

Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 3 June 2025



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Date of publication: 19 June 2025

Call in expiry: 26 June 2025 – decisions can be implemented on 27 June 2025 (if no call-in)

The Leader: **Councillor Ashley Baxter** (Chairman)
The Deputy Leader: **Councillor Paul Stokes** (Vice Chairman)

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Rhys Baker, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste
Councillor Richard Cleaver, Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement
Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Planning
Councillor Philip Knowles, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing
Councillor Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing

Non-Cabinet Members present

Councillor Matthew Bailey (part of the meeting)
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Gloria Johnson (part of the meeting)
Councillor Nikki Manterfield (part of the meeting)
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Ian Selby

Officers

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects
David Scott, Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)
Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Shaza Brannon, Planning Policy Manager
Sam Fitt, Senior HR/Corporate Project Officer
Charles James, Policy Officer

1. Public Open Forum

A question was received from Mrs Jill Groutage relating to the Local Plan.

Mrs Groutage noted the previous Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation had proposed an allocation of 86 houses in Baston village. The revised consultation had increased this figure to 283. She asked Members to consider the effect that such an increase would have on the residents and nature of Baston. She also noted that the developer's website proposed to build only 250 houses rather than 283.

The Cabinet Member explained that central government had increased minimum housing targets for South Kesteven. In relation to the Baston site, a developer had offered the additional land as part of the previous Regulation 18 consultation. All potential site allocations needed to meet specific suitability criteria as outlined within the amended Local Plan e.g. appropriate landscaping and infrastructure. The site would only be approved if deemed appropriate by the Planning Inspectorate.

Mrs Groutage raised safety concerns relating to the site allocation proposed to the west of the A15 in Baston. The location was known for accidents and pedestrian infrastructure was inadequate. The Cabinet Member responded that Lincolnshire County Council had confirmed pedestrian links to the village would require improvement.

Mrs Groutage expressed concern that the proposed allocation was only 25 metres from a known flood plain. The Cabinet Member responded that flood risk assessments formed part of the process and any areas susceptible to flooding could be used for open spaces and biodiversity net gain.

A statement was read on behalf of Councillor Vanessa Smith, outlining her concern about the sharp increase in the projected population of the village and the likely consequential increase in traffic flow. The statement also echoed Mrs Groutage's concerns about flooding near the development site.

The Cabinet Member for Planning clarified that an eight-week consultation on the amended Local Plan would begin in early July 2025.

2. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 13 May 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. Procurement of Integrated HR and Payroll Hosted System

Purpose of report

To award a new contract for the HR and Payroll system.

Decision

Cabinet awarded a five-year contract to Midland HR (MHR) via Softcat at an annual cost of £67,770.97 for the provision of the iTrent HR and Payroll system.

Alternative options considered and rejected

One alternative considered was to tender for new potential bidders. This could have resulted in implementing a new HR and Payroll system that did not integrate with existing systems such as the Recruitment or Learning system as detailed in the report. There would also be significant additional training costs, and potential costs of migrating to another system again after Local Government Re-organisation. Furthermore, there was insufficient time to procure a new system, before the end of the current contract, which would result in increased costs for the Council.

The Council could have done nothing. This would have meant the contract with MHR would expire, leaving the Council at risk of having no HR/Payroll system, losing employee records and details and resulting in employees not being paid.

Reasons for the decision

The current three year contract with MHR via SoftCat was due to expire at the end of July 2025. There had also been a contract with MHR for a five year terms which had commenced in 2017. The MHR 'iTrent' platform was industry leading and was used by a number of neighbouring authorities.

The iTrent system also supplies modules for recruitment and learning, fully integrated with the new learning management system. The annual cost of the new contract had increased slightly since the previous contract with the supplier, mainly due to inflation and updated modules of benefit to the Council.

Two pricing options have been considered; the 5-year contract provided better value for money and the stability of a longer contract period.

The Council needed to continue to use its current HR/Payroll system for employee details and payment information. The 5-year contract was more cost effective, provided stability, and brought multiple contracts under one term.

Local Government Re-organisation had been a key consideration, but on the basis of cost, and the lower risk due to neighbouring authorities using the same system, a 5-year contract was the preferred option.

6. Contract Award for External Decorating

Purpose of report

To seek approval to award a contract to Alfred Bagnall & Sons (East Midlands) Limited for the provision of External Refurbishment works to council owned dwellings for South Kesteven District Council. The contract would be awarded for 3 years with an option to extend for a further years (1+1+1+1), giving a potential duration of 7 years

Decision

Cabinet approved the award of a contract to Alfred Bagnall & Sons (East Midlands) Limited for the provision of External Refurbishment works at South Kesteven District Council owned dwellings with an annual value of £250k for a period of 3 years with the option to extend annually for up to 4 years.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Consideration had been given to the option of carrying out the works “in-house”, but due to current workload and staffing levels this was not a viable option. The Council could have chosen not to carry out external refurbishment works but this was not cost effective as it could lead to further building defects in the longer term, increasing the cost of works.

Reasons for the decision

The proposed contract award had followed a compliant procurement process in line with the Contract Procedure Rules and provided the Council with the appropriate contracts to enable it to deliver the commitment to ensure that all residents could access housing which was safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for the needs of themselves and future generations.

This was an essential part of the cyclical maintenance of Council properties, and provided improvement whilst playing a part in preserving the key components of houses. Without this, issues could manifest and lead to further more costly defects.

A huge range of different processes could be covered by these works, but the best estimate from senior officers was that around 600 properties would benefit from these works. Several teams around the district would be working simultaneously as a result of this contract award.

7. Regulation 18 Local Plan - Proposed Housing and Mixed-Use Site Allocations

Purpose of report

To recommend that the Council approves the publication of a Regulation 18 Local Plan - Proposed Housing and Mixed-Use Site Allocations consultation for a period of eight weeks.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approves the consultation of the Regulation 18 Local Plan - Proposed Housing and Mixed-use Site Allocations (Appendix A of the report) in accordance with the timetable contained within the Council's Local Development Scheme (approved by Cabinet February 2025).**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director (Planning and Growth), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, to make any minor amendments to the document (in order to correct matters of fact or aid clarity to the reader) prior to its publication for consultation purposes.**

Alternative options considered and rejected

The alternative of not publishing a consultation on a Regulation 18 Proposed Housing Land Allocation consultation had been discounted. Whilst the Council had already discharged Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) 2012 by publishing the Issues & Options and Draft Local Plan consultations, it was best practice to keep the community informed and to seek further comment, as the plan evolved.

Publishing the consultation would also ensure that the Local Plan stayed on track and adhered to the timetable set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

Reasons for the decision

The primary reason for the decision was to ensure the Council had an up-to-date legally compliant Local Plan and met the agreed published timetable.

A year ago South Kesteven District Council was at an advanced stage of reviewing the Local Plan. There was then a General Election in July 2024 when both of the biggest parties promised to get Britain building again. The new government promised to build 1.5 million houses. Government published a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with big changes to how housing need was calculated. The changes made by national government had substantially increased South Kesteven District's annual housing need from 701 (as published through 2024 Draft Local Plan) to 886 dwellings per year, an uplift of 185 dwellings per year. This meant that the Local Plan's minimum housing need was 17,720 dwellings across the plan period (2023-2043).

The Planning Policy Manager gave a presentation to Cabinet, highlighting the following points:

- The Council was on track to publish its Regulation 19 document this year. The introduction of the new NPPF had forced the Council to take a step back to Regulation 18 due to the need to find additional sites. Consultation on the new Regulation 18 Local Plan was scheduled to start in early July 2025.
- If any members of the public wished to be added to the Local Plan database, they were to contact the Council. All those on the consultation database would be contacted directly when consultation started. The consultation would also be publicised through the usual communications channels and social media.
- Over the plan period of 20 years, up to 2043, there was now a need to build an additional 3700 homes.
- The Planning team received a large volume of sites (350) through a Call for Sites and all sites were assessed for constraints and suitability.
- Over 50 planning constraints were used as part of the site assessment process. Important stakeholders such as Natural England, and Lincolnshire County Council as the lead flood authority and highways authority were involved in these assessments.
- The Council had a duty to allocate land to meet the identified accommodation needs of their Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community. The need identified through the 2024 Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment was for 40 pitches. A suitable site was submitted through a second Call for Sites which had been proposed for allocation through the upcoming consultation.
- Identified site constraints did not automatically discount a site from allocation as mitigation may be possible.

Sites identified around the district were highlighted to members:

- **Grantham** – a proposed allocation at Belton Lane had been removed due to significant highways constraints. A 2ha Gypsy and Traveller site allocation was proposed is to the south of Gorse Lane.
- **Deepings** – a proposed allocation at Millfield Road had been removed and development steered to the east of The Deepings. The site identified to the south of Market Deeping was sited within the boundaries of Peterborough City Council and was currently being consulted on through the draft Peterborough Local Plan. South Kesteven District Council had submitted comments.
- **Stamford** – Stamford Exeter Fields site had been altered to a mixed-use site including 105 dwellings and employment land. Stamford had a number of constraints which limits development, including with the Rutland administrative boundary.
- **Bourne** – an additional strip of land to the north of the allocation at Mill Drove was proposed for allocation. The draft policy stipulated that no houses be developed beyond the existing built development line. The land can instead be used for open space and biodiversity net gain. A further allocation was proposed to the west of Bourne.

- **Villages** – there was an increase in draft housing allocations proposed in Colsterworth, Corby Glen, Ancaster, Barrowby, Baston and Harlaxton. Numbers of dwellings were indicative only and may change at the planning permission stage.
- Total supply of housing would amount to approximately 19,672 homes, including a buffer of 11% for contingency. The buffer in the 2024 Draft Local Plan was around 20%. Officers have had to make difficult decisions to meet the increased demand for housing.

The following comments were highlighted during the debate:

- The consultation would be for 8 weeks and officers could only accept comments submitted through that process.
- Comments previously submitted through the process were already noted; this consultation primarily dealt with changes that have been carried out. Comments are welcomed on these changes.
- The Planning team had visited each proposed site to check suitability and feasibility.
- There would be public engagement events throughout the consultation process and copies of the draft Local Plan will be held at South Kesteven offices and local libraries.
- Two briefings to Cabinet members had been held alongside two additional briefings to all Councillors. There have been some slight changes between each briefing.
- People cannot edit or remove previous comments submitted through the consultation process but they were welcome to make new comments.
- This plan represented the best of the options that came forward. The Council had to find nearly 30% more homes than last year to meet new government targets.
- The Council was committed to strengthening services and amenities available within towns and villages in line with population growth. It was hoped that residents would support in lobbying government.
- It had taken a significant amount of time for each site to be assessed, as such further site submissions are not encouraged.
- In the current Local Plan there were no Gypsy and Traveller site allocations; this had been commented on by the Planning Inspectorate. It was noted that South Kesteven needed to urgently allocate sites. If no allocations were made through the new Local Plan the Council would be in the same position as it was now; any planning application before the Council could be weighed in favour of permission because the Council did not currently have sites allocated.

8. Corporate Plan 2024-27 & Productivity Plan 2024/25 - End of Year Review 2024/25

Purpose of report

To present a review of the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan 2024-27 and Productivity Plan 2024/25.

Decision

Cabinet noted the review of the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2024-27.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Overview & Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) lead on performance monitoring and scrutiny. Therefore, performance could purely be reported to the respective OSC. Whilst offering focused scrutiny in line with the Committee remits, the individual OSCs would be unable to assess the Council's performance on the whole. This report provided an accessible and strategic overview of overall delivery for 2024/25. Detailed KPI reports for Q4 2024/25 would be presented to the OSCs over the Q2 2025/26 committee cycle.

Reasons for the decision

This summary report was presented to deliver a strategic overview of the first year of the Corporate Plan and to offer assurance to residents and Members on the ongoing commitment to continuous improvement. There was also a summary update on the delivery of initiatives with the Productivity Plan. Productivity Plans were required in Spring 2024, but this workstream had not been carried forward by the current government.

There was scope for new actions to be included. For example, if there were changes with regard to Local Government Reorganisation different criteria for measuring performance could be required.

Each target had been agreed by the relevant committee. Some targets were measured across departments; for example, housing targets could fall within the remit of the Housing and Planning teams.

9. Key and Non-Key Decisions taken under Delegated Powers

The decision taken under delegated powers was noted.

10. Cabinet Forward Plan

In noting the Forward Plan, the Chief Executive made members aware that there was a further report on Local Government Reorganisation to be tabled at the Cabinet meeting in July.

11. Open Questions from Councillors

Question One – Councillor Tim Harrison

Councillor Harrison asked whether the Cabinet would look into the issue of Wolverhampton City Council issuing thousands more taxi licences than South Kesteven District Council. In Councillor Harrison's opinion, this situation was deterring local drivers from trading.

The Leader of the Council had spoken with the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy Leader about this issue, and recognised the need to respond to questions raised by members of the taxi trade. South Kesteven could not change the rules at Wolverhampton Council, but they could lobby government.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing stated that South Kesteven was not the most expensive location to register a taxi, and neighbours such as Peterborough City Council were substantially more expensive.

Councillor Harrison requested that officers and members engaged with him on this issue.

Question Two – Councillor Rhys Baker

Councillor Rhys Baker asked whether the Leader of the Council was looking forward to the Great Big Green Week taking place across the district.

The Leader of the Council was interested in attending as many events as he could, as was the Chairman of the Council.

Question Three – Councillor Virginia Moran

Councillor Moran stated that she had taken possession of a set of keys for the last property on the Earlesfield Estate in Grantham that had been renovated.

The meeting closed at 3:26pm.