



Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 23 September 2025

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member
for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

Update on Economic Development Strategy Action Plan

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide an update to the Committee regarding the progress made towards the action plan associated with the South Kesteven District Economic Development Strategy (2024-2028)

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the progress made on the Action Plan
2. Agree to receive a further update and refreshed Action Plan within the next six months

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Connecting communities
Sustainable South Kesteven

Which wards are impacted?

Enabling economic opportunities
Housing
Effective council
(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 The development of the Economic Development Strategy is an important part of the work programme of the Committee because it has significant implications for the economic vibrancy of the district. The development of the supporting Action Plan may have financial implications, and these will be considered at that time. Where implications cannot be maintained within existing resources the appropriate budget approvals will be sought.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Monitoring Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Enabling Economic Opportunity is a priority within the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2027. Supporting a dynamic, resilient and growing local economy will benefit all our communities. A vibrant economy attracts new and expanding businesses which in turn creates job opportunities and encourages inward investment in our towns and communities. Enabling local growth represents a 'golden thread' running through the Corporate Plan, the Local Plan and other service areas.
- 2.2 The Council's Economic Development Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in October 2024. The strategy was focused around five themes where the Council is most likely to influence the key challenges to achieving economic prosperity for South Kesteven. These five areas are:
 - Business, job creation and employment safeguarding
 - Skills development

- Inclusive growth and regeneration
- Inward investment
- Enhancing South Kesteven's tourism and visitor economy.

2.3. The Strategy can be used as the basis to promote the District as a prime location for investment. It can also be used to communicate messages to Government, investors and interested parties. It also demonstrates to investors and businesses that South Kesteven has a positive approach towards managing and delivering long term growth.

2.4. The Strategy includes an Action Plan setting out the activities the Economic Development Team will undertake to meet the objectives of the Strategy.

2.5. There has been good progress against many of the actions in the Strategy. This is illustrated in **Appendix A**. The Economic Development and Inward Investment Manager post has been vacant several months. Inconsequently, some of the actions have been delayed; this is reflected in the updated Action Plan.

2.6. The management role has now been filled so the paused actions can be resumed. However, there have been a number of key changes in circumstance since the Strategy was adopted. These include the publication of "The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy" by the Department of Business and Trade (June 2025). Additionally, the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) has been established and a Mayor was elected in May 2025. The focus areas for the GLCCA are:

- Transport,
- Employment and Skills, and
- Business and Infrastructure.

2.7. In light of these developments, it is appropriate for the Council to review the Action Plan to ensure that remains aligned with national and local ambitions. Therefore, it is planned that an updated Action Plan will be presented to the committee within the next six months.

3. Key Considerations

3.1. It is important to review progress against the Strategy and Action Plan to ensure the Council is meeting its objectives.

3.2. The actions in the Action Plan were split into "ongoing" activities, year 1 activities and year 3 activities. Actions scheduled for year 3 have been identified in **Appendix A**.

- 3.3. The team has continued to increase business engagement. Activities have included: hosting a webinar on grant funding applications; attending business club meetings; and supporting organisations in grant funding opportunities. The Council also held two “Meet the Buyer” events which provided information about public sector procurement; these were well received by the business community.
- 3.4. Two Skills Summits were held in February 2025. These were well attended and involved over 400 students and 23 businesses across both events. Funding has been secured for a follow-up event in March 2026.
- 3.5. A number of activities have been delivered to promote the district’s visitor economy. The Visitor Economy Officer continues to engage with colleagues across the county as well the people working within visitor economy sector. Actions 5.1 and 5.2 relate to being an “active partner of Destination Lincolnshire” but unfortunately, Destination Lincolnshire went into administration earlier this year. Discussions are ongoing discussions with all District Councils and the County Council to ensure work to create a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) can continue.
- 3.6. The team continue to support organisations in securing grant funding outside of the grant programs run by the Council. This has included working with colleagues to secure £147,500 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Council’s ‘Soldiers from the Skies’ project. Officers are also providing ongoing support to Grantham Museum to raise circa £200,000, and to Harlaxton Manor in their application for £500,000 in development funding (stage one of their £5million ‘Walled Garden Project).
- 3.7. In addition to the strategy, the team has assisted with the delivery of the Future High Streets Fund programme which has been extended to March 2026.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The progress on the Action Plan is for noting and to agree that the Committee will receive a further update within six months. No other options have been considered.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. Regular review of the Action Plan is necessary to ensure the Council delivering the actions and meeting the aims and ambitions of the Strategy.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Minutes to Meeting of FEOSC 17th September 2024: [Agenda item - South Kesteven Economic Development Strategy 2024 / 2028 - Final Draft | South Kesteven District Council](#)
- 6.2 Report to Cabinet 8th October 2024: [Cabinet Paper SK Economic Development Strategy 2024 28.pdf](#)

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Updates on the Action Plan.