

Minutes

Cabinet

Thursday, 15 January 2026



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Date of publication: 30 January 2026

**Call in expiry: 6 February 2026. Decisions
can be implemented from 9 February 2026.**

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 Tim Harrison

Councillor Elvis Stooke

Officers

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

Rachel McKoy, 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

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Gary Andrew, IT Services Manager

Patrick Astill, Communications Officer

Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

Andy Garner, Senior Project Officer

Jessica Morris, Interim Planning Policy Manager

Sue Scoffield, Senior Accountant

Megan White, Corporate Project Officer

79. Public Open Forum

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

80. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

81. Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interests.

82. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on 24 November 2025 (Extraordinary), and 2 December 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

83. Fees and Charges Proposals 2026/27

Purpose of report

To set out the proposed fees and charges for the financial year 2026/27.

Decision

Cabinet recommended to Council:

- 1. The discretionary Fees and Charges for 2026/27 set out at Appendix A of the report.**
- 2. The statutory Fees and Charges for 2026/27 set out at Appendix B of the report.**
- 3. That HMO licence fees were not part of recommendations 1 and 2 above, as they were subject to further work by officers. An updated schedule of charges would be presented to Council on 29 January 2026.**
- 4. The charging policy set out in Appendix C of the report.**
- 5. That the annual bin collection charge for green waste increase by £2 to £55 and that each subsequent bin is increased by £1 to £45 for the 2026/2027 financial year.**
- 6. To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer in consultation with Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development to set the commercial charges for Building Control.**

Other options considered

There were a number of options outlined within section 2 of the report.

Reasons for the decision

Fees and charges were an integral part of the budget setting process and were reviewed on an annual basis.

The report had been considered by the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 13 January 2026.

The following information was highlighted during debate:

- Some authorities had a 'sliding scale' of charges related to houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) but this was not the case in SKDC where all HMOs were charged the identical fees and charges regardless of the number of rooms. Officers were investigating the possibility of introducing a sliding scale and therefore Cabinet made an additional recommendation to Council.
- A detailed discussion about the future of the green waste service took place at Environment OSC on 13 January. The debate informed Cabinet's recommendation to Council that the annual collection charge for green waste increased by £2 to £55 for a first bin, and by £1 to £45 for a second or subsequent bin. The original proposal seen by Environment OSC was a slightly lower amount per bin, but this included the cessation of green bin collections in January and February.
 - There was a series of analyses on the costs the waste service incurred, this was in the process of being translated into a more user-friendly format.
 - There was a higher recommended cost for the first green bin rather than subsequent bins due to economies of scale. There were c31,000 customers in receipt of a green bin, of which c,5,000 have a further bin. Further information would be received by Environment OSC in due course.
 - The money raised from green bins provided a significant contribution towards the cost of the service; however, it did not cover the whole amount.
 - The cost of collecting a 2nd or subsequent bin wasn't equal to the first as the waste lorries were already on the premises to collect the initial bin.
- Building control fees were not included within the Cabinet reports pack because they were commercially sensitive. Cabinet recommended to Council that delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer to determine these fees in consultation with the Cabinet Member.
- The Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement confirmed there was no pressure to increase overall revenue from parking charges in the next year. The car parking review aimed to make the fairest use of parking spaces across the district.

84. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27

Purpose of report

This report reviewed the responses to the public consultation on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27, along with recommendations from the meeting of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee which took place on 18 November 2025.

Decision

That Cabinet recommended the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27 to Full Council based on the same overarching criteria as the existing scheme, as detailed in paragraphs 2.13 to 2.44 of the report.

Other options considered

All options for consultation were detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.

Reasons for the decision

The proposed scheme must follow prescribed stages as stated in the Local Government Finance Act 2012 before it can be adopted by this Council as a Billing Authority – this is detailed as follows:

Before making a scheme, the authority must (in the following order):

- (a) consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it;*
- (b) publish a draft scheme in such a manner as it thinks fit; and*
- (c) consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme*

The following points were highlighted:

- Each year the Council are required to review the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS). The scheme is determined locally, however due to protection given to some customers, such as pensioners and working age claimants there was always an element of costs incurred over which the Council had no influence.
- Any proposed reduction in costs can only be applied to 895 working age claimants. Out of the current council spend of £739,279 (9% of the total scheme), only £90,000 (or 12% of the scheme) can be influenced by any recommended changes to the current LCTSS.
- The LCTSS was determined locally by the council after consultation with precepting authorities, key stakeholders and residents. Consultation on a 'no-change' LCTSS took place in September 2025. All SKDC members and parish clerks were made aware.
- Letters were issued to all those in receipt of Council Tax Support at the start of the consultation. This was a total of 7,243 recipients. A total of 440 individuals

responded to the consultation – this was a rate of 6.07% (compared to 336 responses of 7,133 – 4.73% for the previous year). The response to questions was not mandatory.

- Overall, 83% of respondents agreed with the principles of the current scheme, and 84% of respondents agreed the Council had worked hard to ensure that its Council Tax Support Scheme was fair, protected pensioners and those in vulnerable groups, and responded to local concerns.
- 6% as a level of response to a consultation might appear low but in comparison to some other consultations it was considered a healthy rate of response.

85. Budget Report for 2026/2027 including Indicative Budgets for 2027/2028 and 2028/2029 - General Fund

Purpose of report

To present the draft budget proposals and estimates for 2026/27 for the General Fund.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Note the budget proposals for 2026/27 in respect of General Fund – Revenue and Capital.**
- 2. Approve the launch of the consultation in respect of Council Tax setting for 2026/27 in accordance with the requirements of Section 65 of the Local Government Act 1992 between 19 January to 2 February 2026.**
- 3. Recommend that a sum of £100k is added to the Training and Development Reserve to support Apprenticeships across the Council.**

Other options considered

The alternative options for the Budget were explored within the body of the report.

Reasons for the decision

The Council was legally required to set a balanced budget each Financial Year.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- A member suggested an additional £100,000 reserve for training, apprenticeships and development at the Joint Budget OSC meeting. This would be incorporated into the final Budget report.
- The previous year had seen positive engagement and support to the Budget consultation, and it was hoped that this would be repeated this year.

86. Budget Proposals for 2026/27 and indicative Budgets for 2027/28 and 2028/29 - Housing Revenue Account

Purpose of report

To present the draft Budget proposals and estimates for 2026/27 for the Housing Revenue Account.

Decision

That Cabinet endorses:

- 1. The budget proposals for 2026/27 and indicative proposals for 2027/28 and 2028/29 in respect of Housing Revenue Account – Revenue and Capital.**
- 2. The proposed rent setting increase of 4.8% for 2026/27 for the social housing dwellings.**
- 3. The proposed increase of 2% for garage rents and 3.8% increase for service charges.**

Other options considered

The alternative options are considered as part of the body of the report.

Reasons for the decision

The Council is required to set a HRA Budget each year and to set rent levels in accordance with the Government rent setting guidance.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The HRA budget was discussed at Budget OSC on 13 January 2026.
- Cost saving measures were being explored where applicable. An example was given of employing in-house staff on a trial basis to carry out some of the work of a contractor (when this did not require the qualifications of the contractor).
- It was anticipated that there were still legacy issues with properties which would need to be addressed in the future; these would have an impact on the HRA budget. However, the backlog of repairs had been much reduced, and the voids turnaround time had improved.

87. Contract Award - New Build Housing Scheme at Toller Court, Horbling

Purpose of report

This report set out the proposals for a new build social housing development of three units at Toller Court, Horbling, and sought approval to award the construction contract to Gusto Construction Limited.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the award of a contract to Gusto Construction Limited for the construction of the three housing units at Toller Court, Horbling at a cost of £544k.**
- 2. Delegates authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to allocate an additional 10% of further funding if required due to unforeseen costs during the project.**

Other options considered

The Council could wait to commence the scheme or not build the development, but these options were discounted due to the high levels of housing needs in the area.

Reasons for the decision

There was a housing need for the Council to develop the site therefore the resolution was for the contract to be awarded so that works could commence in Spring 2026.

The procurement process accorded with the Council's Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules, the Procurement Act 2023 and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

The contract award sought to convert a long unused community centre within a sheltered housing scheme. The building had been in the process of being demolished. To rectify this the Council proposed to convert the property into three bungalows which would link into sheltered housing.

A procurement exercise was undertaken, supported by Welland Procurement - four suppliers bid for the work.

Works were due to commence in March 2026 with a view to completion in December 2026.

The following points were highlighted:

- Monthly meetings with the contractor were normal practice for these types of schemes. Officers would generally inspect the site prior to the monthly meetings. Any complaints about noise from residents would be taken on board and dealt with. If necessary, meetings could be held more frequently.
- A contingency had been built into the budget.
- The building currently in situ was in the process of demolition.
- The three bungalows would a range of environmental features.

88. Contract Award for Fire Compartmentation Works

Purpose of report

To seek approval to enter into a contract with Global HSE Solutions for the provision of carrying out fire prevention and compartmentation works to council owned dwellings for South Kesteven District Council.

Decision

Cabinet approved the award of a contract to Global HSE Solutions for the provision of carrying out fire prevention and compartmentation works at South Kesteven District Council owned dwellings for a period of 1 year. The value of this contract is up to £2 million

Other options considered

Consideration had been given to the option of carrying out the works “in-house”, but due to the specialist nature of the work and material requirements to ensure the fire prevention and compartmentation works were completed to the required fire safety standards, this was not a viable option.

Reasons for the decision

To ensure the Council had a competent contractor in place to deliver the required fire prevention and compartmentation works.

To ensure that the Council’s housing stock meets the required fire safety standard and residents have safe homes to live in.

The Council had been using Global HSE for these types of works for a 3–4-year period. The current contract had ended; this was a 1-year contract to allow the completion of previously identified works. These works included fire doors, fire breaks, fire curtains and other general compartmentation work.

A compliant contract will be in place to deliver the work.

89. Contract Award for Fire Alarm System

Purpose of report

To consider a contract award to replace fire alarm systems across housing stock.

Decision

That Cabinet award a contract to Fieldway Supplies for the installation of Fire Alarm Systems for a period of 2 years with the option to extend for a further 1 year plus 1 year. The annual contract value was £500k.

Other options considered

Continuing to maintain the old system – this came with a number of risks and this option was discounted.

Reasons for the decision

To ensure the Council had compliant and suitable fire alarms systems in place. The fire alarm systems in situ were serviceable but were approaching the end of their usable life. Therefore, members and officers were keen to replace systems before this time.

90. Corporate Enforcement Policy

Purpose of report

To consider a new policy.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve and adopt the Corporate Enforcement Policy.**
- 2. Agree that future minor amendments such as typographical corrections to the Corporate Enforcement Policy are delegated to the Head of Service – Public Protection, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing.**

Other options considered

To take no action. In this situation the 2017 Corporate Enforcement Policy would remain without review.

To update the Corporate Enforcement Policy separately to the following policies and not include them within the corporate enforcement policy within the appendices:

- Enviro Crime Enforcement Policy (adopted April 2018)
- Environmental Services Enforcement Policy (dated February 2017)
- Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (dated November 2018)

These options were discounted.

Reasons for the decision

The Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy was last revised in February 2017, and a review and update was necessary. This new overarching policy was a full revision of the 2017 policy and covered the enforcement activities across all the Council's Regulatory Services. This policy also incorporated and updated three other enforcement policies to support ease of reference and consistent application. The

new policy also provided an option for other enforcement policies to be added to the overarching policy.

These services covered by this policy included:

- Public Protection (this includes Environmental Health, Environmental Protection)
- Private Sector Housing, Community Safety (Neighbourhoods) and Licensing)
- Development Management
- Building Control
- Finance
- Tenancy Services.

The Policy would ensure that the Council achieved and maintained consistency in its approach to enforcement and was only targeted at cases where action was needed.

This policy also incorporated and updated three other enforcement policies to support ease of reference and consistent application. The new policy also provided an option for other enforcement policies to be added to the over-arching policy as an appendix.

The CEP had been considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2025, Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2025. Feedback given has been considered and where it was requested to be, has been included. Senior managers have also been consulted and their feedback is included.

Within Appendix A of the report a fixed penalty matrix was included; this had been agreed with the Environmental Crime Partnership and Legal Services Lincolnshire (LSL). SKDC would be trialling this matrix on behalf of the rest of Lincolnshire, and there would be feedback through the Partnership and also wider partners.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 had introduced enhanced powers with private sector housing. It was anticipated that enforcement related policies that local authorities would adopt would be published during 2026.

The following information was highlighted during debate:

- The amount of consultation and training relating to this Policy had been comprehensive.
- The overarching policy covered a lot of legislation; the main area of the Council covered was Public Protection. There was a Senior Managers' Forum held at SKDC which included Heads of Service, Service Managers and Team Managers, where issues can be raised. This topic would be part of future agendas.
- SKDC had a very good and structured method to applying the law in a fair and proportionate way. Moves to prosecutions must be approved by the Head of Service, then the Assistant Director, and finally the Chief Executive.

91. Tree Management Policies

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the adoption of the Tree Management Policies, to replace the existing tree management guidelines.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve and formally adopt the Tree Management Policies, which will replace the Council's existing Tree Guidelines (2019) as the authoritative framework for managing trees under South Kesteven District Council's (SKDC) responsibility.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director for Housing and Projects to make minor amendments to the Tree Management Policies as required, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.**
- 3. Request that the Policies be reviewed within 3 years.**

Other options considered

Not to adopt the Tree Management Policies and continue with existing guidelines. This option was discounted because:

- a) the current Tree Guidelines lacked the clarity and nuance needed to support consistent, balanced decision-making; and,
- b) they do not provide an industry-aligned risk management strategy to demonstrate that SKDC was fulfilling its duty of care, hence leaving the Council more vulnerable to claims of negligence.

Reasons for the decision

Adoption of the updated Tree Management Policies

The updated policies provided greater clarity for officers, tenants and the public. They introduced a more detailed and proportionate approach to tree-related risk management, aligned with accepted best practice and were designed to support the Council's duty of care. Adoption would ensure SKDC managed its tree stock in a consistent, transparent and accountable way, with policies that are defensible, modern and fit for purpose.

Delegation to the Director for Housing and Projects to make minor amendments in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment Minor refinements may be required over time - for example, to reflect updated industry terminology, workflow improvements, or clarifications requested by service areas. Providing delegated authority for these adjustments would avoid the need for disproportionate governance processes whilst ensuring that any changes remained

aligned with Cabinet's policy intent through consultation with the relevant portfolio holder.

Existing tree guidelines were established seven years ago. An update was required to provide flexibility on the management of land.

A modern and risk-based approach to inspection was required. The draft policy document had a clearer four-part structure:

1. Pruning and removal of council managed trees – covered the council's position on overhanging branches, nuisance issues, shading and other common issues.
2. Trees on tenanted property – defined the responsibilities of SKDC and the tenant.
3. Trees in closed churchyards – acted as a form of service level agreement for churches/church wardens.
4. Risk Management – Introduced the concept of 'zoning' and defines a survey and record keeping protocol.

The Policies aimed to focus resources on the risks to people and property. They were in line with proposals debated in Parliament which seemed likely to become the default for local authorities.

Environment OSC have reviewed and commented on these policies on two occasions. The first review invited Environment OSC to scrutinise the policy approach, structure and wording. The second review examined resource and cost implications.

The policies were in line with industry standards.

92. Local Development Scheme

Purpose of report

The report covered a general Local Plan update and a revision to the Council's Local Development Strategy. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008 and Localism Act 2011) required 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.

Decision

Cabinet approved the Local Development Scheme (2026 – 2029) for publication.

Other options considered

The alternative of not reviewing the Local Development Scheme was discounted. Failing to keep the Local Development Scheme up to date would have contravened 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.

Reasons for the decision

The reason for the resolutions was to ensure the Council was providing an up-to date position and an accurate timeline for the production of development plan documents. This would ensure that the Council was acting in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

Maintaining an up-to-date Local Development Scheme would ensure a transparent process. This was important because the local community and others with an interest in the district could be kept aware of development plan production and stages of consultation.

Supporting the continuity of the planning function in South Kesteven would 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.

Local Plans (LP) were key to promoting sustainable growth. There were many steps involved in the preparation for an updated LP, informed by legislation.

In preparing a new draft LP, Regulation 18 was launched by SKDC in February 2024 based on the then housing targets expected of the council. After the General Election in 2024, the new government increased annual housing targets and added further housing requirements.

A second Regulation 18 consultation was undertaken by SKDC in the summer of 2025. SKDC was required to find additional sites for development. Following the latest consultation, the Planning Policy team had been reviewing feedback, and an evidence base to support the next round of consultation.

SKDC was required to develop the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and keep it up to date to reflect progress. The Regulation 19 was originally scheduled for January/February 2026. As the Planning Policy team have been working through consultation feedback, it became clear that additional evidence would be required ahead of the Regulation 19 consultation. A detailed project management approach was required and the overall timetable needed finessing.

In a move supported by the Planning Advisory Service, the Regulation 19 consultation needed to be moved to September 2026. This still allowed crucial time to submit the LP prior to inspection. The Regulation 19 move was the only change to the timetable.

The LP was achievable with current staffing and resources. SKDC was not the only council in this position.

93. Cabinet Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted, with the following points:

- The Budget report for February would be split into two reports – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.
- The Waste Policy would be considered by Cabinet, rather than Full Council.
- The Finance Update report will now be considered by Cabinet in March.

94. Open Questions from Councillors

Councillor Elvis Stooke to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Councillor Stooke asked for a meeting in Loundonhorpe and Harrowby Without with parish councillors about the Blessed Hugh More site regarding tree planting before the next meeting of Environment OSC. Councillor Rhys Baker agreed to try and arrange this.

Councillor Stooke also praised officers involved in the out of hours response to an issue on Somerby Hill, Grantham.

The meeting closed at 5:30pm.