

# Meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 3 March 2026, 10.00 am



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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## Committee Members present

Councillor Elvis Stooke (Chairman)  
Councillor Emma Baker (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Barry Dobson  
Councillor Gloria Johnson  
Councillor Bridget Ley  
Councillor Paul Martin  
Councillor Max Sawyer  
Councillor Nikki Manterfield

## Cabinet Members present

Councillor Rhys Baker

## Other Members present

Councillor Ian Selby

## Officers

Kay Boasman, Head of Waste Management and Market Services  
Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager  
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer  
Andrew Igoea, Tree Project Officer  
Louise Case, Sustainability Project Support Officer  
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer

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## 52. Public Speaking

There were none.

## 53. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ben Green and Sarah Trotter.

Councillor Sarah Trotter was substituted by Councillor Nikki Manterfield.

## 54. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

## **55. Minutes from the meeting held 13 January 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held 13 January 2026 were proposed, seconded, and AGREED as an accurate record.

## **56. Updates from the previous meeting**

The Chairman noted that an update on the outstanding actions would be provided at the following meeting as updates were still being sought.

## **57. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste congratulated officers on reaching the final-three shortlist at the APSE Energy awards under the Clean Heat category.

## **58. Strategy for allocation of Tree Planting Resources**

The strategy for allocation of tree planting resources was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

The Strategy did not seek to commit the Council to a specific level of expenditure: rather, it established a clear, evidence-based framework for prioritising locations, communities and types of intervention once resources were allocated. Regardless of the eventual scale of funding approved, the same prioritisation principles would apply. Agreeing the Strategy ensured that any investment would be deployed efficiently, transparently and in alignment with the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy, without delay.

Opportunities to deliver additional tree planting through grant funding, public-private partnerships, third-sector collaboration or in-kind contributions were considered on a case-by-case basis and are not governed by this allocation framework.

The strategy would be reviewed every three years, or sooner if circumstances change significantly.

The strategy adopted the following principles:

- Priority use of council-owned land
- Focus on tree establishment rather than tree planting
- Replacement planting as a first priority
- Supporting public sector development
- Maximising site potential and operational efficiency
- Targeting areas of greatest benefit
- Use of Tree Equity Scores within towns

Based on historic data, the average cost of watering an amenity tree for one growing season was approximately £100 per tree. This figure was to be reviewed annually based on actual expenditure. Because budgets operated on an April–March basis, the estimated cost of summer watering must be deducted from the current year’s planting budget.

In addition:

- £2,000 was allocated annually for other maintenance tasks (weeding, restaking, minor repairs).
- £3,000 was set aside as a contingency fund.

Review of the previous two years of planting indicates an average planting cost of £225 per amenity tree. This figure would also be reviewed annually using real expenditure data.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- A Member urged prioritising hardiness over attractiveness when selecting trees. They also sought clarity regarding the calculation of the Canopy Deficit Score. This was confirmed to be recorded as 0 if canopy cover exceeded 20%.
- It was queried whether the tree canopy cover was offsetting the carbon emissions of new housing developments within the district. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the competing and conflicting pressures identified by the question and highlighted that the Council’s legal obligation was vested in the biodiversity net gain (BNG) rather than canopy cover. The Cabinet Member also noted the important role of Parish Councils in canopy cover maintenance and continuing dialogue with SKDC regarding developers that were not sufficiently maintaining their trees. In such instances, SKDC could take enforcement action.
- It was confirmed that, under the strategy, there was planting of both clusters, and individual trees, depending on the project.
- A Member urged public-facing clarity that the average planting cost of £225 per tree was due to the large size of the tree.
- The Member also urged the use of trees as a tool to minimise flooding in Grantham. The Cabinet Member noted there was a Kesteven Forest Project which could consider this and sought to protect the character and health of the towns and villages within the district.
- A Member advised caution about the potential for tree roots to undermine the structural foundations of buildings. The Tree Officer offered reassurance that any damage was indirectly due to shrinkage in the soil rather than the roots directly and this was considered when deciding planting locations and species choices.
- It was confirmed that Tree Planting Priority Index (TPPI) figures referred to all land, not just SKDC owned land.
- The Chairman of the Council expressed disappointment in the delay to the Blessed Hugh Moore project but praised the delivery of the Princess Drive project. The Tree Officer confirmed that the trees used

for the Princess Drive project were an upright form and would not impact the highway. The Cabinet Member noted that the Blessed Hugh Moore project now sat with the relevant Parish Council prior to wider consultation. Should the Parish Council not object, the Cabinet Member was confident the scheme would go ahead.

- The suggestion was made to review the Adoption Policy to allow SKDC to take unwanted land from developers which could then be used for trees.
- A Member asked to be sent a copy of the TPPI map of the Stamford.

#### **ACTION**

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded and AGREED to endorse the strategic approach to tree planting outlined within the strategy.

### **59. Progress update on upgrade of District Council Streetlights to LED**

The Progress update on upgrade of District Council Streetlights to LED was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

Streetlights managed by SKDC were the single largest category of electricity consumption the Council was responsible for. At the peak of energy costs, the overall electricity spend for 2023/24 for streetlighting was £301k, a marked increase to previous years.

In September 2023, Council agreed to approve an allocation of £1m to accelerate the replacement of Council operated streetlights with LED lamps.

A contract with EON Energy Solutions mobilised in May 2024, with a target for all Council streetlights to be upgraded within 18 months. The upgrades were also covered by a 10 year warranty which would significantly reduce the ongoing maintenance costs.

Each upgraded streetlight was supplied with a full condition report advising the condition of the column, bracket, lantern, door & paint condition, along with an electrical test report. If required, the light was renumbered/identified.

At the time of the report's publication, 97% of streetlights were LED, compared to a national average for Councils of 77%.

Comparing the latest data for the 2025 year to 2022, the report identified:

- 66.8% reduction in electricity consumption.
- £122k reduction in electricity cost, taking into account varying tariff prices.
- 136 tonnes of carbon avoided equivalent to 1.8% of the Council's total baseline.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- A Member requested clarity about the cost, cost savings, and repayment period of the scheme. The Sustainability and Climate Change Manager confirmed that the scheme had a £1 million budget and was on course to result in a £122,000 cost savings annually. The Cabinet Member agreed to send the Member a further breakdown if requested.
- Praise was given to the Cabinet Member and relevant officers for the successful rollout of the scheme.
- A Member noted that a lamppost in their ward had been reduced in height. The Sustainability and Climate Change Manager agreed to look into the case with the Member following the meeting.

The progress update on the upgrade of District Council streetlights to LED were noted by the committee.

## **60. Update on Climate Change Reserve Fund**

The Climate Change Reserve Fund update was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

South Kesteven District Council had made significant progress in addressing carbon emissions from its own operations. Some of these achievements included:

- Programme of £1m to upgrade all Council streetlights to energy efficient LEDs with dimming.
- Securing over £3.5m of funding via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (phase 3c) to install a new low-carbon heating system at Grantham Meres leisure centre.
- Installation of additional solar PV panels at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre as well as at the Council's main offices at The Picture House.
- Overall reduction in electricity consumption and associated carbon emissions across the Council's portfolio of buildings.
- Development of a new Green Fleet Strategy to agree a way forward to decarbonise the Council's vehicles.

A Climate Change Reserve of £300,000 was put in place from 2023/24 in order to both help respond to the budgetary pressures driven by the increasing cost of energy, and the Council's stated ambition of carbon reduction across the Council's property portfolio. The intention of the reserve was to fund standalone initiatives to reduce energy consumption and associated costs. The fund was increased to £500k for the 2024/25 financial year.

The following projects were being undertaken with the expectation of delivering an energy, carbon or cost saving/income stream to the authority, helping to respond to the increase in utility costs:

- Upgrade circulation pumps for pools in Grantham Meres leisure centre.

- Installation of electric vehicle charge points in SKDC car parks.
- Installation of solar pay and display ticket machines in car parks.
- Grantham Meres leisure centre – decarbonisation scheme agreed contract uplift.

Further projects were being reviewed to be funded from the climate change reserve, as included below. The estimated total of these projects was £234k, however updated costings were being developed for each project:

- Upgrade of pool circulation pumps at Bourne leisure centre.
- Additional solar PV at Bourne leisure centre and Stamford leisure pool.
- Review of energy efficiency of Grantham bus station building.
- Review of Building Management System (BMS) provision for key Council corporate properties.

A budget bid for £55k annually had also been submitted from 2026/27 to fund further electric vehicle charging points within Council owned car parks. This was proposed to be funded from the climate change reserve if supported as part of budget proposals.

A separate climate reserve of £100k had also been established for housing projects under the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- A Member offered support for any scheme that would save money and improve the environment.
- Clarification was sought about recent issues at the Meres Leisure Centre regarding pool temperatures. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the project to ensure that heat pumps were the primary heat source for the centre was due to complete by 1 April 2026.
- It was noted there were plans for investing in sustainability upgrades at Stamford Leisure Centre.

The Update on the Climate Change Reserve Fund was noted by the committee.

## **61. Food Waste Collection Update**

The Food Waste Collection Update was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

The Environment Act 2021 mandated that collection authorities must implement a weekly food waste collection for all households from 31st March 2026.

The Council's service commenced on Monday 13th April 2026, although this was slightly later than 31 March deadline, it was in line with the Lincolnshire Waste Partnerships roll out timetable and the Department for Environment,

Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had been made aware of the date. The Council had received no indication from DEFRA that the slight delay to roll out was a concern.

Across Lincolnshire, South Kesteven District Council, West Lindsey District Council, City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council started collections in March and April of 2026. East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council were planning to proceed with food waste collections in Autumn – Winter 2026. South Holland District Council were planning to proceed with food waste collections in Spring 2027.

During discussions, Members commented on the following:

- The Cabinet Member confirmed that use of plastic bags within the caddie was optional as the bag was removed during the processing of the waste and were incinerated to provide energy for local businesses. A Member suggested, in the interests of hygiene, using plastic bags when smaller caddies were being emptied into larger communal bins.
- The Cabinet Member expressed disappointment that a joint approach was not taken by central government for the roll out of the food waste collections and plastic bag collection schemes. This feedback had been strongly fed back to DEFRA.
- Confirmation was given that food waste was to be collected by a different vehicle and taken to a different site to existing bin collections.

Councillor Bridget Ley left the meeting at 11.39.

- It was noted that the reference on page 44 to the recruitment of further drivers was outdated as the cohort was fully staffed.
- A Member asked for guidance about navigating members of the public who refused to engage with the scheme as was a street in their ward. The Cabinet Member agreed to meet the Member and the Head of Markets and Waste to review the options.
- Another Member encouraged minimising wasted food by using best before dates as only guidance.

The Food Waste Collection Update was noted by the committee.

## **62. Work Programme 2025 - 2026**

The Chairman requested that the Skip Project Scoping and Waste Policy Update were included within the next agenda.

The Vice-Chairman requested an update on the committee receiving green bin baseline figures. The Cabinet Member agreed to chase these from the Finance Team and report back.

**63. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

The Sustainability & Climate Change Officer encouraged Members to attend the Carbon Literacy training that afternoon.

A Member praised the Bourne Recycling Centre for allowing the public to take away paint.

*The meeting concluded at 12.03.*