

A blueprint for South Kesteven's economy

# **Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan**

2024 - 2028



# Foreword

South Kesteven needs to decide which path it takes regarding economic sustainability to impact not only the present generation but also those that follow. This requires a strategic approach in which present policy and economic activity are made more resilient to future uncertainty.

Residents, businesses, community groups, Government, Town and Parish Councils, and education and skills providers have a vital role to play in shaping tomorrow's world, creating the platform for a sustainable future.

Growing public concern has resulted in a tightening of regulations in areas such as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, closed-loop recycling and gender inequality. Whilst no one can predict the future, it is possible to picture what South Kesteven will look like in the next four years.

For South Kesteven District Council, sustainability is gaining a place high on the Corporate Plan agenda. It is all about thinking ahead. Anticipating change and preparing for it well in advance, to ensure South Kesteven keeps its well-preserved architecture, heritage, accessibility of open spaces and sense of community. Shaping a future that is liveable, equitable and environmentally secure.

The next four years will bring new opportunities, yet there will be challenges. In navigating the uncertain terrain that lies ahead it is essential the ambitions for the South Kesteven economy are followed through.

The Corporate Plan (2024 to 2028) details the core focus of the work of the Council, setting out what the authority wants to achieve. In recognising the importance of 'enabling economic opportunity', the Council will work to enable and support a dynamic, resilient, and growing local economy, which benefits all our communities.

This means supporting towns to be places of pride, ensuring residents have the skills needed to secure quality job opportunities in businesses of all sizes and sectors, and helping young people to access career pathways across a diverse range of industries. In practice, this will see the Council collaborating with a variety of organisations to provide a structured approach to investment, supporting business growth and unlocking development opportunities.

The Council takes its role as a key enabler seriously. However, the Council cannot shape the future of South Kesteven alone. Listening better, sharing and harnessing the knowledge, expertise and passion of individuals, communities and academia will be at the heart of a new transparent and open relationship between the Council, residents and businesses.

This means taking time to engage the local voluntary and community sector, coupled with extensive community, business, industry and academia engagement to learn from and engage in everything - from policy development to service delivery.

External resources will be harnessed to ensure the Council is making use of national programmes, research, grant funding and sharing learning with neighbouring areas.

This strategy sets out a series of commitments being made by the Council about how it will work differently in the future. The best is yet to come. Please read on to find out how the Council is going to help South Kesteven build, renew and reinvent our great District.



**Councillor Ashley Baxter, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development**

# Executive Summary

This Economic Development Strategy sets out the Council's vision and ambition for the future growth and development of South Kesteven's economy.

Embracing a strategic approach to enabling local growth represents the golden thread running through the Council's Corporate Plan, Local Plan and relevant service areas.

A great deal has changed since the Council adopted its previous Economic Development Strategy in 2016. The Council now needs to reposition its approach to growth to take advantage of changing economic circumstances. This will ensure the District is in the best possible position to capture and realise economic growth, prosperity and productivity improvements over the course of the coming months and years to 2028.

Whilst things used to evolve more slowly, now how people live, work and access places is changing at speed. Communities (people and businesses) must constantly look forward and evolve or run the risk of getting left behind. All the indicators are that the pace of change is only going to increase.

The economy of South Kesteven will be dynamic, providing economic growth, wealth creation and employment opportunities for a growing population from 2024 to 2028. This growing population will have the opportunity to upskill to meet the changing economic circumstances throughout this period and experience a quality of life in excess of that which is available in most of the UK.

South Kesteven will have a reputation as an area which embraces development and investment and is seen as a destination of choice for businesses across many sectors.

As a strategic leader, influencer and procurer of goods, South Kesteven District Council must set the tone for employees, residents and businesses to embrace change, instead of fearing it.

This is why this strategy has been created to articulate the future and how the ambitions are going to be delivered.

This strategy focuses on five areas where it is believed the Council is likely to have greatest influence to overcome key challenges to economic prosperity and set a path to achieving the vision for South Kesteven in 2028, as follows:

- 1) Business, job creation and employment safeguarding**
- 2) Skills development**
- 3) Inclusive growth and regeneration**
- 4) Inward investment**
- 5) Enhancing South Kesteven's tourism and visitor economy offer**

This strategy is best seen as a living, dynamic document which requires the Council to build a comprehensive system ensuring all partners and stakeholders across the District are making decisions that support it.

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# 01 Location

South Kesteven is strategically well-placed between London and York on the Great North Road (now better known as the A1), with excellent links to other arterial routes. The multi-million pound investment in the Grantham Southern Relief Road is due for completion in 2025.

South Kesteven rivals many areas with a comfortable commuting time of just over a one-hour train ride to London, giving commuters access to a well-managed and efficient East Coast train line.

## A snapshot of South Kesteven

South Kesteven's population is projected to grow from the current **143,400 to 155,821 in 2043**

Unemployment levels are low at **2.3%**

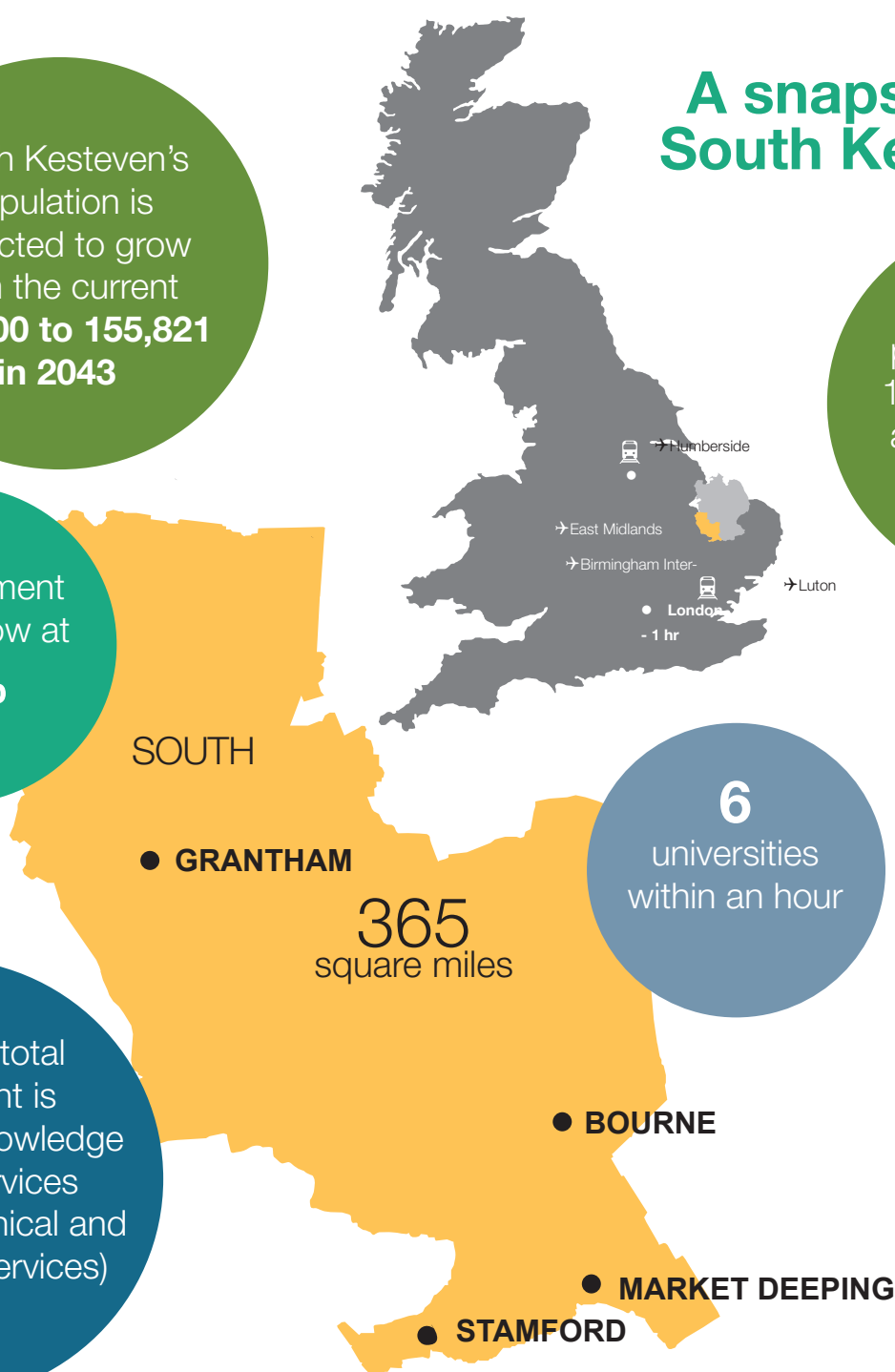
**81.8%** of the population (aged 16-64) possesses at least a Level 2 qualification

**11.1%** of the District's employment is home to many world leading manufacturers

**6** universities within an hour

**16,125** new homes by 2036

**13%** of total employment is provided by knowledge intensive services (scientific, technical and professional services)





# 02 The Local Economy

South Kesteven benefits from inherent economic strengths, whilst also facing some key constraints to growth.

## Summary SWOT analysis

The analysis of recent economic trends within South Kesteven identifies a patchwork of varied economic characteristics and performance, with significant scope to boost the District's contribution to Lincolnshire's wider growth over the coming years.

The population is projected to reach 152,458 by 2036. This growth is driven by newcomers moving into the District from other parts of the country.

The value of South Kesteven's economy in 2021 was £2.835 billion, Gross Value Added (GVA), this is the highest in Lincolnshire. Despite this, in 2020, South Kesteven's productivity was £43,825.77 per job. This is £14,228 less output per role than the national figures.

South Kesteven's productivity was 22.9% lower than the UK average in 2020. All seven Lincolnshire authorities have below average productivity with South Kesteven ranking fifth.

There is a need to tackle all drivers of Productivity Land, Labour, Capital and Enterprise to effectively grow, retain capture high value growth opportunities and job growth in the future.

This Economic Development Strategy has been informed by a refreshed evidence base which establishes the economic baseline for South Kesteven in terms of current economic performance and recent trends.

**Key findings from this are summarised in the 'South Kesteven District Council State of the District report 2023' (See Appendices).**

## Strengths

- High living standards
- Skills profile
- Local economy
- Resilient visitor economy
- Regional Connectivity

## Weaknesses

- Productivity
- Economic inactivity
- Resident vs workplace earnings disparity
- Local transport connectivity

## Opportunities

- The green transition – economic opportunities
- Business base
- Regeneration opportunities
- Pace of population growth

## Threats

- Challenging economic outlook
- Economic underperformance and deepening inequality
- National energy security and supply resilience
- Outmigration of young people

## 02 the local economy

The District is ranked amongst the top **20%** of districts in England for life satisfaction

The median age of the District is **46**

The life expectancy is **80.6** the highest in Lincolnshire

The District is the **2nd** healthiest in Lincolnshire

**12%** of households experience fuel poverty

**81.8%** of the 16-64 population possess at least NVQ2+ qualifications.  
41.1% possess NVQ4+ qualifications

**12.3%** of under 16 year olds experience relative child poverty

Gross disposable household income per head is **£21,467** – the highest in Lincolnshire

Median annual gross earnings are **£31,914**

The local economy is worth **£2.722 billion**

The District's total territorial CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in 2020 were **948kt CO<sub>2</sub>e**  
This equates to 6.6 tonnes per capita

The median house price is **9.78** times the median annual full time salary

**69%** of households own their own home

The crime rate is the second lowest in Lincolnshire at **61.16** recorded offences per 1,000 residents

South Kesteven is ranked amongst the **40%** least deprived districts in England

**13%** of jobs are in knowledge intensive services

There are **6265** businesses in the District, 43 per 1,000 residents

The 2021 census estimated the population of the District to stand at **143,400**

The population is projected to reach 155,821 by 2043

SOUTH KESTEVEN

● GRANTHAM

365 square miles

● BOURNE

● MARKET DEEPING

● STAMFORD

# 03 South Kesteven An Economic Vision

This Economic Development Strategy is guided by an overarching vision for South Kesteven's economy in 2028 to articulate its economic potential and growth opportunities. Our vision for the area is that:

**South Kesteven has a thriving, innovative and diverse economy and is recognised as a great place to live, visit, invest and do business.**

**The District's economy is growing strongly, through the retention, growth and attraction of increasingly based upon knowledge-intensive services, generating high quality jobs, with productivity levels above the regional median and wages above the national average.**

This new economic vision responds to identified weaknesses and challenges to growth such as relatively low workforce productivity, pockets of economic inactivity and earning disparity amongst some communities in South Kesteven.

The vision builds upon existing strengths and unique assets where the District already has competitive advantage and where there is significant scope to use these assets to drive prosperity amongst South Kesteven's residents and businesses in the future.

The ambition is to optimise the area's economic credentials to lead the way within a competitive environment, secure the infrastructure investment needed to realise South Kesteven's potential and deliver a step change in economic performance and prosperity. The aim is to reach and benefit all parts of the community in a genuinely inclusive and sustainable way, so that no one is left behind.

Reflecting the enabling economic growth golden thread running through all aspects of Council activity and service delivery, the overall economic ambition complements the five priorities set out in the South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan which are for the authority to:

- Continue to engage with all communities to support a thriving society that all our residents are proud to be a part of
- Meet the challenge of climate change with a renewed energy, championing our District to be a clean, green and healthy environment for future generations
- Support business and work with partners across all sectors to create the right conditions to support a dynamic, resilient and growing local economy, which fulfils the potential of the District and benefits all our communities
- Ensure all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations
- Deliver the trusted, high quality and value-for-money services our residents expect and deserve

The Economic Development Strategy focuses on five areas where it is believed the Council is likely to have greatest influence to overcome key challenges to economic prosperity and set a path to achieving the vision for South Kesteven in 2028, as follows:

- Business, job creation and employment safeguarding
- Skills development
- Inclusive growth and regeneration
- Inward investment
- Enhancing South Kesteven's tourism and visitor economy offer



# Area of strategic focus 1: Business and Job Creation and Employment Safeguarding

## What we have achieved

### Created the Local Economic Forum

In July 2023, the Council brought together local stakeholders from across the District to provide advice and guidance on the strategic fit and deliverability of the South Kesteven UKSPF and REPF Investment Plan and to help guide decision-making and act as a key consultative body on future strategies, initiatives and funding programmes delivered by the Council.

### Engaged with the Greater Lincolnshire Defence and Security Network (GLDSN)

The GLDSN brings together national and international defence organisations, manufacturing, research, development and innovation expertise. The Council joined the network that was designed to provide a single forum to overcome sector challenges and identify business opportunities in Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland.

### Entrepreneurial, start-up and Business support, advice and guidance

Drawing upon UKSPF funding, Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub was commissioned to provide a range of digitised self-help tools and support delivered online, an engaging workshop and events programme and a specialist start-up support programme. Advisers provide impartial information, diagnostic and brokerage services to businesses of all sizes and sectors, linking to other relevant local and national

support options, including specialist services for developing detailed actions plans for growth.

### Exhibited at conferences and trade shows

Throughout the year, exhibiting at events across the District and Lincolnshire was a good way of raising the Council's profile, generating awareness of the support available to businesses and gain real-time feedback.

Greater Lincolnshire UK  
**The Defence & Security Sector  
Investment Opportunity**



# Area of strategic focus 1:

## Business and Job Creation and Employment Safeguarding

### What we will do

#### Introduce a business newsletter, webinars and podcasts

- Produce a business e-newsletter to provide access to information and updates tailored specifically for entrepreneurs and businesspeople. The news will include industry trends, upcoming networking events, marketing strategies and important announcements directly impacting business success.
- Procure a customer relationship management (CRM) system.
- Partner with experts and specialists to create a collection of business support webinars and podcasts. These will be designed to offer advice and tips to business owners on how to expand the reach of their businesses, build personal resilience and provide insights into funding and procurement opportunities.

#### Continue to distribute UK Shared Prosperity Fund

- Open further rounds of funding inviting community groups, businesses, voluntary and public sector organisations from anywhere in the District to apply for support covering a broad range of initiatives, for example:
  - Creating and improving green spaces
  - Supporting local arts, cultural heritage and creative activities
  - Boosting local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues
  - Supporting businesses to grow
  - Diversification of farm businesses

#### Use the Local Economic Forum effectively

- Actively engage with the Local Economic Forum, share information, build community and allow easy sharing of resources and ideas. Draw upon expertise to shape the work of the Council's approach to economic development beyond current funding streams.
- Evolve the Local Business sub-groups of the Local Economic Forum to optimise UKSPF and other funds and to provide interventions which support local businesses to thrive, innovate and grow. This includes collaborating (where appropriate) with other places and may involve segmenting the South Kesteven business population to focus on specific interventions to best meet local business need.
- Supplement engagement with the Local Economic Forum and sub-groups by continuing to work closely with business representatives, Town/Parish Councils and the Third Sector across the District to ensure a strong and consultative voice on all economic development issues.

#### Help to access financial support

- In collaboration with the Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub and other business support practitioners, assist organisations to find and apply for growth programmes to help businesses start, succeed and grow.

#### Sector support

- Present new programmes of sector support, coordinated and delivered by partners to promote fair access to careers across specific industries and to help identify partners and suppliers for programmes and projects.
- This includes introducing businesses and innovators to networking opportunities, such as (but not limited to) the Greater Lincolnshire Defence and Security Network, with a view to accessing defence-related supply chains, and to draw on Government funding to develop ideas, innovations and new products.



## Invest in clean growth

- Tackle the challenge of protecting South Kesteven's economic and natural assets from climate change. Work in partnership with stakeholders to deliver projects meeting this challenge to mitigate the constraints imposed on the economy by climate change and reduce costs and maximise opportunities in the transition to net zero.

## Social Value in procurement

- Capitalise on local development projects as opportunities for skills development and training and making sure what the Council buys, creates additional benefits for society.

## Develop a small business agreement

- Draw up a statement of principles to encourage effective trade between the District Council and small and medium sized businesses. Publish on our website guidance for suppliers on how to do business with council and details of forthcoming bidding opportunities.

## Host and support Meet the Buyer events

- Provide the opportunity for suppliers to introduce themselves to public sector buyers and private sector primary contractors to learn about new projects, contracts framework and supply chain opportunities.

## Support start-up and step-up businesses

- Identify suitable sites and premises to enable people to start and grow their businesses. Provide good quality advice and access to finance and learning when appropriate. Support the education and skills system in ensuring people recognise starting their own business as a viable career option and equipping them with the skills needed to start and grow a business.

## Profile business innovation

- Support increased levels of innovation activity through innovation institutions in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, health and care visitor economy and energy, and within businesses themselves.

## Inspire, transform and sustain cultural change

- Support independent companies to realise the true potential of digital transformation, embrace new business models or implement new ways of working for those that have not yet embarked on transformation journeys.



# Area of strategic focus 2:

## Skills Development

### What we have achieved

#### Supported apprenticeships

The Council has a lengthy tradition of nurturing talent through apprenticeship programmes and is a keen supporter of the 'earn while you learn scheme'. The combination of workplace training and college study provides apprentices with the opportunity to gain valuable skills and knowledge, as well as a nationally-recognised qualification.

Since 2020, the Council has provided 41 apprenticeships up to degree-level and was awarded Apprenticeship Employer of the Year in the Grantham College 2023 Awards.

#### Created a grow your own culture of caring

The Council's commitment to investing in the growth and development of its staff has cemented its reputation of having a supportive and engaging workforce culture. However, the Council, in keeping with many authorities, is facing capacity and capability challenges.

To ensure the Council is well equipped and supported to deliver development now, and in readiness for the changes set out in the Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, a programme of support is being progressed.

The Council's 'grow your own' ethos allows employees to progress their careers. This programme aims to provide the direct support needed, delivery of upskilling opportunities for existing employees and further development for the future pipeline into the profession. For example, staff who have recently graduated with an MSc in Town Planning are now working towards chartered membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

#### Received the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award

In 2022, the Council received its Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award for outstanding support to the Armed Forces community – one of only 18 organisations across the East Midlands to hold the status.

#### Civic reception

Supported the networking event involving military, community, health, heritage and business leaders. The event was hosted at Prince William of Gloucester Barracks.

#### Moved to new offices, with flexible and agile working

Following a prolonged period of remote working, the Council made a significant investment in new offices to create a collaborative and productive atmosphere. The brand new open-plan office stimulates cooperation between diverse teams and improves outcomes for the people, communities and businesses the Council serves.



# Area of strategic focus 2:

## Skills Development

### What we will do

#### Reduce barriers to employment

- Continue to utilise the 'People and Skills' sub-group of the Local Economic Forum to complement, so not duplicate, mainstream provision. Use UKSPF and other funding to help reduce the barriers some people face to employment and support them to move towards employment and education. This includes targeting funding into skills for local areas to support employment and local growth.

#### Develop skills by working in partnership with local educational facilities

- To feed the existing and future pipeline of planned developments throughout the District, it is necessary to have a robust and fit for purpose further and higher education offering. Targeting learning opportunities in areas where future job creation is most prevalent is going to be key to the skills delivery landscape. It will be necessary for key partners to work together on this endeavour.
- Provide opportunities to retain the District's young talent and to attract young professionals into the local economy.
- Work with education providers and local businesses to highlight the range of career options available in the District.

#### Support a higher skilled and higher paid workforce across South Kesteven

- Support opportunities for greater levels of lifelong learning to include upskilling and reskilling people through their working lives, especially in green skills.

#### Foster an understanding of skills and training needs for the existing and future workforce

- Establish a vocational skills forum involving

education and training providers, employers, awarding bodies, Lincolnshire County Council, the greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Careers Hub

- Hold a skills summit aimed at exploring how to improve work experience offerings, supporting businesses in improving their links with educators and promoting apprenticeships at all levels.

#### Support the delivery of Armed Forces Covenant pledges

- Continue to build on the good progress made delivering the Covenant, especially in raising awareness with the local business community of the advantages of tapping into the veterans' labour pool.
- Disseminate information to business groups to increase knowledge and lead to a more inclusive relationship with the military community.
- Link up with existing national and regional networks that support veterans.
- Promote the many skills gained by veterans that can be put to use in the business environment – from leadership to logistics, mechanics to engineering, digital technology to mapping.

#### Plan for jobs

- Continue to build on the good progress made on delivering the Covenant, especially in raising awareness to the local business community of the advantages of tapping into the veterans' labour pool.
- Disseminate information to business groups to increase knowledge and lead to a more inclusive relationship with the military community.
- Link up with existing national and regional networks that support veterans.
- Promote the many skills gained by veterans which can be put to use in the business environment – from leadership to logistics, mechanics to engineering, digital technology to mapping.



## Develop diverse digital talent

- Focus and invest in ensuring residents have the digital skills and confidence to thrive. Create the conditions for digital businesses and entrepreneurs to see the District as an exciting choice to start, locate and scale their business.
- Work with colleges, university centres and partners to connect employers and learners through nationwide Skills Boot camps that give people the digital skills needed to take the first step into upskilling or changing their career path.
- From the perspective of the digital divide that hinders inclusiveness, consideration will be made to improving not only workers but also all members of society
- Support measures to improve inclusivity and break down the digital divide for not only workers, but all members of society.

## Support emerging growth sectors and new employers

- Work with South Kesteven's two Further Education Colleges in Grantham and Stamford, universities and other local institutions to ensure skills are developed to support emerging growth sectors and new employers entering the District.

## Later life learning and re-entry of older adults into the market place

- Work with workers, companies, non-governmental organisations and policy makers to raise awareness among businesses of the strategic and social benefits of an older workforce and prioritise the training of workers aged 50+ for the new world of work.
- Support businesses to redefine and expand roles to accommodate and meet the targeted needs of older workers to include nonlinear educational paths, returnships, internships, apprenticeships and job sharing.



# Area of strategic focus 3: Inclusive Growth and Regeneration

## What we have achieved

### Planned for growth

The adopted Local Plan provides the vision and framework for how long-term housing, commercial and infrastructure growth will be delivered in South Kesteven, supporting Grantham's ambitions as a 'sub-regional' centre for investment.

The policies within the Local Plan cover a range of topics including housing, sustainability, heritage transport, the visitor economy and employment. These policies are used to determine whether new developments, including new housing and employment generating uses, are suitable to go ahead.

The Local Plan sets out a requirement for 16,125 homes to be built over the period 2011-2036, at an average of 650 homes per year.

### Introduced a plan aimed at securing investment funding

The Council endorsed a plan to identify and secure millions of pounds of infrastructure and improvement needed across South Kesteven. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) sets out what is needed, where and when. It includes projects relevant to transport, education, utilities, health, community and leisure facilities, open spaces as developments and the emergency services.

### Infrastructure Funding Statement

Since 2020, the Council has annually published an updated Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) summarising its position in relation to Section 106 funds, what funds have been spent in the reporting period and what has been secured for the future.

The IFS provides information on the monetary (and non-monetary) contributions sought and received from developers for the provision of infrastructure to support development in South Kesteven. The total funds held on 31 March

2023 was £3,575,719.46. Monies agreed in Section 106 Agreements (S106) which were signed in 2022/2023 for the future and were not yet due to be received, totalled £7,225,090.80.

### Advanced Grantham's High Street

The Council was successful in securing £5.56m from Government to deliver the Grantham Future High Streets Fund programme aimed at improving access to, and the appearance in and around the Grantham Station Approach area, enhancements to Grantham Market Place and creating opportunities to widen participation in the town's markets and events, and increase the amount of good quality town centre residential units by converting empty upper floor retail space.

### Supported, regenerated and improved the economic, social and cultural vitality of Grantham

The Grantham Town Team was established to promote the town internally and externally, provide new ideas and concepts of how Grantham can develop in the future and to support the development of a continuous programme of events and promotional activities.

The aim of the Town Team is to provide a sounding board for new policy and strategy to develop and regenerate Grantham and assist with generating funding and sponsorship for events and promotional activities.

### Invested in and maintained heritage

The Council was successful in securing £1.2m to deliver the Grantham High Street Heritage Zone (HSHAZ) programme. This has seen extensive improvements to shop fronts and buildings of historical significance, with many of the shop fronts reinstated to their original design.

## Consulted with the community

In 2022, funded by the HSHAZ specialists were commissioned to undertake a Community Charette (consultation) which allowed local residents and stakeholders to participate in the development of a vision for Grantham to 2045.

## Introduced an exciting range of heritage interpretation activity

As a result of the HSHAZ a range of activities were completed to highlight, share and celebrate Grantham's heritage including the creation of in person and digital guided tours, a 'Grantham Trumps' card game and a colouring book celebrating the Trigge Chained Library.

A dedicated lamppost banner campaign highlighted historic imagery, and a cultural programme included community ceramics and print projects, theater, dance and sculpture installations.

In addition SKDC supported the Trustees of Grantham Museum with their application to the Arts Fund 'Reimagine' grants programme, securing £18,600 to support building the museum's operational capacity, volunteer development and training, and curatorial support.

## Secured external funding

Other initiatives where external funding has been secured are:

- An additional £90k for cultural activities as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone programme
- £68k secured from National Lottery Heritage Fund and Lincolnshire Community Foundation for Wake House in Bourne and Deeping St James signal box project.
- £250k from Government Welcome Back Fund
- £3.9m of UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- £540k of Rural England Prosperity Fund
- £170k through the Safer Streets Fund to tackle violence against women and girls and make streets safer

## Distributed funding to businesses, community groups, sporting organisations and cultural bodies

The Council received just shy of £4 million from the Government's United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

In February 2023, the Council established a UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Programme Board with a specific remit to set the direction for the programme, support the

Lead Officer in overseeing the overall progress of the programme and make recommendations to decision-makers in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation for executive functions.

## Launched rural business capital grant scheme

This top-up fund was allocated to the Council in addition to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the grant fund was launched to support businesses in South Kesteven (excluding Grantham). The discretionary capital investment-only scheme supports specific categories and seeks to prioritise investments that support green growth in renewables, green power, energy efficient measures that lessen rural reliance on fossil fuels and make a positive contribution to Net Zero. This includes investments aimed at reducing fuel costs.

## Secured funding to tackle violence against women and girls

Grant secured from the Safer Streets Fund for a Grantham-based project dedicated to making a difference to the safety of women and girls at a community level. The funding expands work to change attitudes and behaviours and prevent crime in the first place.

## Exploring how to bring green space into town centre regeneration

The Council worked alongside the Woodland Trust and with University of Sheffield Masters students to identify ways of adding greening elements, such as trees and shrubs, to Westgate and Market Place in Grantham.

The project aims to help to increase visitor time in the town centre, promote Grantham as the home of the Woodland Trust, and reduce the urban-heat island effect in Westgate and the Market Place.

## Supported businesses in times of need

The Council administered and allocated over £53m of Government COVID support grants to close to 3,000 South Kesteven businesses.

## National finalists for awards

The Council was shortlisted for the East Midlands 'Best Covid Response Award' for its exceptional work on support and recovery for the business community at the 2022 Federation of Small Business Local Government Awards.

Grantham was a 2022 finalist for the Academy of Urbanism Great Town Award, and the Visa 'Talk of the Town – Rising Star' Award. .



# Area of strategic focus 3: Inclusive Growth and Regeneration

## What we have achieved

### Provide effective delivery of strategic sites

- Deploy planning powers to achieve high quality regeneration in South Kesteven's four main towns (Bourne, Grantham, Stamford and The Deepings) and build on the master plans already in place for Council owned strategic sites such as, St Martin's Park, Stamford and Turnpike Close, Grantham

### Planning ahead

- Develop appropriate spatial development strategies and planning policies to ensure new high quality housing developments and employment sites meet present and expected future needs.

### Create pride of place

- Work with developers to influence the way they approach new buildings and homes to create places where it is easy for people to lead healthier lifestyles, access good quality local employment and support wellbeing.
- This includes building on the excellent relations with Rutland County Council and collaborating with other neighbouring authorities to identify where cross-boundary growth can help communities. By adopting this approach, it is envisaged funding will be secured for the infrastructure needed to accommodate new housing, employment creation and connectivity.

### Unlock land and stalled development sites

- Create robust policy, a strategic position and auditable backgrounds to implement attractive schemes.
- Work alongside democratically elected bodies, key landowners, Homes England, property, investment and development companies to explore available funding routes and develop master plans.
- In cases where electricity networks are near capacity or where upgrades are stalled and where there is demonstratable demand, engagement will take place with the energy regulator Ofgem to seek the required approvals.

- As part of the planning obligations process, support the Planning Team in maintaining a community and business ideas database containing 'needs' and 'wishes' formally identified by Councillors, Parish and Town Councils, residents' association, business groups and other interested parties.
- There may be the need to explore whether some Section 106 planning agreements negotiated in more buoyant times remain viable. The objective would be to renegotiate agreements where developments have stalled.

### Filling empty high street shops

- Explore schemes for putting empty shops to community or charity use to keep high streets vibrant, including pop-up events, until a permanent store can open.

### Support the path to net zero

- Develop a package of sustainable infrastructure and low carbon capital projects to encourage a District-wide shift to a net zero carbon economy.

### Advance shovel-ready projects, supporting better social outcomes

- Develop a portfolio of shovel ready, infrastructure projects to kick-start investment, unlock and stimulate economic activity within the District.

### Connected towns

- Install free public Wi-Fi service hubs across the District, providing a foundation for smart town technology and digital services while providing high-quality broadband connectivity for businesses.

### Create age-friendly communities

- Develop age-friendly environments enabling all people to: age well in a place that is right for them; continue to develop personally; be included and contribute to their communities while enabling their independence and health.
- Work with partners to apply the Age UK principles of creating age-friendly communities.

## Regenerate and improve town centres and manage parking demand

- Through a series of targeted interventions, underpinned by a combination of inclusive local consultation and successful bids for Government funding, regenerate town centres to be a places people want to live, trade, gather and be entertained.
- Reimagine the role of town centres helping them to ensure diversity among retailers with a healthy mix of independents and chains, facilitate social interaction and provide meeting places, sustain the hospitality and leisure economy and deliver high quality housing.
- This includes developing a parking strategy to manage the future needs of the District.

## Increase urban tree canopy cover

- Build on the work undertaken by students from the University of Sheffield, the Council and the Woodland Trust will explore how to significantly increase tree cover in Grantham's built environment. Take learning across the District as appropriate.

## Refocus Grantham Town Team

- Following the appointment of a Grantham Engagement Manager, refresh the Terms of Reference to include a key qualifying criteria that members of the Town Team must be willing for their involvement to be in the public domain, and relaunch the Town Team.

## Safety and accessibility audits

- To complement the Safer Streets Fund award, and by drawing upon the UKSPF, promote inclusive and sustainable design, safety and access audits of the District's four town centres will be undertaken to benchmark accessibility for disabled people and women and girls' safety in public spaces.

## Create bustling markets

- Bring forward a step change in the way Council-run street markets are presented, operated, marketed and promoted. Aim to make them self-sustaining and complementary to, and supportive of, the existing retail offering.

## Preserve and enhance heritage assets of the District

- Produce a Conservation and Heritage Strategy.
- Explore opportunities for securing further funding to support the conservation and regeneration of the District's build heritage.





# Area of strategic focus 4:

## Inward Investment

### What we have achieved

## Major growth locations

Major Growth locations in South Kesteven were put before and approved the Council's Planning Team as follows:

### Bourne

- Riverside Business Park
  - Located on the east side of Bourne, the site is made up of a three-phase development which was approved in 2016 and 2019.
  - The site has outline consent for 18 small light industrial units and 15 larger varied industrial units with which is hoped to encourage the growth and expansion of local businesses.

### Grantham

- Spitalgate Garden Village
  - Located on the southern fringe of Grantham, covering an area of approximately 224 hectares.
  - 3,700-home garden village that will include shops, schools and a health centre.
  - The site is set to include around 11 hectares of B2, B8 and E(g) employment generating uses.
- Spitalgate Level
  - Located In southern Grantham as part of the wider Grantham Strategic Gateway employment allocation.
  - Recent outline approval for Carta Real Estate Limited
  - Comprises 43,200 sqm of B2-class floorspace and 43,200 sqm of B8-class floorspace.

- Prince William of Gloucester Barracks
  - Due for decommissioning as a British Army installation in 2028, after which the site is expected to deliver 3,500 - 4,000 units with approximately 1,745 anticipated to be constructed by 2041 with the rest beyond.
  - The site is set to include around 8 hectares of employment land for E(g) employment generating uses.
- Rioja Designer Outlet Village
  - With the construction of the new junction south of Grantham on the A1, the Grantham Designer Outlet Village is expected to be one of the few outlets in the UK to have both visibility and direct access from a major highway.
  - The aim is to create a state-of-the-art retail destination, which upon completion is expected to release a total of 137 units.
- Grantham Downtown Designer Outlet centre
  - Sitting alongside the existing Downtown store off Old Great North Road, Great Gonerby.
  - The site is set to feature more than 100 individual designer outlet stores, 1,979 parking spaces, offices, leisure provision, a training academy, multi-storey car park, tourist information and visitor centre.
- Roseland Business Park
  - There has been a recent approval on the disused airfield section of Roseland Business Park for 82,700 sqm of B8-class storage uses.

## Stamford

- St Martin's Park
  - Outline approval granted in 2020
  - This high-quality mixed use development will comprise 10,000m<sup>2</sup> (GIA) of B1 Class E(g) (offices and workshops), c190 dwellings, a retirement village including ancillary facilities, residential (30% affordable housing), local foodstore and café, public open space including strategic landscaping at the eastern end of the site, and all associated infrastructure.
- Stamford North
  - A cross boundary strategic development with Rutland County Council led by Burghley House Preservation Trust with GummerLeathes, as master developer. The aspiration is to establish a beautiful, thriving and sustainable new community.
  - Located in a small valley directly to the north of Stamford, it will become home to up to 1,350 households, and will be the largest part of the Stamford Urban Extension.
  - The site is currently at the application stage and is allocated within the Local Plan.

## The Deepings

- The Deepings currently has two large strategic allocations within the local plan. This consists of 680-unit residential scheme off Linchfield Road and a 14ha employment generating expansion to the currently operating Northfields Industrial Estate. At present neither of these sites have planning permission.

## Commenced partial review of the Local Plan

The current Local Plan was adopted in January 2020. The Council is now focusing its ambitions on building more affordable homes and planning for major growth. To address these priorities, a partial review of the adopted Local Plan is underway and is expected to be adopted in 2026.

The new and revised policies will together contribute to the vision of making South Kesteven a fairer and more inclusive District where residents benefits from the opportunities new developments bring, and workers and visitors from all backgrounds feel welcome and safe.



# Area of strategic focus 4: Inward Investment

## What we will do

### Support for foreign-owned businesses

- Work with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to help all foreign-owned businesses in South Kesteven to grow.

### Produce a pitch book with accompanying aerial filming and motion graphics

- Develop an investment prospectus to promote the District regionally and nationally as an excellent location for inward investment, business expansion and quality of life. As the investment in serviced land and premises comes to fruition, use the Council's key strategic investment sites as a pitch book to attract both indigenous companies to grow and diversify, and inward investment.
- These pitch book projects will be a focal point for the Council's pursuit of Government, and other agency funding, as the District looks to pilot schemes where the potential economic impact is justified, yet may not be fully evidenced.
- This approach will include collaborating with Lincolnshire County Council to capitalise on the benefits of the Team Lincolnshire brand.

### Develop investment-ready projects

- In supporting the delivery of the Local Plan, develop a pipeline of future District Council projects to ensure the substantial level of growth planned within South Kesteven can be accommodated without being detrimental to levels of accessibility, connectivity and services.

### Enhance digital connectivity

- Support investment in the roll-out of gigabit-capable internet across the District.
- Work in partnership with housing, planning and the highways authority to develop digital-friendly local planning and street works policies. Implement good practice from other areas to help breakdown barriers and speed up roll-out of digital infrastructure in South Kesteven.

### Champion a stronger local economy

- Work with key public sector partners such as Greater Lincolnshire LEP and Team Lincolnshire to promote South Kesteven as a prime location for inward investment, including foreign direct investment, new projects, expansions, mergers and acquisitions.

- This includes showcasing investment opportunities and access to talent at appropriate trade shows and national forums such as the UKREiF (the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum).

### Support business expansion and talent attraction

- Create the right conditions and supportive environment to help businesses locate, relocate, rebuild and develop new ventures, especially in emerging sectors. Develop strong relationships between the community, industry and education partners.

### Supply sites and premises for industry

- Ensure a healthy supply of land for businesses and employers across South Kesteven through the Local Plan. This includes, where appropriate, bringing forward Council-owned land and premises that becomes available as public sector services are deployed to alternative sites in the District.

### Increase partnership working with developers and investors

- Work in partnership with developers that meet the needs of investors and provide high-quality employment opportunities, especially but not limited, to target key growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, engineering, healthcare, the visitor economy and the recreation and arts sectors.
- With the support of the planning team, design and implement a model for more effective use of planning obligations to support economic development activity.

### Support innovation and enterprise

- Support and deliver sites and premises in locations across South Kesteven that will secure further public and private investment in innovation and enterprise activities.

### Optimise local benefits of nationally significant infrastructure projects

- Support and work to maximise the local economic benefits of nationally significant infrastructure projects that are planned for delivery in South Kesteven over the coming years.



# Area of strategic focus 5:

## Enhancing South Kesteven's tourism and visitor economy offer

### What we have achieved

#### Free folk festival

- In 2022, the Council organised a one-off festival special, thanks to funding secured from the Government's Welcome Back Fund which featured national and local acts and an extensive variety of entertainment.

#### Hosted inaugural Tourism Networking Event

- In 2023, the Council hosted an inaugural networking event where tourism and hospitality businesses heard from guest speakers on the latest industry news and insights.

#### Supported Destination Lincolnshire

- In 2023, to demonstrate the Council's commitment to ensuring links to the Destination Management Plan, a letter of support was provided towards Destination Lincolnshire becoming an accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership for Greater Lincolnshire.

#### Promoted the Destination Lincolnshire Tourism Excellence Awards

- Visitor economy businesses across South Kesteven were alerted to the awards and offered help with the application process. Three District businesses were selected as finalists, one of which was the Stamford Arts Centre for the Arts and Culture Award.

#### Joined the Tourism Management Institute

- In 2023, the Council signed up to the tourism professionals membership of the Tourism Management Institute to sit alongside professionals from across the industry and access a wide range of experience and expertise.

#### Spotlight on women who have shaped South Kesteven

- In 2023, coinciding with International Women's Day, the Council officially launched a film celebrating ten inspirational women from South Kesteven who made their mark in history in

sectors such as military, theatre, politics, nursing, philosophy, and policing.

#### Introduced range of place promotion initiatives

- Discover South Kesteven is the tourism and visitor economy brand for South Kesteven District Council. The brand is well-recognised and supported by a bespoke website, publications, social media presence (TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and through many in-person meetings, networking events, trade shows and business events.
- An updated Discover South Kesteven website has been created with the visitor in mind. The website shares sufficient information giving a taste of the unrivalled attractions the District has to offer. The website is clean, streamlined, runs smoothly and most importantly is mobile friendly.
- A new blog page enables content to be added to the website without creating more tabs and overloading the site with information.

#### Introduced Hidden History app

- Developed through the High Street Heritage Action Zone, funded by Historic England and the Council, an app to guide visitors through Grantham's landmarks and history was launched. The TrailTale app is a guided walk where users can choose what to explore by following a set route or selecting a series of highlights.

#### Established a cross-Council events team

- Developed and implemented a cross-Council events team to oversee the design and delivery of events promoting the District and its rich offering.

#### Peer networking

- Commenced work with visitor economy officers from bordering local authorities to build a greater relationship and understanding of the various existing and developing cross-border visitor economy offers.

# Area of strategic focus 5:

## Enhancing South Kesteven's tourism and visitor economy offer

### What we will do

#### Active partner of Destination Lincolnshire

- Develop and support a programme of delivery in conjunction with Destination Lincolnshire and its partner organisations, to unlock the full potential of the sector.
- In collaboration with Destination Lincolnshire, identify, develop and assist tourism businesses and local attractions that have the capacity to combine package deals for visitors across South Kesteven.

#### Support accessible tourism

- Building upon Visit England's Accessible and Inclusive Toolkit for Tourism Businesses, promote practical guidance on providing an inclusive welcome, designing accessible buildings, employing disabled people, creating quality accessibility information and accessible tourism training.

#### Review heritage plaque and information trails

- Engage in an audit of existing heritage plaques. In collaboration with local Civic Societies, Town Councils and other stakeholders, identify notable figures with connections to buildings across South Kesteven in readiness for an extended national scheme, a Council Blue Plaque Scheme or both.
- Raise the profile of the Grantham TrailTail app and complete the development of trails exploring the District's other towns.

#### Support a rich history

- Explore supportive actions the Council can take to promote and upgrade local heritage sites to strengthen the local, national and international audience using economy and build civic identity.
- Support the delivery of the 'Soldiers from the Sky' project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and explore further options to build upon the District's considerable military heritage, which provides opportunity to generate both national and international interest.

#### Support and celebrate diversity and inclusion

- Promote diversity and inclusion across the tourism sector. Investigate sponsorship, networking opportunities and a marketplace to promote local women-owned businesses.

#### Support sustainable tourism

- Develop a coordinated offer to ensure South Kesteven's attractions are promoted to a national and international audience using latest technologies and platforms. Helping businesses find the best ways visitors to experience South Kesteven sustainably, providing year-round, well-paid jobs while minimising impact on the environment.

#### Capitalise on cultural and heritage strength

- Develop a new integrated visitor economy strategy for the District to grow and maximise the visitor economy in a sustainable way which respects our unique environment.

#### Continue professional development

- Through membership of the Tourism Management Institute increase learning and adoption of the latest in digital innovation, marketing and tourism trends and data, along with initiatives to promote sustainable tourism strategies and opportunities.

#### Networking events

- Following on from the pilot networking event in 2023, plan a larger and more comprehensive event to bring together a wider cohort of South Kesteven visitor economy businesses. Invite high profile speakers from the sector to provide insight and expertise in delivery of the visitor economy offer and will use the opportunity to launch consultation on the new visitor economy strategy.

#### Support a film-friendly South Kesteven

- Take learnings from Creative England's Filming Partnership Toolkit. Explore the benefit of signing up to the Film-Friendly Charter which aims to ensure friendly procedures are in place for productions. Work with Filming in England Partnership to create a film-friendly environment and unlock the District's full potential as a world-class destination for film and TV production.

#### Create baseline data from which to measure the health of the visitor economy sector

- Continue to invest in footfall and STEAM data (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) evaluation model data.



# 04 Action Plan

The South Kesteven Economic Development Strategy sets a clear vision of how the economy of the District could, and in some cases should develop. The areas of focus set out clearly how all partners can work together to achieve a common objective.

The Action Plan attempts to order all activity into short, medium and long term actions. These are given timescales of ongoing, one and three years. Like the Strategy, the Action Plan is dynamic and is expected to be reviewed and, if needs be, changed on an annual basis. This enables the Action Plan to fully react to changing economic circumstances and to capitalise on new opportunities from new investments to changes in Government policy.



## Area of focus 1

### Business and Job Creation and Employment Safeguarding

ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
1.1	Increase Business Engagement	Produce a quarterly business e-newsletter	• Business & Skills Officer to lead supported by portfolio holder, comms and other teams as required	✓		
1.2		Procure a new customer relationship management system (CRM)	• Business & Skills Officer to lead with IT Support Lead, supported by Procurement Lead		✓	
1.3		Collate a collection of business support webinars and podcasts	• Business & Skills Officer to investigate options, Wider Team to support			✓
1.4	Continue to distribute the UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Explore opportunities to develop a legacy beyond the funding period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKSPF Programme Manager to explore sustainability. Case studies and feedback</li> <li>• Investigate what was missed by the fund and lessons learned workshop for team</li> <li>• Legacy of LEF beyond SPF - how it will function what it will deliver</li> </ul>		✓	
1.5	Use the Local Economic Forum effectively	Draw upon the expertise of Local Economic Forum members to shape the work of the Council's Economic Development Strategy	• UKSPF Programme Manager and Business & Skills Officer to identify future plans for the Local Economic Forum beyond UKSPF	✓		
1.6		Maintain the 'Local Business' sub-group of the Local Economic Forum	• UKSPF Programme Manager to lead supported by relevant members of the Economic Development Team	✓		
1.7		Work closely with Town Councils and Business Clubs across the District	• Business & Skills Officer to lead	✓		
1.8	Help to access financial support	Assist organisations to find and apply for growth programmes to help businesses start, succeed and grow	• Business & Skills Officer to collaborate with Community Grants & Funding Officer	✓		
1.9	Support emerging growth sectors and new employers	Work with FE, Higher Education and training providers to ensure skills are developed to support emerging growth sectors and new employers entering the District	• Business & Skills Officer to lead - following SK business sector audit to forecast needs of the District in the medium to long term and work towards a skills development strategy	✓		
1.10	Sector support	Identify partners and suppliers for sector specific programmes and projects	• Economic Development Team - Audit of key and developing sectors	✓		
1.11		Introduce businesses and innovators to networking opportunities	• To follow on from 1.10	✓		
1.12	Invest in clean growth	Deliver climate change expos which maximise opportunities of the transition to net zero Evaluate progress across the District for clean growth with specialist expertise to identify Council-led incentives and programmes to meet net zero targets Inclusion with carparking strategy (EV charging)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKSPF Programme Manager and Business &amp; Skills Officer, supported by relevant LEF sub-group</li> <li>• Delivery to include Sustainability &amp; Climate Change Officer</li> </ul>		✓	

ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
1.13	Social value in procurement	Capitalise on local development projects as opportunities for skills development and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead and engage with other Council teams as necessary</li> </ul>	✓		
1.14	Develop a small business concordat	Develop a statement of principles and publish guidance for suppliers on how to do business with Council and details of forthcoming bidding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment – working with Procurement</li> </ul>		✓	
1.15	Host and support Meet the Buyer events	Provide the opportunity for contracts framework and supply chain opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead, Business &amp; Skills Officer to support working with Procurement</li> <li>Potential for consultant commission to explore local value spend multipliers etc</li> <li>Explore social value calculator to evaluate grant applications and procurement – and support businesses in understanding how procurement works</li> </ul>	✓		
1.16	Support start-up and step-up businesses	Explore and implement ways which identify sites and premises to enable people to start and grow their businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development Team to highlight relevant support available through Business Lincolnshire's delivery of support including BBC and the Growth Hub, as well as connecting to key partner organisations such as the FSB and the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Business &amp; Skills Officer to work with partners to refer relevant businesses and develop support</li> <li>Identify opportunities to enhance or provide a range of available business premises</li> </ul>	✓		
1.17	Profile business innovation	Support increased levels of innovation activity, through innovation institutions in key sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UKSPF funding to be deployed for business innovation</li> <li>Longer term Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead on strategic development of innovation support beyond 2025</li> </ul>		✓	
1.18	Inspire, transform and sustain cultural change	Support independent companies to realise the potential of digital transformation, embrace new business models or implement new ways of working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business &amp; Skills Officer to promote the availability of UKSPF funding for digital innovation to businesses</li> </ul>			

## Area of focus 2

### Skills Development

ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
2.1	Reduce barriers people face to employment	Maintain and enhance the People and Skills subgroup of the Local Economic Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UKSPF Programme Manager to highlight the opportunities through UKSPF and work with LEF subgroups, to develop ongoing strategies</li> <li>Business &amp; Skills Officer to support</li> </ul>	✓		
2.2	Develop skills by working in partnership with local educational facilities	For existing and future pipeline of planned developments target learning opportunities in areas where future job creation is most prevalent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead, supported by Business &amp; Skills Officer. To include working with planning colleagues to identify likely developments and coordinate with local schools, HE and FE providers, DWP</li> </ul>	✓		
2.3	Support a higher skilled and higher paid workforce across South Kesteven	Support businesses in upskilling and reskilling, especially in green skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on lessons learnt from UKSPF projects in greening</li> <li>Economic Development Team to identify other areas of skills gaps in the District</li> </ul>			✓
2.4	Foster an understanding of skills and training needs	Establish a vocational skills forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business &amp; Skills Officer to lead</li> </ul>			✓
2.5		Hold a skills summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business &amp; Skills Officer to lead</li> </ul>			✓
2.6	Support the delivery of Armed Forces Covenant pledges	Raise awareness of the advantages of tapping into the veterans labour pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment and Business &amp; Skills Officer supported by the Armed Forces and Communications Officer and the Lincolnshire-wide Armed Forces Support</li> </ul>		✓	
2.7		Disseminate information to business groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment and Business &amp; Skills Officer supported by the Armed Forces and Communications Officer and other external partners</li> </ul>		✓	
2.8		Link up with existing national and regional networks which support veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business &amp; Skills Officer to promote to businesses, UKSPF funding available to assist digital skills development</li> </ul>		✓	
2.9	Develop diverse digital talent	Promote nationwide Digital Skills boot camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business &amp; Skills Officer to promote to businesses, UKSPF funding available to assist digital skills development</li> </ul>		✓	
2.10	Future skills for rural businesses	Undertake a comprehensive skills evaluation aimed at formulating recommendations and setting out priorities for the main rural sectors – agriculture, food & drink and horticulture production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business &amp; Skills Officer to commission work to identify particular difficulties and specific needs of rural businesses</li> </ul>			✓

## Area of focus 3

### Inclusive Growth and Regeneration

ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
3.1	Provide effective delivery of strategic sites	Deploy planning powers to achieve high-quality regeneration across the District	• Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead working with Planning colleagues to identify sites and regeneration opportunities. Supported by High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Manager and relevant team members as relevant			✓
3.2	Ensure a supply of commercial premises that meets the need of local businesses	Identify supply side gaps in the quantity and quality of the stock of local commercial property and ensure strategies are in place to deliver this investment through securing private sector investment, partnering with the private sector or through direct delivery	• Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead working with Property Services			
3.3	Planning ahead	Develop appropriate spatial development strategies and planning policies to meet present and expected future needs and ensure communities are connected to employment and leisure opportunities	• Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to support Planning Policy Team in developing future strategies and plans through the local planning process. Consultation with stakeholders, Town Councils, and communities			✓
3.4	Create pride of place	Work with developers to influence the creation of places that help people lead healthier lifestyles, access good quality local employment and support wellbeing	• Council-wide initiatives – Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead strategies, in collaboration and consultation with: Planning, Corporate Projects Officers Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place, Communities Team and Housing team			✓
3.5		Identify new and maintain existing relationships with neighbouring Councils and organisations to identify and support cross-boundary initiatives and growth to help development of the South Kesteven community	• Rutland County Council and collaborating with other neighbouring authorities • Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead	✓		
3.6	Unlock land and stalled development sites	Create robust policy, a strategic position and auditable backgrounds to implement attractive schemes	• Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead, working with planning policy, through Local Plan development, and consult with relevant stakeholders to understand issues preventing development			✓
3.7		Explore available funding routes and develop master plans	• Work alongside democratically elected bodies, key landowners, Homes England, property, investment and development companies • Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead, supported by Lincolnshire County Council			✓
3.8		Evidence demand for electricity network upgrades	• Engage with the energy regulator Ofgem to seek the required approvals • Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead, supported by Lincolnshire County Council			✓
3.9		As part of the planning obligations process, maintain a community and business ideas database containing 'needs' and 'wishes' formally identified by Councillors, Parish and Town Councils, residents' associations, business groups and other interested parties.	• Support the Planning Team			✓



ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
3.10	Unlock land and stalled development sites	Explore whether some Section 106 planning agreements negotiated in more buoyant times, remain viable	• Economic Development Team to support the Planning Team		✓	
3.11	Fill empty high street shops	Explore possibilities and liaise with local stakeholders to support putting empty shops to community or charity use, including pop-up events e.g. dining, art events, pop-up shops etc. To include exploring the potential to develop a South Kesteven pop-up scheme in vacant units by taking short-term leases on vacant spaces	• Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead, supported by Lincolnshire County Council • Supported by Business & Skills Officer, Heritage Acton Zone Programme Manager and other team members and colleagues as relevant			✓
3.12	Support the path to net zero	Develop a package of sustainable infrastructure and low carbon capital projects to encourage a District-wide shift to a net zero carbon economy. To include exploring options within carpark review to support the installation of EV charging points in all District car parks	• Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment and planning policy supported by Sustainability & Climate Change Officer. Working with county to identify opportunities to improve infrastructure etc			✓
3.13	Advance shovel-ready projects, supporting better social outcomes	Develop a portfolio of shovel ready, infrastructure projects to kick-start investment, unlock and stimulate economic activity within the District. Note the potential links to UKSPF programme	• Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment to lead, supported by planning and based on community consultation and buy-in			✓
3.14	Connected towns	Install free public Wi-Fi service hubs across the District, providing a foundation for smart town technology and digital services, whilst providing high-quality broadband connectivity for businesses	• Project led by Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) and Deputy Section 151 Officer		✓	
3.15	Create accessible and age-friendly communities	Make environments accessible for all - supporting age-friendly and accessible spaces and facilities as a first principle, through the creation of a District-wide policy. To include accessibility audits of existing spaces through an externally commissioned consultancy.	• Head of Economic Development & Inward Investment, Planning and Communities Team			✓
3.16		Apply the Age UK principles of creating age-friendly communities. To include exploring other accessibility guidance and principles				✓
3.17	Later life learning and re-entry of older adults into the market place	Raise awareness among businesses of the strategic and social benefits of an older workforce and prioritise the training of 50+ workers for the new world of work	• Business & Skills Officer to with companies, non-governmental organisations and policy makers			✓
3.18		Support businesses to redefine and expand roles to accommodate and meet the targeted needs of older workers to include nonlinear educational paths, returnships, internships, apprenticeships and job sharing	• Business & Skills Officer to lead			✓

ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
3.19	Regenerate and improve town centres and manage parking demand	Consult and apply for funding to regenerate town centres. To include developing and implementing a community consultation (i.e. akin to Grantham Charrette) to identify long-term vision and needs of communities and obtain buy-in to project plans in all towns and larger rural communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development, Heritage Acton Zone Programme Manager and Consultation and Engagement Officer to lead. Including the appointment of external consultants as necessary</li> </ul>			✓
3.20		Reimagine the role of town centre, concentrating on the unique advantages of each settlement across the District.  Review of best practice and successful case studies nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead with Council-wide involvement, Town Councils, County Council, and neighbouring councils</li> <li>• Inclusion of input from national organisations, universities and government research and reports</li> <li>• Input to and from charrette type events (3.18)</li> <li>• Engagement with LEF</li> </ul>			✓
3.21		Develop a parking strategy to manage the future needs of the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead</li> </ul>			✓
3.22	Refocus the Grantham Town Team	Refresh the Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment and Grantham Engagement Manager to review with member engagement</li> </ul>			
3.23	Increase urban greening (including tree canopy cover where feasible)	Explore how to significantly increase green cover in Grantham's built environment by taking account of the University of Sheffield and the Woodland Trust feasibility study. Look to take learning across the District as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grantham Engagement Manager to lead, coordinating with Sustainability &amp; Climate Change Officer</li> </ul>			✓
3.24	Safety and accessibility audits	Undertake safety and access audits of the District's four town centres to benchmark accessibility for disabled people and women and girls' safety in public spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment and Business &amp; Skills Officer to lead, with external consultant support as necessary</li> </ul>		✓	
3.25	Create bustling markets	Bring forward a step change in the way Council-run street markets are presented, operated, marketed and promoted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment, Markets Manager, Business &amp; Skills Officer and Communications Team</li> <li>• Consultation with members and current market traders</li> </ul>		✓	
3.26	Preserve and enhance the heritage assets of the District	Produce a Conservation and Heritage Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and conservation to lead with support from Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment</li> <li>• Consultation with community groups, Heritage Lincolnshire, Town Councils and Civic Societies</li> </ul>			✓

## Area of focus 4

### Inward Investment

ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
4.1	Support for foreign-owned businesses	Help all foreign-owned businesses in South Kesteven to grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT)</li> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment supported by Business &amp; Skills Officer in collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council Economic Growth Officers</li> </ul>			✓
4.2	Produce a pitch book with accompanying aerial filming with motion graphics to promote South Kesteven at events for developers	Develop an investment prospectus to promote the District regionally and nationally as an excellent location for inward investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment working with planning policy/ Local Plan and land allocation</li> <li>• Work with local landowners/stakeholders</li> </ul>			
4.3		Commission aerial filming with motion graphics of South Kesteven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to determine brief for commissioning and procurement</li> </ul>			
4.4		Pursue Government and other agencies funding to pilot schemes where the potential economic impact is justified, yet may not be fully evidenced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to collaborate with Lincolnshire County Council to capitalise on the benefits of the Team Lincolnshire brand</li> </ul>			
4.5	Developing investment-ready projects	Develop a pipeline of future District Council projects to ensure the substantial level of growth planned within South Kesteven can be accommodated without being detrimental to levels of accessibility, connectivity and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to collaborate with Lincolnshire County Council, stakeholders, Government agencies and funders as relevant</li> </ul>			
4.6	Enhance digital connectivity	Support and unlock investment in the roll-out of gigabit-capable internet across the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development Team to support businesses in accessing benefits of Internet roll-out as appropriate</li> </ul>			✓
4.7		Develop digital-friendly local planning and street works policies and implement good practice from other areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development Team to work in partnership with housing, planning and the highways authority</li> </ul>			✓
4.8	Champion a stronger local economy	Promote South Kesteven as a prime location for inward investment, including foreign direct investment, new projects, expansions, mergers and acquisitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to work with key public sector partners such as Greater Lincolnshire LEP and Team Lincolnshire</li> </ul>			✓
4.9		Showcase investment opportunities and access talent at appropriate trade shows and national forums such as the UKREiF (the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead</li> </ul>		✓	



ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
4.10	Support business expansion and talent attraction	Help businesses locate, relocate, rebuild and develop new ventures, especially in emerging sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead</li> <li>• Engage with community, industry and education partners</li> </ul>			✓
4.11	Supply sites for industry	Ensure a healthy supply of land for businesses and employers across South Kesteven. To include, where appropriate, bringing forward Council-owned land that becomes available as public sector services are deployed to alternative sites in the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead on collaborating with stakeholders and working with planning policy team to identify business land</li> </ul>			✓
4.12	Increase partnership working with developers and investors	Support those developers and investors that provide high-quality employment opportunities, especially but not limited to target growth sectors such as manufacturing and engineering, construction, professional, technical and scientific services, the health sector and the recreation and arts sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead, working with Lincolnshire County Council and all relevant colleagues to highlight, support and promote development opportunities to relevant sectors</li> </ul>			✓
4.13		Design and implement a model for more effective use of S106 (new Infrastructure Levy) and planning fees to support economic development activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to support Assistant Director of Planning &amp; Growth</li> </ul>		✓	
4.14	Support innovation and enterprise activities	Support and deliver sites and premises at locations across South Kesteven that will secure further public and private investment in innovation and enterprise activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead to lead in collaboration with planning and corporate projects (OD and Change) to identify development sites and liaise with stakeholder delivered sites, and leverage the social and commercial benefits of Council-led developments</li> </ul>			✓
4.15	Optimise local benefits of nationally significant infrastructure projects	Support and work to maximise the local economic benefits of nationally significant infrastructure projects that are planned for delivery in South Kesteven over the coming years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Economic Development &amp; Inward Investment to lead a review of projects</li> </ul>	✓		

## Area of focus 5

### Enhancing South Kesteven's tourism and visitor economy offer

ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
5.1	Active partner of Destination Lincolnshire	Develop and support a programme of delivery in conjunction with Destination Lincolnshire and its partner organisations, to unlock the full potential of the sector	• Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead coordination with Destination Lincolnshire as appropriate	✓		
5.2		Identify, develop, promote, and assist tourism businesses and local attractions which have the capacity to combine package deals for visitors across South Kesteven	• Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer in collaboration with Destination Lincolnshire	✓		
5.3	Support accessible tourism	Building on Visit England's Accessible and Inclusive Toolkit for Tourism Businesses, promoting practical guidance on providing an inclusive welcome, designing accessible buildings, employing disabled people, creating quality accessibility information and accessible tourism training	• Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer supported by Communications and Communities Teams.  Note: the potential requirement for external consultant support for team training and the production of resources for businesses			✓
5.4	Review heritage plaque and information trails	Audit existing heritage plaques and identify notable figures with connections to buildings across South Kesteven in readiness for an extended national scheme, a Council Blue Plaque Scheme or both	• Heritage Acton Zone Programme Manager and Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead in collaboration with the local Civic Societies, Town Councils and other stakeholders			✓
5.5		Raise the profile of the Grantham TrailTale app and complete development of trails for the District's other towns.	• Heritage Acton Zone Programme Manager and Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead on developing TrailTale trails for Bourne, Deepings and Stamford (x2) commissioned with a view to launch for Autumn 2024	✓		
5.6	Support South Kesteven's rich military history	Explore supportive actions the Council can take to promote and upgrade local heritage sites to strengthen the local economy and build civic identity.	• Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer supporting the Armed Forces and Communications Officer and Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire, including supporting an Arnhem anniversary project and other celebratory and commemorative events	✓		
5.7	Support diversity and inclusion	Promote diversity and inclusion across the tourism sector. Investigate sponsorship, networking opportunities and a marketplace to promote local women-owned businesses	• Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer and Business & Skills Officer to lead			✓
5.8	Support sustainable tourism	Develop a coordinated offer to ensure as many of South Kesteven's attractions are promoted to a national and international audience using latest technologies and platforms	• Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead, working with local tourism stakeholders to identify existing and potential international markets support the development attractive offer			✓

ACTION TO TAKE PLACE			BY WHOM? PARTNER ORGANISATION	TIMESCALE		
				ONGOING	1	3
5.9	Capitalise on South Kesteven's cultural and heritage strength	Develop a new integrated visitor economy strategy for the District to grow and maximise South Kesteven's visitor economy in a sustainable way which respects our unique environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead in collaboration with Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place</li> </ul> <p>Note: Potential requirement for external consultant support in developing strategy</p>			✓
5.10	Continue professional development	Through membership of the Tourism Management Institute, increase learning and adoption of the latest in digital innovation, marketing and tourism trends and data, along with initiatives to promote sustainable tourism strategies and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to explore and take up most relevant options and opportunities</li> </ul>	✓		
5.11	Networking events	Following on from a pilot networking event in 2023, plan a larger and more comprehensive event to bring together a wider cohort of South Kesteven visitor economy businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead on a tourism networking event for 2024.</li> </ul>	✓		
5.12	Support a film-friendly South Kesteven	Take learning from Creative England's Filming Partnership Toolkit. Explore the benefit of signing up to the Film-Friendly Charter which aims to ensure friendly procedures are in place for productions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead supported by Economic Development Team, Communications Team and other Council colleagues as required</li> </ul>	✓		
5.13		Create a film-friendly environment and unlock the District's full potential as a world-class destination for film and TV production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead on working with Filming in England Partnership</li> </ul>	✓		
5.14	Create baseline data from which to measure the health of the visitor economy sector	Continue to invest in footfall and STEAM data and look into the acquisition of additional data that will help paint a picture of the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism and Visitor Economy Officer to lead, supported by the Policy Officer</li> </ul>	✓		



# Monitoring and evaluation

## Performance indicators

The South Kesteven Economic Development Strategy 2024 – 2028 will directly support the Council's Corporate Plan aims support **'A thriving District to live in, work and visit'**

Specifically, Priority 3: Enabling Economic Opportunity Mission: To enable and support a dynamic, resilient and growing local economy, which benefits all our communities.

**To support this approach the Council has adopted several Targets which this Strategy will seek to deliver:**

- Deliver the Economic Development Strategy and accompanying action plan
  - 100% of annual actions on target/complete
- Deliver initiatives to expand and deepen engagement with business
  - Following the introduction of a customer relationship management system (CRM), introduce a 'call and care programme' to support the top 20 businesses in SK
  - Increase business participation in LEF X12 with Town Councils and Business Clubs
- Continue to distribute the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and explore opportunities to develop a legacy beyond the funding period
  - 100% of funding distributed
- Embed and strengthen the Local Economic Forum as a key institution for local stakeholders to shape the District's approach to skills, business support and investment
  - Work closely with Town Councils and Business Clubs across the District
- Work with the Lincolnshire Growth Hub to support businesses start, succeed and grow
  - No of businesses supported x60
  - Jobs created x100
  - Inward Investment projects attracted x2 per year
- Strategically leverage the Council's procurement spend to maximise social value
  - Introduce SKDC Procurement Charter to exploit local employment and supply chain opportunities
  - Introduction of a statement of principles and publish guidance for suppliers on how to do business with Council and details of forthcoming

bidding opportunities.

- Provide the opportunity for contracts framework and supply chain opportunities through X2 Events
- Consider targeted interventions – planning powers and schemes, to achieve high-quality regeneration across the District and explore options to unlock stalled sites.
  - Develop an investment prospectus to promote the District regionally and nationally
- Develop a long-term approach to regeneration and be prepared for investment and funding opportunities.
  - Prepare a Pipeline of 'oven ready' projects x1 per annum
  - Work with landowners and stakeholders to identify development constraints for identified sites for regeneration x5 annual visits per annum
  - Linked to point above, evidence demand for electricity and infrastructure network upgrades through the production of a report
- Continue to promote and develop South Kesteven as an attractive visitor destination, focusing on our cultural and heritage strengths
  - Adoption of the Tourism Strategic Framework
  - Increase annual visitor numbers to South Kesteven by 3% from 2023
  - Increase annual spend by visitor to South Kesteven by 3% from 2023

**With additional targets identified to:**

- Strengthen the knowledge and expertise of the 'People and Skills' sub-group of the LEF through expanded recruitment of the board, with greater representation from local schools in the District
  - Adopted new Terms of Reference for the LEF People and Skills Sub-Group
- Foster business and education connections through attendance and facilitation of networking events.
  - Network events attended X5
- Proactively seek and support interventions to grow and expand the skill base for businesses, such as SWAP's, apprenticeships and work placements
  - Companies supported X3

# Contact

Alternative formats are available on request:  
audio, large print and Braille

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