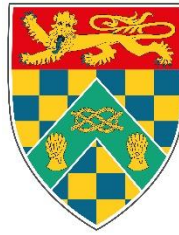


Minutes

Cabinet
Tuesday, 8 July 2025



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Date of publication: 25 July 2025
Call in expiry: 1 August 2025 – decisions
can be implemented on 4 August 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 Helen Crawford
Councillor Phil Gadd
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Sarah Trotter

Officers

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
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)
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection
Chris Prime, Communications Manager
Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance
Mark Rogers, Head of Service (Technical Services)
Gyles Teasdale, Head of Property and ICT
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer

Andrew Beaver, Community Safety Manager
Charles James, Policy Officer

12. Public Open Forum

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

13. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

14. Disclosure of Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

15. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

16. Wharf Road Multi-Storey Car Park Grantham Phase 1 Maintenance Works

Purpose of report

To obtain authority to enter into a contract for essential maintenance works at Wharf Road Multi-Storey Car Park Grantham.

Decision

That Cabinet approves the award of a contract to Rio Asphalt & Paving Co Ltd for a value of £283,305.14 +VAT for essential maintenance works at Wharf Road Multi-Storey Car Park Grantham.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Delaying the works further would mean the car park surface and underlying concrete framed structure would further deteriorate leading to much higher costs in the future. Therefore, this option was discounted.

Reasons for the decision

- The structure of the car park was deteriorating as evidenced by corrosion of the concrete plank structural fixings below Level 3. Resurfacing with mastic asphalt to Level 3 would prevent water ingress and the existing corrosion would be treated to prevent further deterioration.
- The following points were highlighted during debate:
- The car park at Wharf Road had been subjected to a thorough set of surveys.
- Officers had liaised with the landlord, who had agreed a programme of works. The design of the car park had been undertaken by Pick Everard; various contractors had looked at the surfaces to ensure work would be accurate.

- Consultations had taken place with structural engineers regarding the car park. The scope of works included upgrading of the surface base.
- There was no figure available for any projected loss of income because only part of the car park would be closed during the works. At least two of the parking levels would remain open on most days.
- As the car park was being used more than previously (although still far below capacity) it meant that the work was essential.

17. Contract award for Structural Surveying & Associated works

Purpose of report

To seek approval to enter into a contract with Millward Partnership for the provision of structural surveys and associated works to Council owned dwellings for South Kesteven District Council.

Decision

That Cabinet approves the award of a contract to Millward Partnership for the provision of carrying out structural surveys and associated works at South Kesteven District Council owned dwellings with an annual value of £50k for a period of 3 years with the option to extend annually for up to 2 years.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Consideration had been given to the option of carrying out the works “in-house”, but due to the specialist nature of the work this was not a viable option.

Not carrying out the work was also not practicable as this would have led to further building defects, increased repair costs and a housing stock with a low market value.

Reasons for the decision

Structural surveys enabled building defects to be investigated, and remedial work identified. The associated works included the provision of structural calculations along with specifications/drawings when required. All surveying and associated works that would be undertaken on the Council’s housing stock would be done to meet the industry standards and requirements that were set out by the relevant governing bodies. This ensured that residents had a safe home.

Typically, around 45 structural surveys and 12 associated projects were carried out each year. The annual cost for this service was anticipated at £50,000 per annum. The survey works would be funded from the structural survey revenue budget and the associated works would be met from the Technical Services Structural Refurbishment capital budget. The procurement opportunity was tendered as a mini competition using a framework run by Efficiency East Midlands (EEM). Following publication of the opportunity eight Expressions of Interest were received which resulted in four Tender Submissions.

After the tender exercise and evaluation, Millward Partnership gave the best tender submission through the combination of price and quality to carry out structural surveys and associated works on the Council's housing stock. This ensured the Council had a contract in place which was compliant with procurement requirements. Dedicated staff trained in contract management would follow the performance clauses in the contract closely.

18. Contract award for Gas and Electrical Auditing

Purpose of report

To seek approval to enter into a contract with Morgan Lambert for the provision of gas and electrical auditing to Council owned dwellings for South Kesteven District Council.

Decision

That Cabinet approves the award of a contract to Morgan Lambert for the provision of carrying out gas and electrical auditing in South Kesteven District Council owned dwellings, with an annual value of £50k for a period of 3 years with the option to extend annually for up to 2 years.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Consideration had been given to the option of carrying out the work in-house, but this was not a viable option due to the specialised nature of this work and third-party assurance required.

Not carrying out the work was also not practicable as this would have led to further issues as noted above. Carrying out this service by means of a third party ensured impartiality was maintained ensuring a fair and transparent service.

Reasons for the decision

Audits were undertaken on a sample of the gas and electrical works completed each month which provide assurance regarding the quality of the works. The annual cost for this service was anticipated at £50,000 per annum and would be met from the Technical Services Gas and Electrical capital budgets.

The procurement opportunity was tendered as a mini competition using a framework run by Efficiency East Midlands (EEM). Following publication of the opportunity five Expressions of Interest were received which resulted in two Tender Submissions.

Morgan Lambert have given the best tender submission through the combination of price and quality to carry out gas and electrical auditing on the Council's housing stock and to ensure the Council has a compliant contract in place which is compliant with procurement requirements.

The contract award was for the auditing of gas and electrical works rather than for gas and electrical inspections. This award allowed a separate company to audit Council work.

19. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Update

Purpose of report

An update on the latest position with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) following receipt of the Interim Proposal Feedback letter.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the latest position; the proposed timing and confirm the approach set out for the development of the final business plan.**
- 2. Approve the creation of a budget provision of £75,000 to be funded from the General Fund Local Priorities Reserve to procure external support in order to compile the final business plan.**

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council had no obligation to submit an LGR proposal to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). There would be no legal penalty for not doing so, but the Government stated that LGR would proceed even if no proposal was submitted. If the Council does not submit a proposal, it would lose the opportunity to shape and influence LGR to deliver on the strategic interests of South Kesteven's residents.

Reasons for the decision

LGR would have a significant impact on the residents of South Kesteven; therefore, an update on the developing policy programme was presented. A robust LGR proposal must be high quality, evidence-based and offer a thorough analysis of the various options to detail the impact of the Council's preferred LGR configuration on residents, services and businesses. Whilst the Council would endeavour to do as possible internally and with partners, it was recognised that some external expertise and support would add value.

A feedback letter from MHCLG had been received on 3 June 2025 regarding South Kesteven's interim LGR proposal. Furthermore, in-person feedback was received from senior MHCLG officials on 2 and 4 July 2025. Both sets of feedback was general to the Greater Lincolnshire area rather than specific to the South Kesteven bid. MHCLG did not indicate a view on the merits or the features of the proposals submitted, which would have been useful for SKDC officers and members.

None of the proposals within Lincolnshire had been ruled out at this stage, which meant that the inclusion of Rutland County Council in a new authority remained an option. Any proposal would need to set out clear rationale for its findings.

A population of 500,000 was a guiding principle and not a strict target. Criteria are not weighted. Decisions would be judged in the round having regard to guidance and available evidence.

Government funding of £357,000 had been allocated to Greater Lincolnshire to support full proposal development. The Council would continue to work collaboratively to develop a full proposal for LGR that was the most beneficial – short, medium and long term - for both the residents and businesses of South Kesteven, and the wider geography of Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland County Council.

The Chief Executive, Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Leader of the Council all attended the Local Government Association (LGA) Conference last week. Much discussion was around LGR and how it might play out. The Leader spoke to other Leaders, Councillors and officers from across the country (and Lincolnshire). Those present were given a presentation from Angela Rayner MP and Jim McMahon MP.

The Leader of the Council continued to speak to colleagues, particularly in North Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council and Rutland County Council, with a look towards the most practical outcome for the area.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- There were concerns about the possibility of a ‘super authority’ absorbing all existing district councils in Lincolnshire.
- £75,000 was around half the funding that both East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) and South Holland District Council (SHDC) had put forward towards LGR proposals.
- The Leader of the Council continued to correspond with the Leader of Rutland County Council and Alicia Kearns, MP for Rutland and Stamford.
- Rutland County Councillors were not of one mind regarding reorganisation; they were however keen to retain their ceremonial status as the smallest historic county in England.
- Some of the work involved in LGR was specialist.
- Some authorities have said they will be able to share data relevant to LGR.
- Fire and health services were not currently aligned. Lincolnshire currently had two separate fire authorities.
- To achieve genuine LGR for the betterment of the public, no options should be ruled out at this stage. Currently there were four published options
 - the South Lincolnshire and Rutland bid (SKDC’s preferred approach)
 - an ‘eastern’ bid (led by ELDC and SHDC)
 - a City of Lincoln bid (including surrounding villages, and colloquially known as the ‘Lincoln doughnut’)
 - and a Continuing Authority bid (LCC’s preferred approach).
- Briefings would take place for all-Councillors to include feedback from the LGA conference.

- Information from MHCLG was that local Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and fire authorities did not have to align at this stage. A 'co-terminus' future could be acceptable but such arrangements would need to be covered within the report. If Greater Lincolnshire and Rutland County Council came together there would be three PCCs.
- A consultants' report on Adult Social Care (ASC) had been shared with SKDC officers, as well as a District Councils' Network (DCN) report on Children's Services. SKDC needed specialist advice in areas not currently provided by District Councils (including ASC and Children's Services) but may not require such advice on financial modelling and data collection.
- SKDC could not formally consult with local businesses as this function was reserved for government; however, engagement with the business community was possible.
- One more LGR session with parish councils was due to take place in Stamford on 22 July. Senior officers and the Leader of the Council had committed to another round of town and parish council meetings on LGR. A key message was that there was no option to keep SKDC in its current form. In the four sessions delivered so far, the Leader had not heard anyone express a preference for a single unitary authority to cover Lincolnshire.
- Most Greater Lincolnshire leaders had met on 2 July 2025. Officers had not been informed of the intention of ELDC and SHDC to begin public engagement week in the week commencing 14 July 2025.
- Cumbria previously consisted of six districts and one city council which had been reorganised. Their 'Implementation Reserve' was £19 million, split into £3 million per authority. This did not include further costs incurred later in the reorganisation, related to transformation and redundancies. Any anticipated savings were strategic and longer term.
- The border between SKDC and Rutland makes delivery of some services dysfunctional now - a merger could only improve the situation.

20. Appointment of the Member Responsible for Housing Complaints

Purpose of report

To approve the appointment of the Member Responsible for Housing Complaints.

Decision

That Cabinet approve the appointment of Councillor Virginia Moran, Cabinet Member for Housing, as the Member Responsible for Housing Complaints (MRC).

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council could have chosen not to appoint an MRC but this would potentially lead to a breach of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Reasons for the decision

The Cabinet Member for Housing was appointed as the MRC as this ensured compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The Ombudsman did not recommend a term in advance of three years for the MRC.

The MRC would be able to seek support from the relevant officers. Any complaint involving the Cabinet Member for Housing would be considered by the Leader of the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Housing would receive training for this new role.

21. Number of Dogs on Leads- PSPO Consultation

Purpose of report

To give due consideration to consultation responses received in November/December 2024, which invited local people, animal welfare organisations and businesses (which provide services for dog owners), for their opinions on whether there was a need for a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) limiting the number of dogs on leads that one person can walk at the same time.

Decision

That Cabinet notes the results of the public consultation and report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

It may have been deemed as unlawful to ignore the majority response, and re-consult with a view to putting a PSPO in place, as there was no evidence to support the need for this PSPO.

The consultation demonstrated there was not broad support regarding the implementation of a PSPO that would limit the number of dogs on leads that one person could walk at the same time. Therefore, it was requested that no further action was taken at this time.

Reasons for the decision

The purpose of the consultation was to ask local people, animal welfare organisations and businesses (which provide services for dog owners), for their opinions on whether there was a need for a PSPO which would limit the number of dogs on leads that one person could walk at the same time. The consultation demonstrated no broad support regarding the implementation of this proposed PSPO.

On 10 September 2024, Cabinet approved an immediate consultation for PSPOs concerning a recommended maximum number of dogs on leads per person. PSPOs were introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Crime and Policing Act 2014 to deal with nuisances or problems that were detrimental to local quality of life. These

imposed conditions on activity in specific areas applicable to everyone. PSPOs could be issued for any public space and were intended to ensure the law-abiding majority could use and enjoy public spaces, without suffering from anti-social behaviour. The definition of public space was wide and included any place to which the public or any section of the public had access.

The consultation was carried out late in 2024 and received 736 responses.

The following information was highlighted during debate:

- Professional dog walkers had felt it was an attack on their business, which was a misinterpretation. A more pertinent problem was people who were charging for a service without appropriate insurance.
- Some consultees had reported experience of specific instances of ASB. .
- 20% of consultation respondents did not live in South Kesteven.
- It was suggested by one member that the response from the RSPCA was very similar, or identical to, a response that they provide across other consultations around the country.
- There were many complex reasons behind dog attacks including: the attitude of dog owners; issues with particular breeds; and an increase in dog ownership since the Covid-19 epidemic. Limiting the number of dogs on a lead handled by one person might be one form of control but other preventative measures were available.
- A breach of a PSPO could only lead to enforcement if witnessed by an enforcement officer. There had been very few confirmed breaches of any PSPOs.
- Irrespective of any deterrent and enforcement measures in place, there would always be some irresponsible dog owners.
- Officers would keep a watching brief on this issue.

22. Provisional Outturn 2024/25 - Budget Carry Forwards

Purpose of report

This report sought a delegation to approve the carry forward of budgets from financial year 2024/25 to financial year 2025/26.

Decision

That Cabinet delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, HR & Economic Development, to finalise the 2024/25 budget carry forwards for Capital and Revenue expenditure in respect of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Alternative options considered and rejected

An alternative option would have been to present the budget carry-forwards to a later meeting of Cabinet; however, this would have created a delay in the availability of

budgets which would have a consequent detrimental impact on the delivery of the Council's projects and services.

Reasons for the decision

Work was underway to prepare the outturn position of the Council for the financial year ending 31 March 2025. Alongside the preparation of the outturn, work was also underway to prepare the draft Statement of Accounts which would be subject to audit over the coming weeks.

It was a normal and regular activity and a key part of outturn preparations to consider and review budget carry forward requirements. These were budgets allocated for a financial year but the anticipated date of expenditure had been delayed into the following financial year. This was a normal occurrence that happened each financial year following the review of the outturn and where specific projects or events cross over financial years.

Due to unforeseen delays in compiling financial information, it had not been possible to present the budget carry forwards to the July meeting of Cabinet. To avoid deferring the decision until the September meeting, a delegation of authority to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development was agreed to approve the budget carry forwards when they have been reviewed. Upon submission of the budget carry forward proposals, an Officer Delegation Decision Notice would be published to confirm the carry forwards that had been approved.

23. Use of Pesticides on Council Land

Purpose of report

To consider a recommendation from a Joint Meeting of the Environment and Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees following a motion to Council to eliminate the use of pesticides on Council land.

Decision

In noting the recommendations made by the Joint Meeting of the Environment and Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 4 March 2025 Cabinet resolved to:

- 1. Thank the Members of the Joint OSC for their work and consideration in relation to the use of glyphosate on Council owned land.**
- 2. Agree that the Council should continue with a strategy of reducing the use of glyphosate on its land where it is safe to do so and does not present a health and safety concern or impact of the aesthetics of an area.**

3. Request that a review of the Council's use of glyphosate is undertaken following a decision on the renewal of the licence by Central Government in December 2025.

Alternative options considered and rejected

A range of alternative options for controlling weed growth across the district were presented to the meeting of the joint OSC on 4 March 2025. There was consensus that none of the options identified were a suitable alternative.

Reasons for the decision

As detailed within the body of the report the Council's use of glyphosate was already low relative to the size and rurality of South Kesteven district. The Council had already adopted a strategy of reducing its use as far as practical.

237 sites were sprayed within SKDC, which included several Housing Revenue Account (HRA) sites. In SKDC's parks a diluted spray was used on paths and hard surfaces; nothing was used around mature trees or flower beds. Work around roadside verges was often contracted to Lincolnshire County Council.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste has listened to the views of the Joint Environment and Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as well as the proposer of the original motion, and had reviewed case studies and best practice. There had been no significant complaints related to the Council's use of glyphosate.

Glyphosate was used carefully and in a targeted way; for example, it would be used to target weeds around newly planted trees. The resolutions brought SKDC into line with the approach taken by the Woodland Trust.

£490 was spent on glyphosates in 2023/2024, and not all this stock was used. Any alternative approach to tackling weeds without the use of glyphosate (where it was required) would cost at least £50,000, and this would potentially include an extra 2-4 members of staff and an extra 1-2 vehicles.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- Councillors Ben Green and Vanessa Smith had requested that the original recommendations from the Joint Environment and Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be included in their entirety. These recommendations included the use of trial sites across SKDC ceasing the usage of glyphosate, and the launch of a public consultation on the use of glyphosate.
- The government was due to take a decision on the future use of glyphosate around December 2025, therefore the need for a public consultation did not appear to be there.
- Some people would likely be confused as to the difference between herbicides and pesticides.

- HRA sites contained a specification for maintenance which could not be ignored.
- Glyphosate was already precluded for home consumption; the product used by SKDC was not available for domestic use around the district so the council could not impose standards for households.
- A further Joint OSC meeting would take place in December 2025 to consider the government's response to this issue.

24. Cabinet Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

25. Open Questions from Councillors

Question One – Councillor Ian Selby to the Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement

Councillor Selby asked the Cabinet Member to discover for himself how accessible the Grantham Meres Stadium was, whilst asking him to take note of its dilapidation. He requested it be part of ideas for the future.

The Cabinet Member was happy to look into this issue.

Question Two - Councillor Rhea Rayside to the Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Rayside asked whether there were any best practices from other councils SKDC could adopt to ensure a proactive rather than reactive approach to those that walk too many, or an unmanageable number of dogs.

Councillor Moran asked for the issue to be re-visited in a year's time to have a look at the number of issues or incidents.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement was happy to investigate joint publicity campaigns with Lincolnshire Police on this issue.

The meeting closed at 3:53pm.