

South Kesteven District Council Tenancy Strategy 2026–2031 (Draft)

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1. Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 states that all Local Authorities in England must produce a Tenancy Strategy which provides a strategic framework for social landlords (including the Council and Registered Providers (RPs)) operating within South Kesteven to consider when developing or reviewing their tenancy policies.

The Strategy provides guidance to RPs relating to:

- the types of tenancies they will grant.
- the circumstances in which different types of tenancies will be granted.
- where fixed-term tenancies are granted, the length of the fixed term and the circumstances in which a further tenancy will be granted when the fixed term expires

2. Aims and Objectives

The South Kesteven Tenancy Strategy provides guidance to Registered Providers of Social Housing on the types of tenancies, the length of fixed-term, review processes, and circumstances for granting further tenancies. It aims to balance tenant security, efficient use of housing, and local housing needs.

Key Aims:

- **Security of Tenure:** Provide long-term stability for tenants.
- **Protection of Lifetime Tenure:** Ensure tenants who held a secure or assured lifetime tenancy when Section 154 of the Localism Act 2011 came into force and who have remained social housing tenants since. Retain the same level of security if they move to another social rented home, regardless of landlord.
- **Best Use of Housing Stock:** Promote efficient use of homes and reduce under-occupation and overcrowding.
- **Choice, Clarity and Consistency:** Ensure tenants clearly understand tenancy options.
- **Sustainability of Communities:** Support balanced, mixed communities.
- **Collaboration with Registered Providers:** Align tenancy policies with local needs.

3. National Context

The Localism Act 2011 introduced several key changes to the affordable housing sector

- It amended the Housing Act 1996 to give councils more local control over homelessness duties, social housing allocations, and tenancy management.
- Local authorities were provided with more freedom to decide how social housing is allocated and managed to meet local need.

- It made it easier for tenants to move home nationwide by strengthening the rules on mutual exchanges.
- It also aimed to expand the use of fixed-term tenancies in social housing and reduce the standard use of lifetime tenancies. These changes gave councils more flexibility to manage housing and ensure homes are allocated to those most in need. Later, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 built on this by introducing fixed-term tenancies for most new council tenancies.
- It updated homelessness legislation, giving councils the flexibility to resolve homelessness by offering suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.

4 Local Context

4.1 Housing and Demographic Profile

South Kesteven, encompasses the four towns, Grantham, Stamford, Bourne, and Market Deeping, and has diverse housing needs across rural and urban areas. Social rented housing plays a key role in supporting vulnerable households who cannot meet their housing needs in the private market.

As of mid-year 2024, the population of South Kesteven is estimated to stand at 147,151, consisting of approximately 62,850 separate households.

The 2021 Census remains the key source for data on rates and patterns of housing tenure. As of March 2021, 43,574 households own or partly own their home (owns outright 23,765, mortgage or loan 19,155, shared ownership 654). This is 69.33% of all households in the district, this is substantially above the national proportion of 62.3% and slightly above the Lincolnshire rate of 67.15%. 11,422 households (18.17%) live in private rented accommodation. 7,851 households (12.49%) live in social rented accommodation.

Home ownership heavily correlates with age as 73.92% of residents aged sixty-five plus own their homes outright compared with 7.81% for residents aged between thirty-five and forty-nine. The proportion of residents in social housing is broadly similar across all age groups.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of housing tenure by age as per the 2021 census

Age Cohort	Total Households Headed By	Tenure Type (%)					
		Owned: Owns outright	Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	Social rented: Rents from council or Local Authority	Social rented: Other social rented	Private rented: Private landlord or letting agency	Private rented: Other private rented or lives rent free
Aged 16 to 24 years	1,116	3.41%	17.92%	13.80%	9.50%	49.73%	24.19%

Aged 25 to 34 years	7,015	3.09%	42.51%	9.76%	5.72%	35.07%	4.99%
Aged 35 to 49 years	14,591	7.81%	53.53%	8.94%	4.54%	22.79%	2.02%
Aged 50 to 64 years	19,021	35.60%	39.24%	8.09%	2.68%	12.84%	2.34%
Aged 65 years and over	21,103	73.92%	6.42%	8.78%	3.01%	5.76%	0.00%

Rates of home ownership varies across the district and correlates to the rural/urban split and the level of deprivation. Home ownership rates (outright and via mortgage) is more common in rural areas. Renting is more common in the towns.

Table 2: Shows the breakdown of housing tenure by area as per the 2021 census

Table 2: Sub District Housing Tenure, South Kesteven, Census 2021							
Area	Total Households	Tenure Type (%)					
		Owned: Owns outright	Owned: Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership	Social rented: Rents from council or Local Authority	Social rented: Other social rented	Private rented: Private landlord or letting agency	Private rented: Other private rented or lives rent free
Ancaster, Caythorpe & Claypole	3,097	45.01%	33.65%	7.27%	1.68%	9.69%	2.71%
Long Bennington, Allington & Barrowby	4,031	50.24%	29.40%	7.22%	2.70%	8.11%	2.33%
Grantham Northeast	4,373	36.45%	26.69%	18.41%	3.13%	12.92%	2.40%
Grantham Northwest	4,377	35.71%	37.13%	4.39%	3.22%	17.66%	1.90%
Grantham Southwest	2,930	22.87%	25.43%	30.85%	4.88%	14.16%	1.81%
Grantham Southeast	5,589	24.33%	27.73%	5.65%	6.21%	33.57%	2.50%
Corby Glen, Ropsley & Grantham Outskirts	4,163	41.53%	32.98%	3.41%	1.80%	16.86%	3.41%
Morton & Billingborough	3,372	41.96%	32.98%	8.90%	1.90%	11.39%	2.88%
Harlaxton, Colsterworth & South Witham	3,184	34.74%	29.81%	9.20%	5.75%	17.81%	2.70%
Bourne West	3,544	38.54%	39.84%	3.61%	2.51%	13.74%	1.75%
Bourne East	4,171	33.45%	32.80%	8.13%	4.94%	18.82%	1.87%
Langtoft, Thurlby & Uffington	4,151	51.29%	32.72%	4.48%	1.28%	8.34%	1.90%
Market Deeping	3,112	41.77%	31.91%	5.91%	8.48%	10.28%	1.64%

Deeping St James & Frognall	3,131	40.40%	36.95%	4.18%	3.07%	13.41%	1.98%
Stamford North	4,178	32.31%	29.51%	17.69%	3.09%	15.08%	2.32%
Stamford Central, West and South	5,444	38.59%	28.29%	6.65%	4.15%	20.28%	2.04%

4.2 Council Housing Stock and Management

South Kesteven District Council manages a significant social housing portfolio (approximately 6,000 properties) and continues to integrate tenant support services, tenancy sustainment measures, and partnership working with other landlords.

Currently, around 900 households are registered as requiring social housing on the Choice Based Lettings System in South Kesteven. In 2024/2025 SKDC re-let 344 properties which is 6% of the total housing stock.

4.3 Strategic Alignment

This strategy complements the Council’s wider housing and corporate strategies, including:

- Housing Strategy (to provide sustainable, good-quality homes).
- Lincolnshire Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- Housing Allocations Policy.
- Tenant Voice Strategy
- SKDC’s Corporate plan

5. Guidance for Registered Providers

5.1 Overview of Tenancy Types

Tenancy Type	Usage
Introductory Tenancies	These tenancies are used by the local authority for new tenants who have not previously held a council tenancy, providing a probationary period of up to 12 months.
Starter Tenancies	These are offered to applicants of Registered Providers who have not previously held a tenancy, providing a supported introductory period of up 12 months.

Assured or Secure Tenancies	These are recommended for most Council and Registered Provider tenants offering long term stability.
Assured Shorthold Tenancies	These are typically used by Registered Providers or private landlords to offer flexible, time-limited housing arrangements, usually for a fixed term.
Flexible Tenancies	These are granted for a fixed term, typically five years for general needs cases, or a minimum of two years in exceptional circumstances with tenancy lengths clearly explained to tenants. However, South Kesteven District Council generally offers secure tenancies after the introductory period.
Demoted Tenancies	These are used following a Court order when tenants breach their tenancy, often due to anti-social behaviour. They offer a structured period with reduced tenancy rights, encouraging positive change while maintaining the opportunity to return to a full secure tenancy

Registered Providers should:

- Offer secure tenancies for families, older people, or those with care needs.
- Ensure probationary tenancies comply with statutory standards.
- Use fixed-term tenancies for flexibility and efficient stock use.

5.3. Renewal and Review of Tenancies

Review at End of Fixed Term

- Comprehensive review before expiry.
- Engage tenants about housing needs and future options.
- Offer further tenancies in the same or alternative properties if appropriate.

Circumstances Affecting Renewal

- Accommodation suitability for household needs.
- Under-occupation or overcrowding.
- Changes in finances, care needs, or household composition.

Communication and Dispute Resolution

- Providers must communicate decisions clearly.
- Provide reasons for non-renewal and appeal options.

6. Existing Tenants

To make the best use of housing stock, the Council actively supports tenants to move to homes that are better suited and more manageable for their current needs, offering incentives, tailored guidance, and additional rehousing priority for those under-occupying. We also encourage Registered Providers to take the same approach, helping more residents find the right home for them.

7. Rental types

7.1 Affordable Rent

Affordable Rent enables Registered Providers to charge up to 80% of market rent, helping to fund the delivery of additional affordable homes. The Council supports this approach but expects rents to remain genuinely affordable, ensuring homes remain accessible to those in need. Where affordable housing is delivered as part of a wider private development, S106 agreements regulate rent levels to ensure these homes are offered at an affordable level.

7.1. Social Rent

Social rent is a type of affordable housing rent that is set at a lower level than market rents, regulated by national guidelines. It is designed to be genuinely affordable for low-income households and is typically offered by local authorities or Registered Providers.

8. Monitoring, Review and Governance

8.1 Monitoring and Performance Indicators

The following indicators will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this strategy

- Distribution of tenancy types.
- Fixed-term tenancy numbers and outcomes.
- Overcrowding and under-occupation levels.
- Tenant satisfaction and sustainability measures.

8.2 Review Cycle

Reviewed every five years, or sooner if legislation, policy, or housing market changes.

8.3 Consultation and Engagement

Council consults landlords, partners, tenants, and stakeholders during reviews.

8.4 Safeguarding and Domestic abuse

South Kesteven District Council expects all Registered Providers operating within the district to have robust safeguarding arrangements in place that protect and promote the welfare of children, young people, and adults with care and support needs. Registered Providers should adopt their own safeguarding policies and procedures that are consistent with national legislation, statutory guidance, and recognised best practice.

Safeguarding encompasses a range of legal duties and responsibilities designed to protect individuals' health, wellbeing, and human rights. Providers should take a proactive approach to identifying concerns at an early stage, preventing harm, abuse, or neglect, and ensuring appropriate support and intervention where risks are identified.

Registered Providers are expected to ensure that tenants and household members know how to raise safeguarding concerns and how to access advice and support. Where there is reason to believe that a person may be at risk of harm, appropriate referrals should be made to Lincolnshire Children's or Adult Safeguarding Services in line with statutory requirements.

Providers should also ensure that relevant safeguarding information is clearly communicated to tenants, including signposting to further advice and support through tenant information, handbooks, or digital channels.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires RPs to ensure that existing lifetime social tenants fleeing domestic abuse are offered a new tenancy on a lifetime basis. We expect RPs to adopt this approach for victims/survivors of domestic abuse, including where a resident is rehoused through our Housing Register.

8.5 Equality and Diversity

The Council is committed to delivering housing services that embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. We treat all households fairly and with respect, regardless of background or protected characteristics. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this Tenancy Strategy, and no additional mitigations are required. We will continue to review our policies to ensure they remain inclusive and responsive to the needs of our communities.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Glossary of Tenancy Terms
- Appendix B: Relevant Legislation and Policy References

Appendix A: Glossary of Tenancy Terms

Term	Definition
Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)	short-term, flexible tenancy, usually for a fixed period, often used by private landlords or housing providers.
Council Housing/Social Housing	Homes offered at below-market rent to households who cannot afford private housing, provided by the council or housing organisations.
Registered Provider	A housing organisation that provides and manages affordable homes.
Tenancy Review	The process of checking a tenancy at the end of a fixed term to decide whether it should be renewed, moved, or ended.
Tenant Sustainment	Support provided to help tenants maintain their home, including guidance on finances, managing the property, or moving to a more suitable home.

Appendix B: Relevant Legislation and Policy References

Legislation	Summary
Localism Act 2011	Requires all local authorities in England to produce a Tenancy Strategy. Provides councils with greater flexibility in tenancy types, fixed-term tenancies, and allocation of social housing.
Housing Act 1996 (as amended)	Governs the allocation of social housing, introduction of flexible tenancies, and provisions for introductory tenancies.
Housing and Planning Act 2016	Introduced fixed-term tenancies for most new council tenancies, and updated rules on homelessness and housing supply.
Equality Act 2010	Ensures housing policies and tenancy management practices comply with equality and anti-discrimination requirements, protecting households with protected characteristics.

Local Policies and Strategies

Policy/Strategy	Summary
South Kesteven Housing strategy 2026-2031	Sets out the Council's overarching housing objectives, including supply, quality, and sustainable communities.
South Kesteven Housing Allocations Policy 2023	Details the allocation framework for council and Registered Provider properties, including priority criteria and lettings procedures.
Lincolnshire Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027	Guides partnership approaches to preventing homelessness and supporting vulnerable residents.
South Kesteven Voice of the Tenant Strategy	Ensures tenant participation in housing management, including tenancy review and policy consultation.