

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 17 JULY 2025

2.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Ian Selby Chairman
Councillor Anna Kelly Vice Chairman

Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Steven Cunningham
Councillor James Denniston
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Phil Gadd
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Philip Knowles

Councillor Zoe Lane
Councillor Robert Leadenhamb
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Habib Rahman
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Vanessa Smith
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Angela Wakefield, Interim Monitoring Officer
Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing and Projects (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director (Planning & Growth)

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

22. Public Open Forum

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

23. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:

Jane Kingman
Nikki Manterfield
Peter Stephens
Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Sue Woolley

24. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

25. Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the AGM held on 22 May 2025 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

A query was raised about who was in the post of Deputy Monitoring Officer at the meeting in June. It was confirmed that the draft minutes listing James Welbourn as the Deputy Monitoring Officer were correct.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 12 June 2025 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

26. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted the Chairman's engagements since the previous meeting of Full Council.

On 16 July 2025 the SK Charity Cup was hosted by Deeping Rangers FC, who went onto beat Harrowby United FC 2-1.

The Chairman wished to highlight the money raised for worthy causes, and also thanked Councillors Baxter, Byrd, Rahman and Rayside for their attendance at the game. Councillor Ashley Baxter kindly sponsored the match ball.

Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

- The picture surrounding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) changed frequently. The Leader of the Council had attended the Local Government Association (LGA) in Liverpool, where Angela Rayner MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government had been speaking.
- Lincolnshire Leaders would need to engage on this issue as a group, however it was disappointing to see the launch of 'A Greater Lincolnshire for All' - a proposal by South Holland and East Lindsey District Councils which championed the idea of a northern and southern council in Lincolnshire. This proposal was launched some distance away from those districts in Lincoln.
- At their meeting on 8 July 2025 Cabinet agreed a £75,000 budget to procure external support for business plans, in line with North Kesteven District Council.
- Virginia Moran, Chair of the Deepings Community Interest Company (CIC) along with Sir John Hayes MP (MP for South Holland and the Deepings) met a minister from the Department for Media, Culture and Sport to talk about the Deepings Leisure Centre. The Minister offered to put representatives in touch with Sport England. A positive conversation had taken place with the Leader of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and Cabinet Member for Growth at LCC.

Cabinet Member for Planning

The Cabinet Member made the following announcements:

- The second Regulation 18 consultation on the revised draft Local Plan was launched on Thursday 10 July 2025. A recent Government announcement increased South Kesteven's annual housing requirement from 700 new homes per year to almost 900. As a result the Planning team have the challenge of finding the most suitable sites for these new homes.
- Public engagement events were planned for 17 July 2025 in Bourne Market, 30 July in Market Deeping Library, 1 August at Stamford Market, and 2 August in Grantham Market.
- Parish and town councils had been invited to sign up to one of two sessions where they can take part in question-and-answer sessions.

Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

The Cabinet Member made the following announcements:

- The Waste team were in the process of restructuring the waste collection rounds within the district; many households were likely to see changes to the days and times when their bin would be collected. All addresses would be notified of changes via a leaflet through their letterbox. There would be a mixture of online and offline communications.

- Parish and town councils would also be advertising this topic, and that would be supplemented with information on social media and on the SKDC website. The Cabinet Member would write to members and ask that the information be shared with their communities.

Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

Green Flag awards had been received for Grantham's Dysart, Queen Elizabeth, and Wyndham Parks – an achievement to be proud of.

27. Appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council

Members considered the requirements placed on Full Council for the appointment of Members to its Committees and Panels.

Since the AGM on 22 May 2025, political Group Leaders had agreed the membership of Committees under delegation to the Chief Executive. Following this, there had been further changes requested by certain political Group Leaders resulting in this report.

Having been moved and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council approves the following appointments to committee seats as proposed by the respective political Group Leaders:

- **Councillor Susan Sandall to replace Councillor Nikki Manterfield on the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- **Councillor James Denniston replace Councillor Steven Cunningham as a member of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (gifted seat from Grantham Independent Group to the Independent Group).**

An appointments to committees document correct as of 17 July 2025 was appended to these minutes.

28. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2024/2025

Members considered a summary of the work undertaken by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees during 2024/2025.

The Chairman of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee introduced the report, highlighting some of the projects discussed and supported by the various Scrutiny Committees:

1. Backlog of Maintenance of the Councils Assets
2. Increase to the Homelessness Budget

3. Bulky Waste Collection update
4. CCTV transfer update
5. Stock Condition Surveys
6. Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey
7. Balanced budget

There were a number of different strategies discussed, including:

- Play Area Strategy where £100,000 has been allocated and to support replacement equipment.
- Cultural strategy to support a pop-up cinema, free thinking festival and reinvention of the Gravity Fields Festival.
- Sports and Physical Activity – this was supported by the staff and councillor groups who undertook Step into 2025 in January.

Having been moved and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council notes the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/2025.

29. Pay Award 2025/2026

Members considered a recommendation from Employment Committee to implement a 3.2% pay award in line with the National Employers' for Local Government Services final offer effective from 1st April 2025.

The same offer had been made for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers. SKDC was not part of the national consultation process but had reflected the national pay offer.

A 2% pay offer had been budgeted for, so there was a funding shortfall of 1.2%. There was a budgetary impact of £244,000 on the General Fund and £76,000 for the Housing Revenue Account.

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded.

An amendment was moved to read:

That Council approves recommendations 1-3 in the Pay Award 2025/26 report except as modified below.

Adds a new Recommendation 4:

"No element of the 3.2 per cent 2025/26 pay award shall be applied to any employee whose aggregate annual remuneration (defined as basic salary + contractual cash allowances + employer pension contributions) exceeds £169,344, the Prime Minister's current cash salary. Any employee above that threshold will therefore receive no increase – a freeze."

The amendment was seconded.

Note: Once clarity had been received on the total figure within the scope of the amendment, the Chief Executive left the Council Chamber for the remainder of the debate on the amendment.

Several Councillors spoke in support of the Chief Executive and her work. She was the only officer within the scope of the amendment.

After brief debate, and on being put to the vote, the amendment **FELL**.

Note: The Chief Executive returned to the Council Chamber.

Debate began on the substantive motion:

- The government had not reimbursed SKDC for National Insurance contributions this year. Therefore, the additional cost would be covered by the budget for salaries. The figures within the recommendations did not include National Insurance costs.
- When the budget was being prepared for 2025/2026 assumptions were made using external advice and guidance. As at October 2024 the guidance was that a 2% rise was required.
- The borrowing was a drain on reserves which could have been used for other purposes.
- When budgets were built last year members had several bids for works to consider. Had a 3.2% pay rise been budgeted for, some of those bids along with fees and charges could have been considered differently.
- About 15 years ago SKDC oversaw a buyout of national Green Book arrangements. As part of this there was an agreement that SKDC mirrored the local administration of any pay awards.
- There was a query over whether SKDC staff had the right to strike or whether it had been negotiated out of their terms and conditions.
- There had been several meetings where the overall budget (including staff pay) had been discussed, including the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the February meeting of Full Council.

Having been moved and seconded, and following a vote it was **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council:

- 1. Note the National Employers' for Local Government Services final pay award offer of 3.2% for the financial year 2025/26.**
- 2. Note the current budget allocation for the pay award is only 2%.**
- 3. Agree additional budgets to fund the proposed pay award of 3.2% from 1 April 2025:**
 - £244k in order to fund the additional General Fund. This is to be funded from the Local Priorities Reserve.**
 - £76k in order to fund the additional Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This is to be funded from the HRA Priorities Reserve.**

30. Members' Open Questions

Question One – Councillor Mark Whittington to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Whittington asked that best wishes be passed onto Ollie Chessum, a local lad who was representing the British & Irish Lions out in Australia. He had previously represented Kesteven Rugby Club.

Councillor Baxter was delighted to pass on his best wishes and to send a card on behalf of all Councillors.

Question Two – Councillor Charmaine Morgan to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Morgan asked the Leader of the Council to join her in welcoming the completion of the United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust's (ULT) consultation on the future of the old Grantham Hospital site. They had committed to listen to the views of residents before a final decision was reached as to its future.

Councillor Baxter was not surprised that Councillor Morgan was raising this issue following her hard work with the local community on this issue.

Question Three – Councillor Tim Harrison to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture

Councillor Harrison highlighted the success of the Grantham Guildhall Arts Centre and asked the Deputy Leader to outline which factors had contributed to this success, and whether they could be applied at Bourne Corn Exchange or the Stamford Arts Centre.

Councillor Paul Stokes responded. One of the successes involved looking at the staffing structure. Streamlining staffing and attracting the right people had worked extremely well. Stamford already had a successful Arts Centre with the only cinema in Stamford, and this success would be built on. Bourne had the best multi-use venue in the district and was a wonderful space for rentals, weddings etc. It was doing incredibly well with a wonderful team.

Question Four – Councillor Steven Cunningham to the Portfolio Holder for Housing

Councillor Cunningham requested an update on housing void completion times.

Councillor Moran announced that the number of void properties was considerably under the target set for 9 months' time. There were 77 void properties; major voids were down to 39 from a previous level of 68, and minor voids were down to 26 from a previous level of 38. There were 4 voids awaiting inspection. Caution was needed over a continuous drop in voids, particularly as stock condition reports filtered through.

The downward trend in numbers of voids was where the Portfolio Holder wanted it to be.

Question Five – Councillor David Bellamy to the Portfolio Holder for Planning

Councillor Bellamy had been made aware of several Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in the local area. One example was a solar farm north of Stamford, adjacent to the site of the Mallard Pass Solar Farm, which would span an area of roughly 7 square miles. When there were formal consultations would the Portfolio Holder confirm they would be discussed at Planning Committee?

Councillor Dilks expected these plans to be discussed at Planning Committee but would keep up to date with proceedings and keep members informed.

Question Six – Councillor Max Sawyer to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Sawyer asked whether Councillors were duty bound to stand for re-election if they changed political allegiance after having been elected for another party.

Councillor Baxter felt that Councillors were not always honour bound to do this, but encouraged the Reform UK group of Councillors to do so.

Question Seven – Councillor Elvis Stooke to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture

Councillor Stooke wanted to congratulate the Portfolio Holder and his staff for the achievement of Green Flag status at the three parks within Grantham and asked whether this was a reason why investors should come here to South Kesteven.

Councillor Paul Stokes agreed that Grantham was a fantastic place to come and visit and was easily accessible from London. He also acknowledged the hard work of town and parish councils in making the district a great place to live and be part of.

Question Eight – Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for HR, Finance and Economic Development

Councillor Dixon-Warren asked whether it was consistent with the Council's values of 'making a difference', 'supportive to all', and 'kindness' to put a resident at risk of debt or poverty by imposing a council tax second home premium that was nearly as high as their annual state pension.

Councillor Baxter apologised to the resident concerned. Advice was being taken to get the reply in this example right. The situation with second homes was difficult – the desire was to promote the use of housing, and not to have homes empty for large portions of the year. The law changed recently allowing a council tax premium to be placed on second homes; this had risen from 90% of Council Tax to 200% to encourage people to live at the address they were paying Council Tax on.

Question Nine – Councillor Robert Leadenhamb to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for HR, Finance and Economic Development

Councillor Leadenhamb asked how the £75,000 recently approved by Cabinet for consultancy work on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) would be monitored and reported to allow Councillors to check for value for money.

Councillor Baxter reported that the picture surrounding LGR was not one of unanimity, particularly in places such as Rutland where there were ties to both Lincolnshire and Leicestershire.

To put together a sensible bid there needed to be support within the budget for consultancy work.

Question Ten – Councillor Sarah Trotter to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for HR, Finance and Economic Development

Councillor Trotter asked the Leader of the Council whether he would write a letter to the Home Secretary in support of Lincolnshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Councillor Trotter highlighted fears about their future, with the prospect of Lincolnshire Police being declared bankrupt.

Councillor Baxter was happy to write a letter to the Home Secretary with support from Councillors Trotter and Dilks, as representatives on the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel.

Question Eleven – Councillor Ben Green to the Chairman of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Green asked the Chairman of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to commit to regular, scheduled litter picks across the district's stretch of the A1 Road.

Councillor Stooke promised to report back to Councillor Green on this matter.

Question Twelve – Councillor Matt Bailey to the Portfolio Holder for Property and Public Engagement

Councillor Bailey asked for the new opening times of the Conduit Lane toilets in Grantham to be confirmed.

Councillor Cleaver pledged to confirm these times outside of the meeting and would respond to any correspondence from Councillor Bailey on this issue.

Question Thirteen – Councillor Helen Crawford to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for HR, Finance and Economic Development

Councillor Crawford asked whether other districts in Lincolnshire were looking to include Rutland County Council within their plans for LGR.

Councillor Baxter confirmed that they were. He was looking forward to a positive discussion with the Leaders of Rutland County Council and North Kesteven District Council in the coming weeks.

Question Fourteen – Councillor Gareth Knight to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance and Licensing

Councillor Knight reported that there was an agenda item due at Governance and Audit Committee on 23 July related to 'reporting fraud and whistleblowing', which centred on procurement rules not being followed by a Council owned company. He asked for further clarity to be given to Full Council on this issue ahead of the Governance and Audit Committee meeting next week.

Councillor Knowles highlighted that the incident was an occasion where a rule was not followed by a Council-owned company but had since been rectified.

Question Fifteen – Councillor Graham Jeal to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for HR, Finance and Economic Development

Councillor Jeal highlighted a recent newspaper column written by Councillor Baxter which had suggested that too many representatives in local government were male, white and mature. He asked whether this was a general statement about the political system or was it local to his electoral ward.

Councillor Baxter stood by his column and suggested that there were not enough women, young people, or people of colour involved in politics. In his view LGR would complicate this process and make it more difficult to stand for election.

Question Sixteen – Councillor Susan Sandall to the Portfolio Holder for Property and Public Engagement

Councillor Sandall wished to know when the St. Martin's Park development in Stamford was due to start, and when the eyesore building at the entrance to the site would be pulled down.

Councillor Cleaver reported that the final planning approvals were gained a month ago. New purchases of land and actual works to the site were awaited.

Question Seventeen – Councillor Zoe Lane to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Waste

Councillor Lane asked for assurance on future proofing for food collections so that residents don't have another spate of missed bins or changes to collections days.

Councillor Rhys Baker highlighted that changes hadn't been made to waste collection rounds for 12 years. Changing the collection days for most residents was the most fiscally prudent use of resources, but it was accepted that there would be disruption.

Lessons had been learned for previous bin rollouts. Food waste collections were additional to other collections in the community and would be collected every week.

31. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 3:57pm.

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Membership of Committees – July 2025

Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (1)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)	SK Independent (1)	Labour (0)	Green (1)
Gareth Knight	Barry Dobson (VC)	Chris Noon	James Denniston	Murray Turner (C)	Gift to Democratic Ind		Emma Baker
Matt Bailey	Rhea Raside						
Rob Leadenham							

Employment Committee (9)

Conservative (4)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)	SK Independent (0)	Labour (0)	Green (0)
Gloria Johnson (VC)	Anna Kelly (C)	Paul Stokes	Ashley Baxter	Harrish Bisnauthsing			
Gareth Knight	Gift to Cllr Rhys Baker						
Susan Sandall							
Ian Stokes							

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (4)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (0)	SK Independent (0)	Labour (0)	Green (1)
Paul Martin	Barry Dobson	Elvis Stooke (C)	James Denniston				Emma Baker (VC)
Gloria Johnson	Max Sawyer						
Nikki Manterfield							
Sarah Trotter							

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (4)	Democratic Independent (1)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)	SK Independent (0)	Labour (1)	Green (0)
Gareth Knight (VC)	Max Sawyer	Ian Selby	Bridget Ley (C)	Murray Turner		Lee Steptoe	
Vacancy							
Mark Whittington							
Gloria Johnson							

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (0)	SK Independent (1)	Labour (1)	Green (0)
Zoe Lane (VC)	Anna Kelly	Gift to Green	Bridget Ley	Habib Rahman	Gift to Lib Dems	Lee Steptoe (C)	Emma Baker
Susan Sandall	Charmaine Morgan						
Gloria Johnson							

Licensing Committee (11)

Conservative (4)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (2)	Independent (0)	Liberal Democrat (1)	SK Independent (1)	Labour (0)	Green (1)
Rob Leadenhams (VC)	Paul Fellows (C)	Elvis Stooke		Harrish Bisnauthsing	Gift to Conservatives		Gift to Democratic Independent
Jane Kingman	Philip Knowles	Patsy Ellis					
Helen Crawford	Rhea Ryside						
Pam Bosworth							
Susan Sandall							

Governance and Audit Committee (9)

Conservative (3)	Democratic Independent (1)	Grantham Independent (2)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (0)	SK Independent (1)	Labour (1)	Green (0)
Sue Woolley	Rhea Rayside	Tim Harrison (C)	Bridget Ley		Paul Wood (VC)	Rob Shorrock	
Mark Whittington		Paul Stokes					
Rob Leadenham							

Planning Committee (13)

Conservative (5)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (2)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (1)	SK Independent (1)	Labour (0)	Green (1)
Gift to SK Ind	Charmaine Morgan (C)	Tim Harrison	Gift to Democratic Ind	Harrish Bisnauthsing	Penny Milnes (VC)		Vanessa Smith
Sarah Trotter	Pam Byrd	Patsy Ellis			Paul Wood		
Vacancy	Paul Fellows						
Gloria Johnson							
Mark Whittington							

Standards Committee (11)

Conservative (5)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (2)	Independent (1)	Liberal Democrat (0)	SK Independent (1)	Labour (0)	Green (0)
Sarah Trotter (VC)	Pam Byrd (C)	Tim Harrison	Ashley Baxter		Penny Milnes		
Richard Dixon-Warren	Max Sawyer	Chris Noon					
Peter Stephens							
Vacancy							
Mark Whittington							

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9)

Conservative (4)	Democratic Independent (2)	Grantham Independent (2)	Independent (0)	Liberal Democrat (1)	SK Independent (0)	Labour (0)	Green (0)
Nikki Manterfield (C)	Rhea Rayside (VC)	Tim Harrison	James Denniston	Habib Rahman			
Richard Dixon-Warren	Pam Byrd	Gift to Independent Group					
Rob Leadenhams							
Mark Whittington							

Chief Executive Appeals Panel (3)

Conservative (1)	Democratic Independent (1)	Grantham Independent (1)	Independent (0)	Liberal Democrat (0)	SK Independent (0)	Labour (0)	Green (0)
Vacancy	Richard Cleaver	Tim Harrison					