Green Fleet Strategy 2025 – 28

South Kesteven District Council

Foreword

In 2019, South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) declared a climate emergency. In response, we set a target to reduce council carbon emissions by 30% by 2030. We have made excellent progress toward this target, but to succeed, we must reduce the harmful gases released by our vehicles. Climate change and air pollution are enormous challenges, and to create a more sustainable future, we must act now. This includes improving our vehicle fleet and investing in 21st Century solutions.

SKDC uses a fleet of vehicles every day to provide excellent and efficient services to our residents. A mix of cars, vans, street sweepers, bin lorries, and more. These vehicles help us travel to meet residents, maintain public spaces and parks, collect waste, and enforce planning conditions. While most of these activities must be carried out in person, and vehicles remain the most practical way to cover the 350 square miles of South Kesteven, we know they also contribute to climate change and air pollution.

Everyone deserves clean air to breathe. This Strategy is bold because it aims to improve the health and well-being of every resident of South Kesteven. Cleaner air will benefit everyone, whether cycling to work, walking to school, or sitting at a café with friends. By 2035, our carbon-neutral vehicle fleet will help ensure that everyone who lives, works, and plays in South Kesteven can enjoy a healthier, greener, and cleaner district.

This Green Fleet Strategy describes how SKDC will reduce the environmental impact of our vehicles while maintaining the high standards our residents expect. Our goal is for our vehicles to produce as few harmful gases as possible—and, where possible, produce zero emissions. Achieving this will require innovation, sustainable technology, and rethinking how we operate and deliver services.

To meet these goals, we will:

- Reduce vehicle mileage and optimize waste collection routes,
- Promote green and sustainable technology,
- Support innovation in transport, and
- Make active travel, like walking and cycling, safer and easier.

These changes—and many others outlined in this Strategy—will help us achieve our central goal: ***operating a carbon-neutral vehicle fleet by 2035.***

This Strategy introduces a range of actions—some big, some small—that together will make a significant impact. There is no single solution, but these changes will add up to cleaner air, reduced emissions, and a healthier, greener, and cleaner South Kesteven.

Councillor Rhys Baker, Cabinet Member for Waste and the Environment

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1 Introduction

The Need for a Green Fleet Strategy

South Kesteven District Council use a range of vehicles to deliver their statutory and non-statutory services. Activities including maintaining the public realm, undertaking enforcement, delivering housing and other services to residents and collecting and disposing of waste all require the support of a fleet. Whilst the Council has a well-established fleet service, it is evident that there is more to work to do reducing the environmental impact. Fleet emissions now represent the single largest area of carbon emissions for the Council, and emissions have been static or growing since regular carbon reporting commenced in 2018. It will not be possible for the Council to meet overall net zero goals without addressing decarbonisation of the fleet. Therefore, this Green Fleet Strategy has been developed to highlight how the Council will continue to use its fleet to facilitate service delivery whilst also driving down the environmental impact of the service area. The strategy will cover the 3-year period from 2025-28.

Vehicles and the Environment – the Problem

South Kesteven is a predominantly rural district with a population of 143,400 people, it covers 365 square miles and is strategically located alongside the A1. Most of the population lives within the four historic market towns of Bourne, Grantham, Stamford and The Deepings. The remainder live in the network of villages and rural dwellings. The geographical spread of the population throughout the district means that travel by motor vehicle is the most likely choice for service delivery. In 2021, the Council's services drove 1,473,371 miles and produced 1,988 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (Transport Decarbonisation Report, 2022).

To service the district's needs, the current fleet is made up of over 160 vehicles and over 80 pieces of machinery; with the exception of two pool cars, everything else is powered by traditional fossil fuels. Alongside the impacts on the environment, the emissions from fossil fuels are known to affect people's health, impact quality of life and contribute to noise pollution.

The Council's 2023/24 update on its carbon reporting highlighted that the carbon emissions from the operation of the vehicle fleet remains consistently high, showing little change from the 2018/19 baseline. The fleet is now the largest contributor to the Council's carbon emissions, responsible for 34% of emitted carbon during the 2023/24 financial year.

The Council has pledged reduce carbon emissions for a 2030 target and has committed to create a more sustainable district within their Corporate Plan 2024-27. Furthermore, the government has mandated that from 2035 it will be illegal to sell new petrol and diesel vehicles, and there is a national target to meet the 'net zero' emissions target by 2050.

The Council's Commitments

This strategy and action plan is supported by several documents, and it is designed to align with the climate goals of the Council as a whole. The fleet plays a large role in reaching the 2035 net zero target and therefore it is essential that this strategy aligns with the following documents:

- The Corporate Plan 2024 – 27: The Corporate Plan is made up of five priorities, one of which is '***Sustainable South Kesteven'.*** This mission of this priority is to 'meet the challenge of climate change and ensure a clean, green and healthy natural and built environment for present and future generations'. A key target within this document is to reduce the operational carbon footprint by 30% between 2019 and 2030.

- South Kesteven Climate Action Strategy: this document sets out the Council's vision, aims and high-level ambition to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- The Transport Decarbonisation Report, 2022: this document was written by the energy saving trust and it is a technical breakdown of the environmental impact of the fleet with recommendations for improvements.

These documents provide the corporate and technical background for this strategy, and together with this document they highlight how the Green Fleet Strategy and Action Plan will contribute to the Council's environmental aims.

To support this document, a ***Technical Appendices*** has also been created. The Technical Appendices contains an in-depth breakdown of the information used to create to this strategy and action plan and it is anticipated that the documents will be used in tandem. This document will set out the high-level aims and objectives with linked action plans, the Technical Appendices will provide all the additional technical information which has been used to inform the strategy.

What is the Green Fleet Strategy

The Green Fleet Strategy provides a structure for delivering services in the most energy efficient way, it is based on the following principles:

- Adopting cleaner technologies and fuels – embedding green criteria within the Council's procurement process to encourage the exploration of alternative vehicles.
- Encouraging efficient vehicle use – introduce a system for monitoring and analysing vehicle usage across all service areas to explore how overall fuel usage can be reduced.
- Managing demand – reducing mileage, encouraging efficient journey planning and optimising routes. This will include rationalising the fleet to reduce the number of vehicles required where possible and ascertaining where vehicle life cycles can be extended. Current practices will be examined and improved to ensure demand is managed to maximise resource efficiency.
- Improving supporting infrastructure – the new depot project (due to complete in late 2025) offers the opportunity to increase the number of EV charging points. This increase will influence the vehicle replacement schedule moving forward.

The Council's Fleet and Grey Fleet

The Council runs a mixed fleet which procures, repairs and maintains vehicles and machinery for a variety of services including Waste, Street Scene, Housing and Markets. The Transport Team look after 243 vehicles/machinery and Table 1 shows a breakdown of the vehicles and machinery. Currently, only two of the vehicles operated by the Council are electric vehicles; these are two Renault Zoes which reside within the pool car stock.

Table 1: Current Fleet Breakdown (2024/25)

Vehicle Type	Service Area	Fleet Size
RCV 32 Tonne	Waste	4
RCV 26 Tonne	Waste	21
RCV 22 Tonne	Waste	2
RCV 18 Tonne	Waste	2
HGV – Other	Waste	8
Pool Cars	All	17
Hook lift	Waste	1
Pick Up	Street Cleansing	6
Large Sweeper	Street Cleansing	3

Small Sweeper	Street Cleansing	4
Tractor	Street Cleansing/Markets	1
Van	Street Cleansing/Housing/Waste	87
Machinery	Street Cleansing (Grounds Maintenance)	87
Total		**243**

In 2022, the Council commissioned a 'Transport Decarbonisation Report'. The report was written by the Energy Saving Trust, and it provided a benchmark for the greenhouse gas emissions and the energy consumption associated with its road transport fleet. Throughout 2021 (the operational year assessed by the report) SKDC's road transport drove 1,473,371 miles and consumed 6,741 megawatt of fossil fuel energy; around 1,988 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were produced. Table 2 shows the breakdown of greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption by vehicle type for the Council's fleet (2021 figures).

A further consideration is the use of the Council's grey fleet – these are vehicles which are owned by employees but used for travel associated with work. Due to the nature of the grey fleet, the Council has no control over the environmental merits of personal cars. However, the Council operates a pool car system, and this strategy explores how the use of this system can be improved to reduce the environmental impact of the grey fleet.

A full breakdown of the data used to support this strategy document can be found in the Technical Appendices, this includes an in-depth breakdown of the environmental impact of the fleet.

The Document's Structure – How to Use This Strategy

This document highlights the vision and key objectives of the Council alongside action plans for each key objective. The action plans will be implemented and monitored in partnership with the key stakeholders. The document contains the following sections –

- **Section 2**: Vision and Key Objectives – this section sets out the high-level vision of the Council and highlights the agreed key objectives which will remain the same throughout the period of the strategy, they form the basis of this strategy and are essential for building a solid foundation for a change of culture around fleet management.
- **Section 3**: Action Plans – this section will be 'live' and it will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect any changes in strategic direction, policy or legislation. The action plans will also include a monitoring process which will identify areas of strength and weakness and help guide the decisions made at the annual review. The key KPI's will be monitored through the Corporate Plan performance management process.
- **Section 4 and 5**: Policy Statements – these sections set out key changes to the Council's procurement policy and travel policies. These changes, whilst they will take time to implement, are key to the long-term success of the green fleet aspiration.

Supporting Information / Technical Appendices

In addition to this document, there is also a Technical Appendices document which contains supporting and in-depth information on the Council's fleet, the environmental impact of the fleet and the financial implications of 'greening' the Council's fleet.

2 Vision and Key Outcomes

The automative industry is currently experiencing rapid technological change; green technologies and alternative fuel options are emerging indicating a step change in the industry with a renewed focus on reducing emissions and maximising efficiency. This change is driven by the Governments commitment to reach 'net zero' by 2050, alongside the Governments pledge to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2035. South Kesteven District Council's (the Council's) fleet is predominantly made up of diesel vehicle's, except for two electric cars. This strategy aims to address this imbalance and facilitate a change from the current dependence on fossil fuelled vehicles to a greener approach to vehicle procurement and utilisation.

It is the vision of this strategy that *by the end of the 3-year period, the fleet is considerably less dependent upon fossil fuels and making use of green technologies and behaviours; this includes considering electric vehicles and alternative fuels alongside the smart use of vehicles to reduce avoidable journeys.* This is a facilitating strategy; green technology is still in its infancy and there is much debate over the best way forward within the industry. It is because of this inertia that this three-year strategy will focus on how the carbon emissions of the current fleet can be reduced without a full switch to one solution.

To meet this vision, three key outcomes have been identified to help us to address the key challenges we face over the next three-years. These outcomes are –

1. ***Facilitate the transition to a carbon neutral fleet through the usage of green technology including electric vehicles and alternative fuels,***

2. ***Facilitate the transition to greener driving behaviours and more effective fleet usage by ensuring vehicles are used as efficiently as possible and eliminating unnecessary journeys, and***

3. ***Ensure the fleet is fit for present and future service delivery.***

This strategy will focus on how each of the three key outcomes can be developed to ensure that the Council's fleet not only reduces emissions but is also fit for delivering efficient and effective services in the face of planned and unexpected changes throughout the years ahead. For each key outcome, a series of indicators have been defined to enable the delivery of the outcome.

Outcome 1: Facilitate the transition to a carbon neutral fleet through the usage of green technology including electric vehicles and alternative fuels

This outcome focusses on how the target to reduce carbon emissions by 2030 (Corporate Plan 2024-27) will be achieved. This will be achieved through a dual focus of:

1. A switch to electric vehicles, and
2. Other initiatives which focus on improving efficiency and indirectly reducing emissions, these include:
   - Explore the use of alternative, low-emission fuel alternatives including hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO), and
   - Exploring innovative options such as trialling home charging for electric vehicles which are stored at home overnight.

To ensure this is achieved, the following key indicators have been developed and will be our focus over the next three years.

Outcome 1: Facilitate the transition to a carbon neutral fleet	
Key indicators	
1.1	Annual reduction in vehicle CO2 emissions through utilisation of alternative fuels and electric/hybrid vehicles where feasible.
1.2	Establish an E-vehicle home charging trial for vehicles which are stored at home overnight.

Outcome 2: Facilitate the transition to greener driving behaviours and more effective fleet usage by ensuring vehicles are used as efficiently as possible and eliminating unnecessary journeys

This outcome focusses on how behaviours can be changed to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the fleet. This will be achieved through a focus on:

1. Data collection – establishing a baseline on current vehicle usage which includes the council owned fleet, pool cars and grey fleet,
2. Maximising efficiencies – reviewing vehicle utilisation and routes to assess whether fewer vehicles are required overall, the vehicle types selected are fit for purpose and journeys are carried out in the most effective order, and
3. Improving behaviours – using technology to analyse driver behaviour and educating drivers on the most environmentally friendly ways to utilise vehicles.

Outcome 2: Facilitate the transition to greener driving behaviours and more effective fleet usage by ensuring vehicles are used as efficiently as possible and eliminating unnecessary journeys	
Key indicators	
2.1	Establish baseline data for current fleet usage which covers the usage of council owned vehicles, pool cars and grey fleet.
2.2	Undertake a vehicle utilisation assessment and route review and establish areas for improved efficiency.
2.3	Work with each service area to identify best practice driving behaviours and how these can be rolled out to their team.

Outcome 3: Ensure the fleet is fit for present and future service delivery

This outcome focusses on ensuring that the Council's Transport Team can support service delivery at the present time and into the future. This outcome has two focusses:

1. Compliance – ensuring that the service is compliant with the terms of the Operator's Licence, ensuring all scheduled and reactive repairs and maintenance are completed in-line with legislative requirements and ensuring employees using fleet vehicles are legally compliant (licence, speeding etc.), and
2. Procurement – providing professional advice to service users on vehicle procurement specifications, working in partnership with service users to identify suitable replacement types and ensuring that vehicle procurement is completed as per the relevant financial process.

This will be achieved through the following indicators.

Outcome 3: Ensure the fleet is fit for present and future service delivery	
Key indicators	
2.1	Ensure SKDC's fleet and Operating Centres remain compliant with the conditions of the Operator's Licence.
2.2	Retain 'Green' OCRS (Operator Compliance Risk Score) status.
2.3	Establish a Transport User Group to monitor policy compliance and driver behaviour across all departments using vehicles. The group will establish terms of reference and relevant KPI's in line with policies.
2.4	Health and Safety – ensure Risk Assessments and relevant documents are reviewed annually and after any significant incident.

3 Action Plans

This strategy is based on three key outcomes which will enable us to address the key challenges and achieve the vision of the strategy. The previous section outlined the outcomes and the high-level indicators which will be used to monitor progress against the outcomes; this section outlines the key actions which will also be monitored to facilitate the delivery of the indicators and ultimately the three key outcomes.

Outcome 1: Facilitate the transition to a carbon neutral fleet through the usage of green technology including electric vehicles and alternative fuels

Key Indicator	Actions		Outcomes
Annual reduction in vehicle CO2 emissions through utilisation of alternative fuels and electric/hybrid vehicles where feasible.	1.1a	Year on year increase in the use of HVO (or another suitable alternative).	• Year on year increase in the use of alternative, low emission fuels
	1.1b	Replace vehicles with electronic alternatives as replacements become due, in-line with budget, procurement and infrastructure requirements. This will include 4 x EV's within this 3-year period.	• Ensure 4 electric vehicles are included within the vehicle replacement programme for the next 3 years, in line with infrastructure allowances at the new depot
	1.1c	Introduce a BEV procurement policy that follows a clear process to prioritise BEV purchases (based on highest efficiency and the greatest potential to reduce GHG emissions). The process should consider utilisation, whole life costs and emissions as part of the vehicle procurement.	• Review all current fleet-related policies and processes with a view to embedding the 'green fleet' principles
Establish an E-vehicle home charging trial for vehicles which are stored at home overnight.	1.2a	Create a business case for the implementation of the trial, if successful, roll out the trial and monitor performance.	• Collect data throughout the trial period to ascertain the success of the trail and the viability of rolling this out more widely within the council
	1.2b	Once complete, analyse the success of the trial and ascertain if this can be rolled out on a larger scale.	• Establish a programme for further roll out

Outcome 2: Facilitate the transition to greener driving behaviours and more effective fleet usage by ensuring vehicles are used as efficiently as possible and eliminating unnecessary journeys

Key Indicator	Actions		Outcomes
Establish baseline data for current fleet usage which covers the usage of council owned vehicles, pool cars and grey fleet.	2.1a	Create baseline from existing data and identify areas for improvement.	• Established baseline data set which clearly defines starting position to track progress against within 3 months of strategy adoption
	2.1b	Where possible, benchmark data against other local authorities and identify where best practice can be shared.	• Identify suitable network which offers benchmarking against like for like authorities within 3 months of strategy adoption
Undertake a vehicle utilisation assessment and route review and establish areas for improved efficiency.	2.2a	Undertake vehicle utilisation review and establish vehicles which are under-utilised and explore alternative options.	• Annual review of vehicle utilisation which aligns with the council's vehicle replacement programme to ensure there isn't a vehicle surplus
	2.2b	Undertake a route review for each service area and establish areas where route optimisation would be effective.	• Introduce optimised routes for all service areas alongside a process for regular route optimisation assessments
	2.2c	Establish mechanism within the Transport User Group (Outcome 3) to monitor and improve vehicle utilisation and route optimisation.	• The creation of a mechanism which allows high-level monitoring of performance through the user group
Work with each service area to identify best practice driving behaviours and how these can be rolled out to their team.	2.3a	Establish training plan for all employees who are required to drive council vehicles.	• Training plan to be rolled out to relevant service areas within one year of strategy adoption
	2.3b	Create monitoring process which allows poor driving behaviours to be identified and rectified through training and education.	• The creation of key KPI's which allow high-level monitoring of performance through the user group

Outcome 3: Ensure the fleet is fit for present and future service delivery

Key Indicator	Actions		Outcomes
Ensure SKDC's fleet and Operating Centres remain compliant with the conditions of the Operator's Licence.	3.1a	To ensure that all requirements of the operators' licence requirements are met, including vehicle maintenance, inspections, driving hours and behaviour.	• Services continue to run seamlessly with no disruption to service delivery
Retain 'Green' OCRS (Operator Compliance Risk Score) status.	3.2a	To ensure that vehicles are always maintained to a high standard and are properly prepared in advance of their annual MOT.	• Seamless delivery of transport services
	3.2b	To ensure Mechanics are trained and accredited to ensure they have the necessary skills required.	• Continuous and safe delivery of service
Establish a Transport User Group to monitor policy compliance and driver behaviour across all departments using vehicles. The group will establish terms of reference and relevant KPI's in line with policies.	3.3a	Establish the group including: • Membership, • Meeting interval, • Terms of reference, • KPI's, and • Roles and responsibilities.	• Establish group within 3-months of strategy adoption • Establish KPI's for performance and improvement monitoring at initial meeting of the group
	3.3b	Monitor and feedback progress through annual corporate performance reporting through the Corporate Plan.	• Incorporate agreed KPI's into the corporate performance monitoring process within first year of strategy adoption
Health and Safety – ensure Risk Assessments and relevant documents are reviewed annually and after any significant incident.	3.4a	Undertake annual review of risk assessments and safe systems of work.	• Completion of annual review of relevant RA's and SSOW
	3.4b	Undertake additional reviews when relevant in-line with legislation updates, policy changes and health and safety recommendations.	• Undertake additional reviews when required and as advised by the corporate Health and Safety team

4 Policy Statement 1: Green Fleet

Green Vehicle Procurement Process

This strategy will only be effective if specific processes are altered to ensure they support the delivery of the key objectives. One area essential to this success is procurement. Therefore, to coincide with the implementation of this strategy the procurement process for vehicles will be amended to reflect the Council's commitment to the green fleet.

The Transport Manager and Procurement Lead will be required to:

- Assess the options and ensure the most environmentally friendly option is chosen when a vehicle is procured,
- Assess the vehicle needs of the year ahead and adjust the budget requirements to reflect the additional costs associated with more environmentally friendly options,
- Propose and encourage the uptake of low/zero emission vehicles with service area leads, and
- Carry out an annual assessment of vehicle utilisation to ensure vehicles are rationalised wherever possible.

5 Policy Statement 2: Travel Optimisation

This strategy will only be effective if specific processes are altered to ensure they support the delivery of the key objectives. An additional area essential to this success is a travel optimisation. This is a decision-making process which encourages staff to minimise travel, reduce overall travel time and mileage and minimise emissions. In addition, it aligns with the Council's health and wellbeing priorities by encouraging employees to consider walking or cycling to work destinations as opposed to using a vehicle.

Travel optimisation sets out a decision-making process to minimise travel and its impact, and it includes:

- Does there need to be an 'in person' meeting?
- Will an audio or web conference meet the business need?
- Can a more sustainable mode of travel be used such as walking, cycling or public transport?
- Is there a low emission pool or car club vehicle available?
- Can the journey be shared with a colleague?
- What is the best time for the meeting to minimise journey disruption?

This is a new concept which has been enabled by developing technology over recent years and to ensure it is embedded, it has been included in the action plan for Outcome 1.