



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 7 May 2026

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

Grantham Future High Street Fund Project Closure Report

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update and project closure report following the completion of the Grantham Future High Street Fund (FHSF) Programme.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

Note the report on the completion of the FHSF Project and provide any feedback on the lessons learned.

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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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

Which wards are impacted?

Housing
Effective council
Grantham St Wulframs;

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 Council has received the entirety of the capital grant (£5,512,899) allocated to the FHSF programme from The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- 1.2 The capital budget is set out below in **Table 1**, which shows the actual spend breakdown for 2021-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026.

Table 1: FHSF Capital				
	2021-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	Total
Capital Spend	£ 481,131.00	£ 3,468,059.00	£ 1,563,709.00	£ 5,512,899.00

- 1.3 Spend for 2025-2026 was focused on the delivery of the additional works programme which was approved by MHCLG through the formal Project Adjustment Request (PAR) process.
- 1.4 This approval took place in two phases as budget allocated to contingency within the public realm projects was de-risked and released. The first of these approvals was received in February 2025, the second in July 2025.
- 1.5 SKDC complied with all requirements of MHCLG to meet deadlines for the contractual commitment of works and subsequently complete project spend.
- 1.6 There is also a revenue budget which forms the Council's obligatory match funding to the FHSF Programme. This revenue budget is illustrated below in **Table 2**, which shows actual spend throughout the project to date

Table 2: FHSF Revenue					
	2021-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	Remaining Allocation	Total
Revenue	£ 122,000	£ 51,346	£ 111,274	£ 94,442	£ 379,092.

- 1.7 There is no deadline by which SKDC must spend its match funding, although it was generally expected that this will align with the Programme as a whole, the Council are able to continue to deliver activity with this budget to achieve the required level of match funding as per the grant agreement.
- 1.8 Officers are required to submit a monitoring and evaluation return to MHCLG by Friday 29May.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.9 The FHSF programme was delivered by the Economic Development Team under the guidance of the FHSF Board and where appropriate the funder, MHCLG.
- 1.10 All decisions regarding spend were made following the Council's delegated responsibilities as outlined in the Financial Regulations and where spend or contract values exceeded the limits permitted under existing delegations, authority was sought from Cabinet or Full Council as required.
- 1.11 Officers regularly reported to the Finance and Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee (or its equivalent predecessors) to provide updates on the progress of the project.
- 1.12 Officers provided monitoring and evaluation reports to MHCLG on a six-monthly basis as required. MHCLG require an ongoing process of output monitoring and will require annual reports for three years from 2026.
- 1.13 There are no further legal or governance implications arising from this report which are not already referenced in the body of the report.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.14 As SKDC met all necessary deadlines for contractual commitment and spend of funding prior to the close of the programme, there are no further risks to the council following its completion

Completed by: Claire Saunders, High Street Heritage Action Zone Project Manager

2. Background to the Report

Project Background

- 2.1 The FHSF programme was launched in 2019, as part of an £830M programme of investment in town centres which made up the then Government's 'Levelling Up' programme, administered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- 2.2 The programme gave provision for capital funding for Local Authorities for projects which addressed local challenges which centred on town centres. The expectations of MHCLG were that proposals would include interventions which fall under the following general headings:
- Investment in physical infrastructure
 - Acquisition and assembly of land including to support new housing, workspaces and public realm
 - Improvements to transport access, traffic flow and circulation in the area
 - Supporting change of use including (where appropriate) housing delivery and densification; and
 - Supporting adaptation of the high street in response to changing technology.
- 2.3 It should be noted between September 2021 and July 2024 MHCLG operated under the name of the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), however for simplicity the term MHCLG will be used throughout this report when discussing communications with central Government.
- 2.4 The bid for funding was a two-stage process, an initial Expression of Interest phase was submitted to Government in March 2019, which outlined the Council's vision for 'Grantham: A Living Town'
- 2.5 The proposal outlined four areas of focus for improvement within the town:
- Streets and spaces – creating shared social space and encouraging dwell time
 - Homes – creating homes where people will want to live within the town centre

- Transport – rationalising the traffic environment, tackling congestion, and improving the pedestrian experience
 - Culture and learning – supporting places and spaces where people of all ages can develop and grow, increasing their skills and understanding of the world around them.
- 2.6 In August 2019, the Expression of Interest was shortlisted by MHCLG in the second funding round, and SKDC were invited to develop a full business case and bid for funding. The council secured £150,000 in funding from MHCLG to support the development of the final bid.
- 2.7 This funding supported project staff and allowed for the commissioning of consultants to support the creation of the business case in line with MHCLG’s requirements.
- 2.8 This work included the creation of an outline Spatial Masterplan, collation of baseline data, development of project proposals, and calculation of project Benefit Cost Ratios (BCR) which were required to meet or exceed a minimum threshold set by MHCLG.
- 2.9 A programme of public and stakeholder consultation took place between July-September 2020 which included public surveys (both street surveys and online surveys) as well as business and stakeholder workshops. Officers also engaged directly with key landowners.
- 2.10 This consultation was used to identify needs and desires of residents, workers, visitors, and businesses in the town centre, and as the basis of the developing programme.
- 2.11 These consultations identified key concerns which included
- An overwhelming sentiment that Grantham was ‘boring’ with little to engage residents or visitors, and little reason to come into the town other than employment.
 - Lack of public spaces within the town centre which encouraged people to dwell or mingle in the town centre.
 - A prioritisation of vehicle traffic on the high street which created a hostile environment for pedestrians, particularly vulnerable people and children.
 - Key entry routes into the town centre, particularly the route from the Station was unwelcoming and illegible for visitors.
 - High level of retail vacancy, and a poor retail mix.
 - Grantham’s built and natural heritage is a strength which was underutilised.
- 2.12 A wide range of potential projects were assessed for inclusion, and an initial draft business case was submitted for review to MHCLG In March 2020. This included a longlist of six projects totalling £12.3M:
- Station Approach land acquisition and mixed-use redevelopment

- Station Approach Public Realm improvement
- Market Place Public Realm improvement
- St Peter's Hill Gardens public realm
- George Centre residential conversion
- Upper Floor Residential Conversion programme

- 2.13 Feedback received from MHCLG following the draft encouraged Local Authorities to focus on deliverability in their bids, as well as ensuring that the minimum BCR threshold was exceeded within the bid. Informal guidance from the MHCLG team indicated there was a strong preference for bids under £10M, and it was therefore strongly suggested that SKDC revise their bid to below this cost threshold.
- 2.14 Local Authorities were also asked to consider the impact of Covid19 on the deliverability, costs and outputs of their proposals.
- 2.15 Following its approval from the Council on 16 July 2020, the Final Business case was submitted to MHCLG on 29 July 2020
- 2.16 The bid encompassed an £8.1M grant request which included the following projects
- Station Approach land acquisition and mixed-use redevelopment
 - Station Approach Public Realm improvement
 - Market Place Public Realm improvement
 - St Peter's Hill Gardens public realm
 - Upper Floor Residential Conversion programme
- 2.17 In December 2020, MHCLG informed SKDC that the Council would be awarded 69% of their final grant request. This decision had been made as the scheme was oversubscribed and was a common response to the Local Authorities which had applied to the scheme.
- 2.18 The programme was reprofiled to account for the reduced grant award. Ultimately SKDC secured a grant of £5.52M for the delivery of the following projects:
- Station Approach 'Strategic Site' land acquisition
 - Station Approach Public Realm improvement
 - Market Place Public Realm improvement
 - Upper Floor Residential Conversion programme (reduced to 22 units from the previous 25-unit budget)

2.19 The grant funding was initially broken down as follows

Programme Element	Budget
Station Approach – Public Realm	£1,686,875
Market Place	£822,188
Strategic Site Acquisition	£2,160,981
Upper Floor Grants	£550,000
Programme Management and consultancy costs	£335,998
TOTAL	£5,556,042

2.20 The Council agreed to support the project with match funding of £379,092 in revenue funding, which would support a Town Centre Manager post, the delivery of a 'Town Team' programme, as well as supporting cultural activities in the town centre.

2.21 It was estimated that the upper floor grant conversion programme would leverage a minimum of £550,000 in private sector match funding as the result of the delivery of the scheme.

2.22 Funding was received by SKDC in June 2021, and delivery of the project began in August 2021 following the appointment of the Programme Manager.

2.23 The scheme was initially due to complete delivery by March 31 2024, but would later benefit from a series of project extensions, ultimately completing in March 2026.

Project Delivery

Station Approach Strategic Site Acquisition

2.24 The acquisition of underutilised land between Wharf Road and Station Road, and the creation of plans for future development of the site was originally a key project within the bid proposals to Government.

2.25 A budget of £2.16M was allocated to the delivery of this aspect of the project.

2.26 The ambition of the project was to provide the opportunity to create housing, employment and light industrial sites within the town centre, while significantly improving a key gateway route into the town centre from the south, and to and from the Railway Station.

2.27 With the support of appropriate legal and professional services, the FHSF Programme Manager, engaged with the property and landowners as well as potential development partners.

- 2.28 Landowners initially showed interest in potentially selling the site to the Council, under the condition that the Council would identify and purchase a suitable site for the relocation of the businesses affected.
- 2.29 Considerable interest was shown in the scheme by LCR, the regeneration and property development arm of London North Eastern Railway (LNER), who were engaged by the potential redevelopment potential for the approach to Grantham Station.
- 2.30 Working with officers from SKDC, LCR produced a masterplan for the site, encompassing the Railway Station, and the surrounding land not currently used for housing.
- 2.31 Despite all best efforts, it was not possible to identify a suitable relocation site which would meet all the requirements of the businesses which would be displaced by the land acquisition and redevelopment.
- 2.32 This process had been significantly impacted by the considerable rise in property and land values which was experienced between 2021 – 2023.
- 2.33 Investigation was made into the likelihood of success of acquiring the land through Compulsory Purchase, however following legal advice it was determined that a compulsory purchase attempt would be unlikely to be successful within the timeframe required for the delivery of the project, and that this element was no longer viable for delivery.
- 2.34 In November 2023, officers submitted a formal Project Adjustment Request (PAR) to MHCLG to request the removal of the project from the programme, and the reallocation of funding to other projects within the scheme.
- 2.35 This was approved by MHCLG, and the budget was reallocated to the two public realm schemes which had experienced significant cost uplifts which will be discussed later in this report.
- 2.36 This reallocation of funding resulted in the budget for Grantham Market Place public realm being increased to £1.8M, and Station Approach public realm being increased to £2.3M.

Public Realm Schemes – Market Place and Station Approach

- 2.37 The Future High Streets fund programme included two public realm projects, both of which took place on land which fell under the responsibility of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC).

- 2.38 As such SKDC officers worked in partnership with officers from LCC Highways in the development and delivery of the two schemes
- 2.39 LCC Highways led on the design and delivery of the public realm works, were responsible for final approval of designs, procurement of contractors and services, and management of the delivery of the schemes.
- 2.40 Because of this both schemes were delivered together under one contractor (Taylor Woodrow), and under a partnership agreement with LCC.
- 2.41 The initial budget for two schemes was £2,509,063.
- 2.42 The Grantham Market Place public realm scheme was intended create a more flexible space in the town centre which felt less dominated by vehicle traffic.
- 2.43 By raising the level of the road surface, the intent was to create a space which was more flexible for events, as well as tacitly slowing vehicle traffic through the Market Place.
- 2.44 During the project design and bidding phase, early discussions were had with LCC Highways about the potential for exploring or trialling pedestrianisation of the Market Place, however ultimately LCC were not comfortable with exploring this until the Southern Relief Road was open, and its impact on traffic in the town centre was known.
- 2.45 The design of the marketplace was therefore required to meet the necessary standards for use as a public highway, however, would not require alteration should pedestrianisation be something that the Council wish to consider in the future.
- 2.46 The works to the five-arm junction between Station Road, Wharf Road, Harlaxton Road, Sankt Augustin Way and Westgate (referred to throughout the project and this report as 'Station Approach'), were in response to consultation feedback the pedestrian experience when navigating this junction was poor, and that it provided a poor first impression to the town centre for visitors arriving from the Station.
- 2.47 The project sought to address these concerns by rationalising crossing points and traffic signals, improving the pavement surfaces on the approach to the crossing, resurfacing the highway, and reducing the number of barriers to the number required for safety.
- 2.48 In the original bid proposal, the improvements were to continue along the length of Station Road to the Railway Station itself, encompassing the section of Station Road, which is owned by LNER, however during 2020 LNER completed resurfacing and repaving works of this section independently.

- 2.49 During the design stage the projects were heavily impacted by rapidly increasing costs which were seen globally following Covid and the outset of the Ukraine War. During this time forecasted costs for the project more than doubled.
- 2.50 As a result it would not have been possible to deliver both public realm schemes within the allocated budget. SKDC Officers worked with LCC Highways to identify potential options for cost engineering of these schemes.
- 2.51 However, the decision to remove the strategic site from the programme and reallocate the funding to the public realm projects allowed the necessary increase in budget to deliver both schemes as planned.
- 2.52 The revised budget for these two programmes was £4.2M, which was managed by LCC Highways as the lead delivery partner.
- 2.53 Following the necessary process of approvals for the designs and procurement both from SKDC and LCC, Taylor Woodrow were appointed as contractors for the delivery of both schemes.
- 2.54 Works to Market Place began on the 17 May 2024 and concluded on 13 September 2024.
- 2.55 SKDC officers worked with colleagues at LCC Highways to limit disruption as far as possible, and to ensure that the public were aware of the phasing of the works.
- 2.56 To support businesses in the area during the period of disruption, street performers were arranged and craft workshops were held in a pop-up arts space to encourage footfall to Westgate.
- 2.57 On 19 October 2024, a 'Festival of Community' was held to mark the completion of the works, and as a formal reopening of the Market Place. This will be discussed further in this report, as part of the Future High Streets Fund events programme.
- 2.58 In October 2025 works were carried out to rectify defects with some of the setts which were laid, which had delaminated. These works were coordinated by LCC Highways, and the cost of the works was met by the contractor.

2.59



Grantham Market Place – 17 September 2024

- 2.60 Work to Station Approach began 19 August 2024 and was completed 16 December 2024
- 2.61 The work included resurfacing of the junction, replacement of traffic signals, lighting and signage, rebuilding of pedestrian crossing islands, removal of unnecessary barrier fencing and improvements to surrounding footpaths.
- 2.62 While it was inevitable that there would be disruption to traffic during these works, SKDC officers worked with LCC Highways colleagues to mitigate this where possible.
- 2.63 Works were carried out in five phases to minimise as far as possible disruption to traffic and the town centre.
- 2.64 As with previously, additional activities and street performances were delivered in the town centre to support footfall.

2.65



Station Road/ A607 Junction - 16 December 2024

- 2.66 Both projects were delivered significantly under budget, in large part due to a fall in the inflation and costs across the construction industry as a whole, and due to the release of contingency funding which had been retained against risk as the projects completed
- 2.67 The final delivery costs for the Market Place works was £1,396,646 and the final cost of the works to Station Approach was £1,420,656 (totalling £2,817,302). The total value of the programme underspend was therefore £1,4572,695

Additional Works

- 2.68 As a result of the underspend on the two public realm projects, SKDC officers successfully negotiated with MHCLG to retain £1.46M in funding for South Kesteven, to enable the Council to deliver a programme of Additional Works.
- 2.69 These negotiations were carried out in phases, as contingency was released, and were linked to formal offers of programme delivery extensions from MHCLG. For ease they are discussed together in this report under a single 'additional works' programme.
- 2.70 MHCLG required that any additional projects built upon works which had already been delivered through the scheme, replaced elements of project work which had previously been scaled back, or which were strongly linked to existing programmes. Officers were unable to make suggestions for entirely new schemes, or to alter the approved FHSF area to allow for spend elsewhere.
- 2.71 The additional programme of works received formal approval from MHCLG in each phase through the Project Adjustment Request process. SKDC officers were

required to demonstrate the value for money of delivering the new programme.

2.72 MHCLG also approved the use of a proportion of the remaining funding to continue to support officer salaries during the delivery of the extended programme.

2.73 This process was not unique to SKDC, with the majority of places in receipt of FHSF grants requesting and receiving additional extensions of time to complete project delivery.

2.74 The additional works completed are as follows:

2.75 Refurbishment of Conduit Lane toilets:

2.76 The refurbishment was carried out between 11 November 2024 and 27 January 2025. It included a full refurbishment of men's, women's and disabled facilities and the installation of pay by card facilities on the site. The refurbishment of the toilets was carried out to support the delivery of future activities in the Market place and surrounding area, and to encourage greater dwell time in the town centre.

2.77 The opening hours of the toilets were restricted following vandalism; however, officers are reviewing the options for extending opening hours.

2.78 Installation of removable bollards at Conduit Lane carpark.

2.79 This work returned removable bollards to Conduit Lane carpark, replacing the existing fixed bollards. This allows the carpark to be used for large vehicles during events. While primarily completed in support of the delivery of the Mid-lent fair, it will also support other events in the Market Place/ town centre which require parking for large vehicles which are related to the activity.

2.80 Addition of power and street furniture to Market Place and Westgate, town centre wayfinding:

2.81 STEM architects were commissioned to complete designs for the introduction of power and street furniture into the Market Place. The scheme was designed to create a welcoming space in the town centre, where people could linger and enjoy the facilities and services provided by surrounding businesses. This would be supported by additional town centre wayfinding signage, which is being delivered through the same contract.

2.82 The delivery of this programme was delayed so as not to clash with the timing of the Mid Lent Fair, however with agreement of the funder will take place in the 2026/27 financial year.

2.83 Refurbishment of Grantham Museum:

- 2.84 Within the pre-existing Upper Floor grant programme was provision for funding to be used to bring vacant spaces in the town centre back in to use for purposes other than residential use, once the agreed 22 residential units were delivered.
- 2.85 MHCLG agreed that under this provision, funding could be provided to carry out a programme of refurbishment of Grantham Museum, to enable vacant and underused spaces to be used for collections storage, supporting the Museum's viability and strengthening the Cultural Quarter.
- 2.86 The first phase of the works which included installation of a mechanical ventilation system in the basement, modernisation of the antiquated heating system, and creation of small kitchen area was completed in October 2025.
- 2.87 MHCLG further agreed that SKDC could give £65,000 in funding to the Grantham Community Heritage Association (GCHA) in the form of a grant for the purchase of new display cabinets, environmental monitoring equipment and accessibility equipment.
- 2.88 Providing this funding in the form of a grant, allowed it to be used (with MHCLG consent) as match funding for a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund by the GCHA.
- 2.89 SKDC officers worked with the GCHA to prepare a suitable project bid and supported them in securing an additional £243,800 in funding for activity which will be delivered over the next three years.
- 2.90 **Cultural Quarter Improvements (St Peter's Hill Public Realm):**
- 2.91 This project delivered a range of improvements to the St Peter's Hill Green public realm, including the installation of water features, new seating, new planting, laying of paving on 'desire line' routes, installation of new benches, including accessible leaning benches, improved waste facilities, and installation of a water bottle filling station.
- 2.92 MHCLG approved these works as an extension of the town centre public realm works previously completed.
- 2.93 **Cultural Quarter Improvements (Guildhall):**
- 2.94 This project supported the delivery of repairs to the Guildhall roof, including the restoration of the bell turret, as well as improvements within the guildhall, including the provision of new furniture for the café, and upgraded lighting equipment for the theatre.

- 2.95 These works were approved by MHCLG as an extension of the previous phases of the 'Cultural Quarter' improvements – the St Peter's Hill and Museum projects.
- 2.96 **Town Centre Connectivity:**
- 2.97 Linked to improvements in navigation to and around the town centre which were the integral to the Station Approach project, this additional project focused on improving the experience of bus users.
- 2.98 Working with colleagues at LCC, the project included the replacement and upgrade of bus shelters along the central route through the town centre (London Road, High Street and Watergate)
- 2.99 Real time signage was installed at all bus stops from Sainsbury's on London Road to Watergate, where it was not already in place.
- 2.100 **Markets Enhancement equipment:**
- 2.101 The town centre events pilots which took place throughout the delivery of the FHSF programme demonstrated the potential of a number of event formats to support the town centre in general, and markets in particular.
- 2.102 Following this, MHCLG approved the use of funding to purchase a stage, lighting and sound equipment which will support the provision of future events.
- 2.103 While MHCLG approved this spend based on the ability to use the equipment in Grantham, there is no restriction against using it elsewhere in the district as appropriate.
- 2.104 Details of approved costs for the additional works can be found in the following report: [Grantham Future High Street Fund Programme Update.pdf](#)

Upper Floor Conversion

- 1.1 The upper floor grant scheme was established to enable owners of retail properties within Grantham town centre to convert vacant and underutilised upper floor space into high-quality residential units.
- 1.2 This scheme had geographical restrictions and the grants issued have provided new residential accommodation in the High Street, London Road and Westgate areas of the town centre.

- 1.3 A total of £550,000 was allocated to this scheme out of the FHSF programme budget with grants providing 50% of the eligible costs of conversion, up to a maximum of £25,000 per unit.
- 1.4 During the scheme, a total of six grants were awarded which has supported the creation of 22 new units within the town centre.
- 1.5 The number of units created for each of the six grants, the amount of grant issued, and the location for these works is included in the below table:

Town Centre location	Units created	Grant issued (£)
17-19 High Street	9 units (7 x 1 bed and 2 x 2 bed flats)	225,000
9-10 High Street	8 units (8 x 2 bed flats)	200,000
45 High Street	2 units (1 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed flat)	50,000
83 London Road	1 unit (1 bedroom flat)	25,000
85 London Road	1 unit (1 bedroom flat)	25,000
30 Westgate	1 unit (1 bedroom flat)	25,000

- 1.6 As part of the funding conditions, the property owners provided match funding of at least 50% for the remaining costs of conversion. In most cases the match funding leveraged for the works was considerably higher.
- 1.7 As MHCLG has not placed a restriction on the timeline for which match funding must be spent two of the projects will continue to be delivered by the contractors in the financial year 2026/27. These projects will continue to be monitored by SKDC officers until completion, and the total value of match funding leveraged through the upper floor scheme will be reported to MHCLG through the ongoing programme monitoring process.
- 1.8 It is forecast that the total match funding leveraged by this programme will be more than £1.4M.
- 1.9 Officers worked closely with Legal Services Lincolnshire throughout the scheme and all grants awarded have a funding agreement in place between the Council and the applicant (property owner) with a legal charge in place that protects the funding awarded and allows the Council to reclaim the grant if the property is sold within 5-years of signing the funding agreement.

Events programme and Town Team

- 1.10 The Council committed £379,000 in match funding to the FHSF which was allocated to the delivery of revenue activity, including the creation of a Town Centre Engagement Manager post, establishment of a stakeholder 'Town Team' and the delivery of a programme of events piloting the scale, forms, and desirability of a range of different activities.
- 1.11 Several iterations of a Town Team were attempted, however despite providing considerable, highly valuable stakeholder feedback, the programme did not ultimately succeed in its aim of creating a self-sustaining and self-organising stakeholder group.
- 1.12 More successful was the delivery of town centre activities, which included the following key highlights:
- 1.13 **Festival of Community**
- 1.14 This was a programme of activity which took place through the summer of 2024, culminating in the festival itself which was held on the 19 October 2024.
- 1.15 12 workshops were held where members of the public and community groups were invited to take part in creating large scale willow and paper lanterns which paid homage to Grantham's historic links to the wool trade, and its importance as a route on the Great North Road. Over 500 people participated in the workshops.
- 1.16 Schools were engaged in producing imagery for a projection which was shown at the main community event on the 19 October.
- 1.17 The event was split in two phases of activity. During the day street performers supported a market featuring local artists, and a 'community stage' featuring local music and dance acts.
- 1.18 In the evening, music was provided through live performances from Punjabi Roots, Street artists performed across the Market Place and along Westgate interpreting a theme of light and illumination. Artworks created by local schools and community groups were included as part of a large-scale projection to music.
- 1.19 **Grantham Bike Night, 27 August 2025**
- 1.20 Grantham Bike Night came about as the result of a suggestion from the Town Team to revive the event. Despite heavy rain during the event, the bike meet welcomed over 800 bikes and over 2000 people attended. The event was supported with live music from two local bands, exhibitors and street vendors.

The event received positive feedback from businesses, and participants both in person, on social media, and in the local press. Comments from businesses included:

- *“Congratulations, it didn’t feel like I was in Grantham! It was incredible, amazingly well organised and such an amazing turnout. It’s so refreshing to see these types of events happening in the town”*
- *“What a great evening, what a turnout, what a community. It would be wrong not to do this again”*

1.21 A further Grantham Bike Night will be held this year, delivered by the SKDC Arts team.

1.22 **Dinomania 17 August 2025**

1.23 A dinosaur themed family event was hosted in the Market Place on 17 August 2025. Dinomania is the most interactive dinosaur entertainment experience in the UK and reached the 2022 semi-finals of Britain's Got Talent and featured on Blue Peter in 2024. Dinomania is known for its realistic animatronic, walking dinosaurs, baby dinosaurs and fossil exhibits.

1.24 700 people attended the three shows, with many others enjoying dinosaur walkabouts, and other related activities. Businesses joined in holding themed activities including reading sessions, and craft and educational activities. Others extended business hours to benefit from the increased footfall.

1.25 Other activities delivered as part of the FHSF programme included:

- The Whale – Plastic Ocean
- Grantham in Bloom (Summer and Christmas promotions)
- Summer Festival
- Brocante & French Market
- Outdoor Cinema
- Lincolnshire Day
- Small Business Saturday
- Sound of the 80s (part of ThatcherFest)
- Support to Christmas Markets
- Multiple Street Theatre/ Entertainers

1.26 The programme was an effective pilot of potential events and activities, and officers were able to learn valuable lessons about the types of events which were popular, and requirements for event management – particularly about ticketed events.

1.27 SKDCs total match funding spend over the duration of the programme was £301,050 and as such £94,442 remains within the budget.

- 1.28 As MHCLG did not place limitations on the date by which the committed match funding must be expended the Council can continue to use the budget to support the delivery of similar activity in Grantham.
- 1.29 The underspend from this project will be utilised to provide a programme of events in support of the Newton 300 commemorations.

Challenges and Limitations

- 1.30 As with any project of this nature and duration there were both challenges and limitations in the delivery of the scheme.
- 1.31 The programme required collaboration with a number of external stakeholders, principally although not exclusively MHCLG and Lincolnshire County Council. With other partners leading on the delivery of significant areas of the project, SKDC officers did not have full control over the timeline for delivery of public realm projects.
- 1.32 This at times lead to elements of friction, however officers worked closely with external stakeholders to resolve any difficulties in delivery and projects were delivered successfully.
- 1.33 SKDC Officers built a strong working relationship with the MHCLG team responsible for the delivery of the Future High Street Programme nationally and benefited from the ability to negotiate with MHCLG for project adjustments.
- 1.34 Furthermore, SKDC benefitted from several project extensions, the initial extension of six months was further extended by another six months and then another 12 months. While this allowed for the successful delivery of the additional works programme had the potential of a 24 Month extension been apparent from the outset Officers may have been in a position to make different proposals for the use of some of the underspent funds.
- 1.35 The impact of inflation and volatility of cost for the delivery of projects, particularly of the public realm programmes, led to considerable variation in the project delivery, and was a key factor in the scale of underspend.
- 1.36 Officers needed to work with stakeholders, in particular LCC to monitor costs of the delivery and react to underspend appropriately to prevent the loss of funding.
- 1.37 Due to the duration of the project, a significant challenge was in managing public perception and changes of public priorities during the length of the project. Despite the inception of the programme being rooted in public and stakeholder consultations, the significant lag between the consultation process and the delivery of works led to the public perception that the programme did not address

the most pressing needs of the town.

- 1.38 While this could be mitigated in part through communications from SKDC, it is a difficulty which many long term projects face and it is therefore important that the community see the benefits of the project in the months and years to come through effective use of the new public realm spaces, provision of high quality residential accommodation, and through the delivery by partners of long term legacy projects such as the 'Grantham Museum – A New Century' project, delivered by Grantham Community Heritage Association.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The FHSF programme ran from 2021-2026. Delivery was impacted by major events including the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Ukraine War and the national economic downturn, increased inflation and cost of living crisis.
- 3.2 Despite this, the programme succeeded in achieving the majority of the aims of the original bid, with the exception of the Station Approach Land Acquisition, the funding for which was reprofiled into the delivery of an extensive programme of additional works.
- 3.3 The programme highlighted the desire for quality town centre accommodation, and public spaces enlivened by community and cultural activities as a key of the town's continued regeneration.
- 3.4 Although this funding stream has come to an end, SKDC officers will continue to pursue any available funding to support the regeneration of South Kesteven's town centres as appropriate. The lessons learned through the delivery of this scheme will be valuable in influencing how any future programmes are developed and delivered.
- 3.2 As part of the terms and conditions of the grant MHCLG will monitor the impacts of the project over the next three years, SKDC officers will continue to provide monitoring information to MHCLG on request.

4. Other Options Considered

As this report provides an overview of the scheme for the purposes of project closure, there are no other options to consider.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 As a town centre regeneration programme delivered within by the Council's Economic Development team, the FHSF programme falls within the remit of The Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The presentation and

endorsement of this completion report will allow for the celebration of the completion of the scheme, and recognition of what has been delivered.

- 5.2 As the programme has only recently concluded, officers, along with the project board, will continue to reflect on the impact of the programme, and on lessons learned to ensure that learning can be incorporated into any future regeneration works of this nature.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 [Grantham Future High Street Fund Programme Update.pdf](#)