings in February and May 2024 the Committee received updates on the work undertaken to update the Economic Development Strategy. A Cabinet Member workshop had been created and all members of the Committee had been invited to take part and contribute.
- 6.19 Members welcomed the updates, and highlighted areas within the document of note, such as aspirations for future development, the timing of the publication of the final document, and specific projects that would play a part in the District's economic growth.

## **7. Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Chairman:** Councillor Virginia Moran

**Vice-Chairman:** Councillor Lee Steptoe

During the 2023/2024 municipal year, the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions. A summary of the items considered by the Committee is set out below:

- 7.1 A number of policies were considered by the Committee, with many being recommended to Cabinet for adoption. The policies included:

- Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- HRA Disposal and Acquisitions Policy
- Total Housing Compliance Policy
- Private Sector Housing Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Estate Management Policy
- Total Housing Compliance Policy
- Housing Allocations Policy

### **Choice Based Letting System**

- 7.2 The Committee reviewed updates regarding the implementation of the Choice Based Letting System in year. The new system allows applicants to play an active and engaged role in the allocations process, giving them the chance to bid for a property that suits them. They can access their account online, track their existing bids, see where they are placed on property shortlists and be notified if/when an offer is made. It gives applicants a realistic view of the likelihood of having a successful bid allowing them to make informed choices of the properties they would consider.

## **Voids**

- 7.3 Committee reviewed data related to Voids. Completion of over 380 void properties was considered at the Committee in March.

## **New build properties**

- 7.4 22 properties had been purchased which included 21 properties funded from the Local Authority Housing Fund. Nine Properties were in the process of being purchased which included eight properties funded from the Local Authority Housing Fund.
- 7.5 New build schemes had commenced at Swinegate, Grantham and Elizabeth Road, Stamford which would deliver 24 properties.
- 7.6 Planning permission had been granted for a 21-unit scheme at Larch Close, Grantham. There was also approval to purchase 36 units in Corby Glen between March 2025 and June 2028.
- 7.7 In previous years, the number of new builds was as follows:  
2018/19 – 4 units  
2019/20 – 13 units  
2020/21 – 15 units  
2021/22 – 9 units  
2022/23 – 6 units
- Total – 47 units
- 7.8 The following inspections, assessments and updates were also considered by the Committee over the course of the year:
- 259 Asbestos inspections / re inspections - these are legally required annual inspections.
  - 147 Fire risk assessments (FRA) – these are blocks/schemes with communal areas and this is a legal requirement.
  - 147 Fire prioritisation tool reports on the blocks - the tool assigns a priority rating to buildings based on a series of questions about the structure, external walls, and flat entrance doors – (Best Practice).
  - 147 compartmentation surveys for Fire safety – this is in addition to the FRA and is far more substantial than anything previously undertaken by the Council in terms of the extent to which it examines the building fire safety.
  - The results from the above are directing the compartmentation program which is now underway with the first 15 schemes due to complete later this year.
  - LOLER (lift inspection) – 26 inspections – each lift receives 2 inspections a year.

## **8. Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Chairman:** Councillor Nikki Manterfield

**Vice-Chairman:** Councillor Steven Cunnington

During the 2023/2024 municipal year, the Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions, and there was also one further Joint Meeting involving its members. A key highlight from the year was the great work in achieving improved safeguarding training figures.

The Committee received a number of standing updates throughout the year on topics such as Customer Services, the SK Community Fund, Cost of Living, Changing Places and Safeguarding.

A summary of other items considered by the Committee is set out below.

### **Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs)**

- 8.1 The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning presented the report which provided an overview of the current end to end time for the delivery of disabled facility grants (DFG) to residents of the District, in comparison to the previous year. The Council were given £975,000 per year of Government funding from the 'Better Care Fund.' This fund was utilised to make agreed adaptations in homes in the private sector to assist people in having the best quality of life whilst remaining in their own homes.
- 8.2 Members highlighted the following issues within the report prior to noting it:
- Occupational health assessments were undertaken by Lincolnshire County Council. The delays in assessments had been overcome on their side as their waiting lists had reduced. The assessments were crucial to ensure the right adaptations are put into place.
  - the delivery time for DFGs
  - the majority of properties were surveyed depending on the adaptations required.

### **Community Engagement Strategy**

- 8.3 A public consultation held via the Council's website and direct opportunities were offered to the voluntary and community sector organisations within South Kesteven to comment on the proposed content of the Strategy. The response to the consultation was higher from residents than it was from community groups, with general agreement of what was proposed. It was clarified that the strategy would be amended to reflect the new Corporate Plan and the plan would become a living document and could be developed over time.
- 8.4 Members contributed to the formation of the Strategy and suggested that actions related to Armed Forces and engagement with local communities be added.
- 8.5 The Committee then recommended the Strategy to Cabinet.

### **Crime and Disorder**

- 8.6 At its meeting in March the Committee held a joint presentation including Lincolnshire Police. The key officers within the Crime Disorder and Local Partnership and their roles were confirmed along with the multi-agency approach which was to consist of joint patrols and visits and a shared system of case management. CCTV played a crucial role in the partnership, particularly working to avoid criminal activity.
- 8.7 Inspector Mark Hillson provided an overview of the crime data from the last year, confirming that shoplifting had seen the most significant increase. The Committee was also informed that crime was reducing overall although business crime had seen a

national increase. Lincolnshire Police had been working with partners to target prolific offenders and support crime prevention.

- 8.8 Members raised issues during discussion on the subject of Community Protection Notice; the numbers of Policemen on patrol at any point; the rise in drug trafficking and possession of weapons; CCTV relocation, and rural communities.

### **Safeguarding**

- 8.9 The Cabinet Member for People and Communities presented the report that provided an update on the progress of the review and the updated Safeguarding Policy 2024 – 2027.
- 8.10 A multi-agency approach was essential in assisting transient families.
- 8.11 Working Together to Safeguard Children was statutory guidance updated in December 2023 – it was last updated in 2018. Many of the changes to Working Together related to partner organisations such as Lincolnshire County Council – Social Care, Care Leavers, Child protections etc and Health including changes around procedures relating to child death, for example.
- 8.12 The importance of multi-agency working was highlighted to ensure successful outcomes for children and young people. This would relate to cases of early help through to child protection.
- 8.13 It was confirmed that there were 63 relevant officers across Housing, Public Protection and Revenues and Benefits. The percentage of relevant, or ‘community facing’ officers at that time who had completed or who were undergoing year 1 training stood at 84%.

## **9 Joint Committees**

- 9.1 There were three Joint Scrutiny meetings held in year:
- **Joint Meeting of the Finance & Economic and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (25 July 2023).** This was an extraordinary meeting on the subject of the replacement depot project at Turnpike Close. The Committee recommended to Cabinet that an allocation of £8m be included in the General Fund Capital Programme to enable the construction of the new Depot. It also recommended to Cabinet a review of the contingency calculation.
  - **Joint Meeting of the Finance & Economic and Culture & Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9 January 2024).** This was an extraordinary meeting on the subject of proposed funding for the Deepings Leisure Centre Community Interest Company. The Committee recommended that Full Council provide one-off funding to the sum of £850,000 based on conditions provided within the report.
  - **Joint Meeting of the Environment and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (18 March 2024).** This was an extraordinary meeting looking at the response of the Council to flooding in the District. The Committee recommended to Cabinet that a fund be made available for direct costs in relation to any emergency, and also asked for a report to be added to the workplan of

Environment Overview and Scrutiny investigating options available to combat flooding.