



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

Tuesday, 5 November 2024

Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member
for Planning

South Kesteven Shopfront Design Guide

Report Author

Claire Saunders, High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Manager

✉ claire.saunders@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet for the updated South Kesteven Shopfront Design Guide 2024 to be used as a technical document alongside the existing supplementary planning policies relating to shopfront design as a material consideration in planning decisions. Furthermore, to endorse the publication and signposting for members of the public to this document for queries relating to shopfront design, and to support the delivery of the UKSPF Shopfront Maintenance Grant.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the adoption of the draft South Kesteven Shopfront Design Guide 2024 as a technical document with material consideration for planning decisions.**
- 2. Endorse the use of the South Kesteven Shopfront Design Guide 2024 as a guidance document to support the delivery UKSPF funded Shopfront Maintenance Grant.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Enabling economic opportunities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

1.1 No financial or procurement implications arise from this report.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy 151)

Legal and Governance

1.2 If adopted the South Kesteven Shopfront Guide will become material consideration in planning decisions relating to shopfronts. It is proposed that the document be adopted as a technical document which will sit alongside the existing design guides which have been adopted as supplementary planning policies.

Completed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan highlights the importance of maintaining the historic and built environment of the district within both the 'Connecting Communities' and 'Enabling Economic Opportunity' priorities.
- 2.2. Good design in town centres is a cornerstone of generating and supporting a sense of place which not only enhances civic pride and strengthens communities, but also supports local businesses.
- 2.3. As has been demonstrated through the delivery of the SKDC and Historic England funded Shopfront Improvement schemes in Grantham, appropriate shopfront design has a significant impact on the appearance and perception of our town centres.
- 2.4. The Council currently has Shopfront Design Guidance documents for Bourne Grantham and Stamford, which have been formally accepted as supplementary planning policies and are therefore given material consideration in making planning decisions.
- 2.5. No specific shopfront design guidance is currently available for businesses in Market Deeping.

- 2.6. All three of the current guides are available online but the inaccessibility of the current design guide documents was noted both through the delivery of the Grantham High Street Heritage Action Zone programme and has also recently been discussed in local press in relation to some high-profile decisions about shopfronts in Stamford within the past 12 months.
- 2.7. It was therefore considered necessary to update the guidance, allowing businesses to easily access and understand planning policy and legal requirements regarding shopfront design, and allowing business owners to make properly informed choices.
- 2.8. Although the current Shopfront Design Guidance documents were produced between 1993 and 2005, much of the information and guidance within the document remains correct to current planning policies, and this is reflected in the new draft.
- 2.9. Updating the document has allowed information to be made more accessible, reflect current national policies, and include advice on legislation which was not in place at the time of the previous documents, such as the impact of the Equality Act. Readers are signposted to the latest Government and Historic England guidance.
- 2.10. Due to the similarities in the treatment of shopfronts across the district, all four of South Kesteven's market towns have been included within one document, creating a single access point for the information.
- 2.11. Specific considerations for each of the four towns have been outlined where these fall beyond the general guidance, for example the impact of the Article 4 Directive in Stamford and restrictions on lighting in Market Deeping.
- 2.12. The SKDC shopfront design guide will also be a useful reference for shop owners whose properties are situated outside of the four towns in village high streets.
- 2.13. The guide has been reformatted into clear sections which make accessing specific information easier, including updated photography and illustrations, enhanced guidance colour choice, signage, lighting and suitable materials, and strengthened guidance on the use of window vinyls.
- 2.14. It is understood that there is a desire to look for ways to prevent new window vinyls from being used; this will be explored separately including looking at whether byelaws could be used.
- 2.15. It is proposed that this document will be approved as a technical document which will sit alongside the current design guides which are supplementary planning policy documents, and that it will support the implementation of a new Shopfront maintenance grant scheme in all four market towns (funded by UK Shared

Prosperity Fund) supporting retailers in improving shopfronts and signage in line with the guidance.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The town centres of Grantham, Stamford, Bourne and Market Deeping are all within designated conservation areas which highlights the importance of their special character and historic value.
- 3.2. Many of the retail properties within the town centres are listed buildings and as such under a higher level of legal protection. Carrying out unauthorised works to a listed building is an offence which may result in prosecution.
- 3.3. Despite this many business owners are not aware of the relevant guidance and planning regulations which relate to shopfronts.
- 3.4. Current guidance documents have not been updated in nearly 20 years, and while much of the guidance remains accurate, they do not reflect current planning or equality legislation, which has been addressed in the new document.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The 'do nothing' option has been considered as existing guidance, although outdated, does provide necessary basis for planning decisions. However, the most recent iteration of the current guidance was published 19 years ago, and the oldest over 30 years ago; therefore, the documents do not reflect current best practice or legislation in all cases. In addition, much of the guidance is not publicly available in a format which is easily readable.
- 4.2 As such this option was discounted in favour of the production of an updated guide which meets the requirements of current and future users, and which expands the coverage of guidance to include Market Deeping.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. Clear and accessible shopfront design guidance is important to maintaining the quality of the historic environment within the District's town centres, and thereby their attractiveness to visitors, residents and businesses.
- 5.2. The Council's current design guidance, while technically accurate in many ways, requires updating to account for changes in legislation, technology, and to expand the scope of the guidance to cover all of the District's market towns.
- 5.3. The new draft document provides the information in a more accessible format, as well as enhanced information on key elements of shopfront design including

materials, colour, signage and advertising – including the use of window vinyls, and accessibility.

- 5.4. The updated guide will support Officers within the planning team in decision making in relation to shopfront design applications and will facilitate discussion where disagreements in approach arise.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1. [Stamford Shopfront Design Guide \(1993\)](#)
- 6.2. [Grantham Shopfront Design Guide \(1997\)](#)
- 6.3. [Bourne Shopfront Design Guide \(2005\)](#)

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix 1: South Kesteven Shopfront Design Guide 2024