



Local Development Scheme (2025 - 2028)

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008 and Localism Act 2011) requires a Local Planning Authority to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme setting out the Development Plan Documents to be produced, including the Local Plan. The report is seeking approval of the 2025 - 2028 Local Development Scheme for publication.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to approve the Local Development Scheme (2025 – 2028) for publication.

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities Housing 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 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy s151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 All planning authorities are required to produce an updated Local Development Scheme by 6 March – the February meeting of Cabinet is the last opportunity to consider the Scheme prior to the deadline.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 Publishing a Local Development Scheme, and keeping it up to date, is a regulatory requirement. The Council currently has a Local Development Scheme in place, but an update is required due to the publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024 which has triggered the review of the Local Development Scheme and Local Plan timetable. Local Plans must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council has therefore revised the Local Plan timetable to take into account the implications of the new National Planning Policy Framework.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance and Risk Officer

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.4 The planning process seeks to meet the needs of our diverse community. The emerging Local Plan will be supported by evidence-based reports such as a Local Housing Needs Assessment; Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment; and Employment Land Review which will identify the accommodation and employment needs of our community up to 2041. The emerging Local Plan seeks to meet the need by identifying suitable land allocations. The planning process requires

developers to meet all housing needs, providing appropriate type and sized dwellings to meet the needs of current and future households.

- 1.5 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was published in 2021 and explains how the Council will involve and consult with the public and wider stakeholders when planning for the future of South Kesteven District. The SCI seeks to ensure that consultation will be inclusive to ensure that our diverse community are made aware of; and given the opportunity to comment on development plan documents and planning applications. This includes ensuring that the planning process is transparent and accessible.
- 1.6 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will need to be carried out at each key stage of Local Plan preparation to ensure that the Local Plan is inclusive and implemented in an equitable manner.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

Climate Change

- 1.7 The production of a Local Development Scheme has no identified impact on climate change as it is a timetable for development plan production. The Local Plan and planning system is a mechanism to support delivery on the climate change agenda and the Council's commitment to reduce the organisations' carbon footprint and support the district on a pathway to net zero carbon. The emerging Local Plan will introduce new climate change policy evidenced by a Climate Change Study; and will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 South Kesteven District Council's vision, as set out in the 2024 – 2027 Corporate Plan is to be: "A thriving District to live in, work and visit". The Local Plan and Planning Service have a key role to play in realising this vision by recognising that every locality has different constraints and opportunities. The Council is committed to ensuring that the planning service does everything that it can to support our communities and to sustainable growth. This will be achieved by working proactively with our communities to ensure that development meets the needs of our business and local economy as well as recognising the importance of housing and growth to meet the needs of our residents. Having an up-to-date Local Plan means that the Council can ensure that the best development is delivered in the right places to meet the needs of our residents and to deliver the Council's ambitious growth plan.

The Local Plan

- 2.2 Local Plans must be succinct and up-to-date providing a positive vision for the future of the area and a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social, and environmental priorities. The preparation of the Local Plan will usually follow the stages outlined below:

1. Evidence gathering and early consultation
2. Call for Sites
3. Public Consultation – key Issues and Options for the Local Plan Review
4. Public consultation on Draft Consultative Local Plan
5. Public Consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan
6. Submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Examination
7. Examination of Local Plan by Planning Inspectorate
8. Adoption of Local Plan

Local Development Scheme

- 2.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) places a statutory duty on South Kesteven District Council to outline which documents will form part of the Council's Local Plan within a document known as the Local Development Scheme. The Local Development Scheme informs developers, landowners, agents, and members of the public of the Council's programme for the preparation of documents and the key stages to get involved in the planning making process.
- 2.4 The Local Development Scheme should be kept up to date to reflect the Council's progress and to inform residents and stakeholders of each stage of the Local Plan Review and opportunities to participate.

Progress against the June 2024 Local Development Scheme

- 2.5 The Local Development scheme published in June 2024 indicated that a Draft Local Plan would be published in Winter 2023/2024 for a consultation (number four of the stages outlined above) in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). The Draft Local Plan consultation commenced on 29th February 2024 for 8 weeks until 25th April 2024 in conformity with the Local Development Scheme.
- 2.6 The next stage of consultation, Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan, was scheduled for Winter 2024/25. Due to the publication of the new NPPF in December 2024, and the implications therein, the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan was not published for consultation as intended, triggering the requirement for the Local Plan timetable to be reviewed. Furthermore, since the publication of the new NPPF, reviews of Local Development Schemes nationwide have been mandated by the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government.

Letter to Chief Planners from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

- 2.7 In a letter to chief planners, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government asked that, in light of the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, that all planning authorities produce an updated Local Development Scheme within 12 weeks of the publication of the NPPF, i.e. by no later than 6 March 2025.
- 2.8 The Local Development Scheme at **Appendix A** covers the period 2025-2028 and updates the previous version published in June 2024. If approved at Cabinet on 11th February 2025, the Council will publish the revised Local Development Scheme, meeting the government-imposed deadline of 6 March 2025. A copy of the Local Development Scheme will also be emailed to the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, as requested by the letter to chief planners.

The implications of the new National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

- 2.9 In December 2024, the government published a new NPPF, following consultation. The government's response to the consultation of the NPPF states:
- “All earlier stage plans [proceeding regulation 19] progressing under this version of the National Planning Policy Framework will be expected to be submitted for examination under the existing 2004 Act system no later than December 2026”*
- 2.10 Due to the uncertainty of the NPPF, a Regulation 19 version of the South Kesteven Local Plan was not published for consultation as per the current Local Development Scheme. As such, the South Kesteven Local Plan is an 'earlier stage plan'. Policies in the new NPPF now apply, and the Council must submit the Local Plan no later than December 2026 for it to be examined under the existing 2004 Act.
- 2.11 The new NPPF's standard method calculates a new mandatory housing need for South Kesteven District Council of 895 dwellings per year, an uplift of 208 dwellings per year. To meet the uplifted housing need of 895 homes, the Council must allocate additional land to the preferred sites publicised within the Regulation 18 Local Plan.
- 2.12 A review of available suitable land as detailed within the February 2024 Site Assessment Report, indicates that there is additional suitable land available to meet the increased need; as such another Call for Sites is not required. Furthermore, a further call for sites, and the resultant assessment of any sites received, would take a significant amount of time which timescales do not allow for.

The New Local Plan Timetable

2.13 Taking into account the implications of the new NPPF, the expected timetable for key milestones in the preparation of the Local Plan and the detail of each stage is set out below. More information on each stage of plan production can be found at **Appendix B**.

2.14 To ensure a transparent process, the new Local Plan timetable includes an additional six-week regulation 18 consultation following a redraft of the Plan.

Plan Stage	Regulation	Agreed timetable (June 2024)	Revised timetable (2025 Draft Local Development Scheme)	Status
Commencement of Document Preparation		April 2020	-	Completed
Consultation on the scope of the Plan	Regulation 18	12 October – 23 November 2020	-	Completed
Consultation on the Draft Local Plan	Regulation 18	29 February – 25 April 2024	-	Completed
Consultation on Draft Local Plan Focussing on Additional Sites	Regulation 18	-	June-July 2025	Not started
Consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan	Regulation 19	Winter 2024/2025	January – February 2026	Not started
Submission	Regulation 22	Summer 2025 (June)	November 2026	Not started
Examination	Regulation 24	Summer 2025 – Spring 2026	November 2026 – October 2027	Not started
Inspector's Report	Regulation 25	Spring 2026	October 2027	Not started
Adoption	Regulation 26	Summer 2026	November 2027	Not started

2.15 The proposed revised timetable considers the best information currently available and reflects lead in times to obtain consents and approvals to move between the different stages of the Local Plan.

- 2.16 It is important to note that the Local Plan is timetabled to be submitted to the Secretary of State before the government-imposed deadline of December 2026, to ensure that the Local Plan is considered under the existing legal framework.**

Next Steps

- 2.17 The next steps are:
- Publish the Local Development Scheme before 6 March as requested by the letter to chief planners dated 13 December 2024
 - Email Local Development Scheme to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, as specified in the letter to chief planners dated 13 December 2024
 - Notify the Secretary of State via the Planning Inspectorate, of the revised Local Development Scheme and timetable for submission to ensure that the Planning Inspectorate can adequately resource the Local Plan examination.
 - Implementation of the new Local Plan timetable and project plan.
 - Notify key stakeholders including, all District Councillors and the Town and Parish Council.
 - In accordance with regulatory requirements, if approved, the Local Development Scheme will be published onto the Council's website;

The Local Development Scheme will be monitored and considered on an annual basis through the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), which sets out the list of documents included and considers any changes and updates.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The Council has a legal duty to keep the Local Development Scheme up to date and to publish onto the Council's website. The previously agreed timetable is out of date and requires amending.
- 3.2 **Other than the timetable, no other key changes have been made to the Local Development Scheme.**

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternative of not reviewing the Local Development Scheme has been discounted. Failing to keep the Local Development Scheme up to date would contravene the statutory requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Planning Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 12.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The reason for the recommendation is to ensure the Council is providing an up-to-date position and an accurate timeline for the production of development plan documents. This will ensure that the Council is acting in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 5.2 In a letter to chief planners, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government asked that, in light of the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, that all planning authorities produce an updated Local Development Scheme within 12 weeks of the publication of the NPPF, i.e. by no later than 6 March 2025. Approval and publication of the revised Local Development Scheme in February 2025 will ensure that this deadline is met.
- 5.3 Maintaining an up-to-date Local Development Scheme will ensure a transparent process. This is important because the local community and others with an interest in the district can be kept aware of development plan production and stages of consultation.
- 5.4 Supporting the continuity of the planning function in South Kesteven will aid the recovery of the local economy and the economic resilience of the district by providing greater certainty and confidence for future investment and development.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation on the Local Development Scheme is not a regulatory requirement.

A key element to the preparation of the Local Plan Review is the Council's approach to consulting and engaging the community on the South Kesteven Local Plan. The Local Plan goes through several stages of preparation. It is important to clearly set out how and when people can become involved in the process, which is the purpose of the Local Development Scheme. Significant consultation will be undertaken throughout all the stages of preparing and producing the Local Plan Review and timescales for consultation are set out in the Local Development Scheme. In undertaking consultation, the Council must comply with its adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 List any background papers and where they can be accessed:

- Local Development Scheme (June 2024)
https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-08/Local_Development_Scheme_2023-2026.pdf
- Statement of Community Involvement 2021

https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-08/Final_SCI_2021.pdf

- National Planning Policy Framework

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Local Development Scheme (February 2025)

8.2 Appendix B: Stages of Local Plan Production