



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

# Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 10 March 2026

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

## Update on Economic Development Strategy

### Report Author

Simon Jackson, Economic Development and Inward Investment Manager

✉ Simon.Jackson@southkesteven.gov.uk

### Purpose of Report

To updates to the Committee regarding: a) the Action Plan associated with the South Kesteven District Economic Development Strategy (2024-2028); and b) progress towards a refresh of the strategy.

### Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. Note the update on the Action Plan and refresh of the Economic Development Strategy (2024-2028).**
- 2. Request a refreshed Economic Development Strategy be presented to the Committee in May**

### 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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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 Enabling economic opportunities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	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 This is an update report for noting. Any refreshed, or new, Strategy would require Cabinet.

*Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager*

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1. Enabling Economic Opportunity is a priority of 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.
- 2.2. The Council's Economic Development Strategy 2024-28 was adopted by Cabinet in October 2024. The strategy set out a path to achieving the vision for South Kesteven. It also identified five areas of focus where the Council has most influence over key barriers and challenges to economic prosperity:
  - Business, job creation and employment safeguarding
  - Skills development
  - Inclusive growth and regeneration
  - Inward investment
  - Enhancing tourism and the visitor economy

- 2.3. The Strategy included an Action Plan setting out specific activities the Economic Development Team could undertake to meet the objectives of the Strategy.
- 2.4. As reported to the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in September 2025, there have been several key changes of circumstances since the Strategy was adopted. These include: a reduction in the level of resources the Council has available to support economic development: the Local Government Review: the publication of “The UK’s Modern Industrial Strategy” by the Department of Business and Trade (June 2025); and, most notably, the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) has been established and a Mayor elected in May 2025.

The GLCCA has three key areas of focus:

- Transport,
  - Employment and Skills, and
  - Business and infrastructure.
- 2.5. The GLCCA set up: an Economic Advisory Panel; Employment and Skills Board; Business and Infrastructure Board and a Transport Board. These are preparing strategies covering housing growth, transport, growth and infrastructure as well as a Local Skills Improvement Plan; all are expected to be published in 2026. It will be important to ensure the South Kesteven Economic Development Strategy aligns with the GLCCA growth strategies to maximise impact and to attract funding and other resources into the District. In anticipation of the completion of these strategies, and to avoid delays in refreshing the Council’s Strategy, officers are liaising with the GLCCA.
  - 2.6. In light of these ongoing developments, it is appropriate for the Council to review the existing Action Plan to ensure it remains deliverable and aligned with the Council’s Corporate priorities, as well as local and national ambitions.
  - 2.7. The Economic Development and Inward Investment Manager was appointed in September 2025 and began work to refresh the Economic Development Strategy. A key principle of the refresh is to focus on the actions that will deliver the greatest impact on economic growth in the District. This Refresh is scheduled for presentation to the Finance and Economic OSC in May and to the Cabinet for approval in July.
  - 2.8. During the Financial Year, and particularly since the arrival of the Economic Development and Inward Investment Manager, progress has been made against many of the actions in the existing Strategy. However, given the large number of actions, and changes in circumstances listed above, several actions have not been progressed or have been put ‘on hold’. Details are outlined in the Action Plan update (Appendix A).

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1. The Strategy and Action Plan requires regular review to ensure the Council is meeting its objectives.
- 3.2. Since updating this Committee in September 2025, the Economic Development Team has continued to deliver the actions in the strategy including:
- a) a refreshed Economic Development Strategy 2026-2029
  - b) increase business engagement through attendance at business clubs, networking events, awards and the Combined Authority's 'Great Exhibition'
  - c) a large Skills Summit Careers Fair attended by over 40 exhibitors and over 1,000 Year 10 students from across the District
  - d) delivery of a talk to the business community on the Age Friendly communities project and the importance of wellbeing in the workplace
  - e) strengthened partnerships with colleagues in county and district councils, as well as Business Lincolnshire
  - f) allocated all UKSPF funding and managed projects across the 'Local Business' and 'People & Skills' categories to ensure projects hit targets and maximise outputs and outcomes
  - g) delivered several activities to promote the visitor economy including
    - maintain and develop the Discover South Kesteven website
    - manage all DSK social media accounts: X, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook
    - meeting with Tourism Venues and Stakeholders
    - meeting with LCC and other tourism officers to advise on the new Destination Management Plan
    - developing the Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy
  - h) Continued to support organisations in securing external grant funding
  - i) delivered online and in-person funding and bid-writing workshops for businesses
  - j) worked with Grantham Museum to develop a fundable project and supported them in the submission of a £243,800 bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund
  - k) provided support to access funding for heritage projects including for Wake House in Bourne and the Deepings Community Library
  - l) launched the SKDC Shopfront Maintenance Grant programme (UKSPF funded)
- 3.3 The team is supporting Stamford and Grantham in submitting Expressions of Interest to the Department of Culture Media and Sport for the 'UK Town of Culture' competition which has a closing date of 31 March 2026.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 The report is to note progress against the Action Plan to seek agreement that the Committee will receive a refreshed Economic Development Strategy. 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 is delivering the actions and meeting the aims and ambitions of the Strategy.

## **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 Minutes to Meeting of FEOSC 23rd September 2025:  
Agenda item - [Update on Economic Development Strategy Action Plan](#)

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1: Updates on the Action Plan.