

North Kesteven District Council's **Annual Report** 2019-20



North Kesteven District
Council supporting a District
of **Flourishing Communities**

Foreword

It is a pleasure to provide a foreword to the Annual Report looking back over 2019-20, a year characterised by significant achievement and considerable success in delivering excellent, effective and efficient services for our residents, businesses and visitors.

Once again, our Annual Report illustrates the excellent work carried out by this Council in support and furtherance of the Flourishing Communities which make up this great District.

It reflects on the Council's achievements in meeting its aims and aspirations; its continued success in reaching for the highest standards and delivering strong and resilient services that are truly relevant and responsive to our communities' needs; and the effective and efficient manner in which this Council carries out its duties and responsibilities.

In the face of ongoing and emerging challenges, such achievements are under-pinned by the solid foundations of strong leadership and a clear plan of community-focused priorities, set out through the NK Plan and supported through the endorsement of partners, stakeholders, residents and businesses.

For me 2019-20 stands out for the many elections we ran with our characteristic professionalism, most notably the District Council elections through which we successfully ran a Cabinet Office electoral integrity pilot looking at the need for voters to have ID with them at the polling station and which brought in 20 new Members and a change in the Council's political balance. Additionally there was a pre-Christmas General Election, a European Election and a by-election.

It is also characterised by the coronavirus pandemic that impacted in the final weeks of the civic year in a manner which may not be fully apparent until we report next year on 2020-21. What I can report now though, with considerable pride, is the phenomenal manner in which all 380 members of staff and 43 Members responded and re-doubled their efforts in support of our communities and businesses.

Reflecting on the year to last April, I am struck by some phenomenal results across all areas of the authority.

Among these are:

- The unanimous decision by Council to declare a Climate Emergency – the first within Lincolnshire – through which we have sharpened our focus on an already clear priority targeting actions in support of Our Environment and scoped out a series of dynamic, bold and challenging actions to further our climate commitment;
- The realisation of our 300th new home over a decade through direct building and acquisition to unlock more housing choice for all;
- The fulfilment of our £8.9m regeneration of 63 homes and construction of 18 more at Newfield Road, Sleaford;
- Commitment of £4.2m into the delivery of a cinema as a catalyst for economic and environmental regeneration at the heart of Sleaford;
- Investment of £1.2m in the refurbishment and expansion of the National Centre for Craft and Design in Sleaford;
- Participation in a trial of separating paper and card from broader recycling and simplifying the recycling mix;
- Commissioning 15 additional workshop units to add to the business dynamism within North Hykeham;
- Furtherance of a range of job creation and investment opportunities to promote onward economic growth and prosperity for the District, including the purchase of 37 acres of enterprise land in Sleaford; and
- Continued growth in our own housing provision and support for broader housing need.

Whilst mindful of the challenges ahead and pragmatic in our response to those, I am proud to say that throughout a range of uncertainties in the broader world, this Authority continues to be the constant in the lives of our residents; delivering first-class, quality services and excellent facilities.

By remaining committed and focused on the things that matter most, we continue to strive for the good of the Council and the District at large.



Council Leader Cllr Richard Wright



Corporate Priorities:

Our
Economy



Our
Homes



Our
Environment



Our
Communities



Our
Council



Vision

Supporting a District of Flourishing Communities

Purpose

To deliver effective and efficient public services that meet the needs and priorities of local people, support growth in the District and ensure a sustainable environment

Priorities

Our Economy:

To promote the economic and employment growth of North Kesteven

Our Homes:

To promote housing growth that meets the current and emerging needs of North Kesteven

Our Environment:

To promote a sustainable natural and built environment, where our heritage is preserved and celebrated

Our Communities:

To promote the sustainability, wellbeing, safety and health of North Kesteven's growing communities

Our Council:

To be a high-performing and value for money Council that is prepared for the future

Ambitions

- Support business growth and jobs in NK
- Regenerate NK
- Drive investment in NK including transport routes

- Deliver the Local Plan
- Increase the supply of housing in NK
- Maintain and improve housing in NK
- Provide high quality housing services across NK

- Conserve and improve NK's heritage and natural environment
- Champion sustainability across NK
- Promote and protect environmental health

- Clean, safe and inclusive communities NK
- Healthy, fit and vibrant NK
- Supportive NK

- Customer focused NK
- High quality, value for money NK
- Open and accountable NK

Priorities - Our Economy

Ambitions

- ▶ Support business growth and jobs in NK
- ▶ Regenerate NK
- ▶ Drive investment in NK including transport routes



Performance Indicators:

- ▶ 65 jobs created as a result of Council intervention
- ▶ 25 new investments in NK for regeneration projects
- ▶ 118 jobs safeguarded as a result of targeted support by the Council
- ▶ 12.2 hectares of employment land has been developed for delivery of jobs
- ▶ 98% average workshop occupancy across the workshop portfolio

Priority Delivery Actions

Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park

Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park (SMEP) is a 14.58 hectares (36 acres) Strategic Employment Site, as allocated in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. This site is an extension to the established Sleaford Industrial Area which includes the popular Sleaford Enterprise Park to the north east of the town. The vision for the site is 'a premier strategic employment park servicing Sleaford's ambition for economic and employment growth, meeting the needs of fast growing local businesses in key sectors and facilitating inward investment.'

Development of the SMEP site represent NKDC's largest investment commitment, with the current capital approval of £56 million for 2020/21 and future years, which will create/safeguard 500 jobs.

SMEP has an approved governance structure and Business Plan. The project is in the design and planning stage. An overall site masterplan has been created and a range of assessments and investigations are ongoing in order to submit a hybrid planning application later in the year (September/October). Subject to planning approval, work on implementing the strategic infrastructure could begin in 2021 with business units potentially being delivered and operational by 2024.



Discovery Court, Whisby Road, North Hykeham

Plans are currently being developed to deliver a new industrial scheme for the Council on Discovery Park as part of a design and build project. The £2.2 million investment will see 15 industrial units ranging in size from 750Sqft to 2,800Sqft, totalling 21,000Sqft of industrial space. The units will provide start up and grow on space for businesses in the LN6 area and will complement the scheme at Blackwood Court on Teal Park.

The application for planning permission was submitted in September 2019 and received approval January 2020. Work started on site in late May 2020 with completion expected at the end of March 2021. This represents a slight delay to the project because of the impact of the COVID-related lockdown. It is still anticipated that this will enable further schemes to be brought forward on the remainder of this plot.

Another benefit of this scheme is that it has enabled a potential pedestrian/cycleway link to be extended from Whisby Road through to Sadler Road, crossing over land that forms part of this wider development site. This means that, subject to securing funding, independent, highway-free access can be gained from Hykeham Railway station all the way through to Sadler Road, via Whisby Road; bringing a considerable number of businesses easier access to Hykeham Railway station.



Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum

The museum was awarded the prestigious Sandford Award as an assurance of its educational quality; recognising the excellence of its programme on National Curriculum-compliant work and the loan of school resource boxes.

New Business Investment

St Modwen, the owners of St Modwen Park at Witham St Hughs, continue to develop out their site with additional speculative workspace, following the successful occupation of phase 1.



COVID Business Support

A major piece of work to support the local business community in North Kesteven to survive the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has seen small business grants assessed and distributed to businesses. Almost £20 million pounds has been paid out in grants from an initial allocation of just over £22 million.

Heart of Sleaford Project

Work to deliver this major regeneration project continues. The proposals will now see a three screen cinema and integrated restaurant based on the old Buttermarket building provided at a cost of almost £4 million.

Key works have been ongoing into the legal and procurement frameworks required to deliver the various stages of this major scheme which will also include a significant public realm works providing direct pedestrian links between Moneys Yard and the Market Place.

This project has been put on temporary hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Transport Investment

The Council has secured £2 million Government funding towards the improvement of both the A17 Holdingham Roundabout and the A17/A153 Sleaford Rugby Club junctions. This will be used to contribute towards the cost of significant highway improvement works aimed at alleviating queuing and congestion.

The overall cost of the works will be funded from a combination of monies secured from housing planning permissions, and direct funding from North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council.

National Centre of Craft and Design Refurbishment

Plans have been drawn up for a £1.2 million refurbishment of the National Centre of Craft and Design in Sleaford which will create an enhanced modernised space for artists and also secure the commitment to the town from major employer MRI Software.

Under the scheme, an entire floor will be occupied by MRI which will move from its existing premises in Westgate. All the existing features of the NCCD will be retained by the addition of a 200 square metre ground floor extension.

New Car Parking Machines

The introduction of new machines in Sleaford enable people to pay for their parking with card, coin or contactless.

Sleaford Street Furniture

New planters were added to the Public Realm scheme, joining previously installed seats, planters and a bike port, some of which were relocated based on public feedback. The scheme creates moveable focal points, making space for people to sit and chat in the town centre.

Visitor Economy

The tourism sector saw further growth throughout the year with reports indicating that 3.30 million people visited North Kesteven in 2018, which represents a 8% increase from previous years. The Visitor Economy is estimated to have raised £152 million for the local economy; an 11% rise on previous years, which supported more than 2,000 full-time-equivalent jobs.

Further Heritage Lottery funding has been secured for regenerating Mrs Smith's Cottage in Navenby. Work at the Cottage has progressed well over the last year. The roof is now back on, works completed and scaffolding removed. The furniture is also now restored to the cottage. Works to 3 Blacksmiths Mews has also now been completed, providing both education and exhibition space in support of the cottage's appeal and operation.

Work on the future of Cranwell Aviation Heritage Museum and its eventual relocation to new premises continues.

Priorities - Our Homes

Ambitions

- ▶ Deliver the Local Plan
- ▶ Increase the supply of housing in NK
- ▶ Maintain and improve housing in NK
- ▶ Provide high quality housing services across NK



Performance Indicators:

- ▶ 10 new Council Homes provided
- ▶ 99.5% of repairs to Council Homes completed right the first time
- ▶ 89% of tenants satisfied with the landlord service provided by the Council
- ▶ 249 new affordable homes delivered
- ▶ 27 private sector empty properties brought back into use

Service Statistics

11,552 of all repairs (11,612) were completed right the first time.

The average time a property stood empty between tenancies was 20 days.

98% of Council tenants and 100% of private sector tenants were satisfied with the disabled adaptations completed on their properties.



Priority Delivery Actions

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

The Council, in partnership with three other Lincolnshire district councils, secured £600,000 additional government funding in order to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. The funding will be used to increase levels of preventative intervention, improve wellbeing and provide greater support in settled accommodation.

Grinter Close Regeneration

Major regeneration was proposed for the former sheltered housing scheme in North Hykeham. The plans, along with an investment of £3.926 million, would increase the number of Council Homes available in Grinter House and Grinter Close from 27 to 34, delivering more houses and a wider range of housing options for the District.

Gas Safety

The Council took action against a landlord who failed to provide Housing Enforcement Officers with gas certificates for one of his private rental properties. He was ordered to pay more than £1,400.

Quarrington School

Work began in September 2018 on the long-awaited conversion of the iconic 150-year-old former school into unique homes at the heart of Sleaford. Now nine new homes have been created. Six unique homes have been carved out of the old headmaster's house, classrooms, hall and chapel whilst the remaining three have been built in the grounds to the rear.

Newfield Road

The £8.93 million regeneration project concluded this year. It resulted in 68 homes being fully renovated, making them modern and larger as well as giving improved energy efficiency. Eighteen new homes were built as part of the project and a new play area. An official opening event was held in June 2019, to which tenants, contractors, Councillors and others associated with the project were invited.

Empty Homes Interventions

The Empty Homes project has been assisting owners to return their properties back into use for a decade. Officers from across the Council work together to resolve any issues, helping to turn around an average of 20 of the most troublesome long-term empties each year. In 2019-20, a total of 27 properties were brought back into use.

300th New Property

The 300th new property directly delivered by the Council across its programme of Council House expansion and acquisition for private rent through the Lafford Homes company.

Priorities - Our Environment

Ambitions

- ▶ Conserve and improve NK's heritage and natural environment
- ▶ Champion sustainability across NK
- ▶ Promote and protect environmental health



Performance Indicators:

- ▶ 63% reduction in CO² from local authority operations since 2008/9
- ▶ 98% of food businesses within the District broadly compliant with legislation
- ▶ 97% of new homes created reaching an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) levels A and B

Priority Delivery Actions

Climate Emergency

The Council was the first in Lincolnshire to declare a Climate Emergency, committing to meet the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal and progressing a detailed plan for further action.

Purple Bins

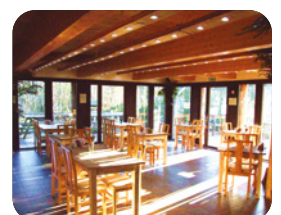
Separate collection of paper and card began for 1,700 customers as part of a year-long trial across three council areas. By separating clean and dry paper and card from other recycling more can be recycled and it can attract a better price, helping to meet the rising cost of providing such an excellent recycling service.

Monitoring Air Pollution

Buying two hand-held air pollution/particulate monitoring devices to better monitor levels and work with local communities in air pollution 'hot spots'

Protecting Public Health

A prosecution was secured after out-of-date food was found in a pub. The owner was required to pay more than £1,300 after food hygiene inspectors counted eight instances of unsafe food at his premises in one routine visit – including a beef steak nearly three weeks past its use-by-date.



Mrs Smith's Cottage

Thanks to support from the Heritage lottery Fund, which has contributed generously to the work, the cottage has a new roof in place. Structural issues with the roof had caused the closure of the site to visitors in 2012.

The way the site is presented has been reinvigorated, with a new visitor centre next door and by incorporating the latest in digital interpretation.



Energy and Utilities

The Council has specified that electricity connections to new Council Housing are to be certified as being from 100% renewable sources wherever possible.

Plastic Reduction Policy

The policy strives to eliminate single-use plastics wherever possible including replacing plastic stationery and a ban on plastic giveaways at Council events.

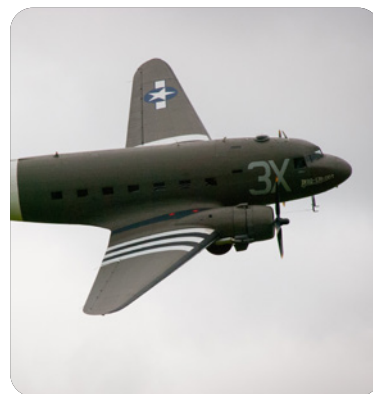


SCRAP fly-tipping

The Council joined together with the other Lincolnshire councils, the Environment Agency and the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner to launch the SCRAP fly-tipping campaign. Based on an award winning campaign by the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, it aims to fight the blight of fly-tipping in the county and cut clear up cost.

Hangar for Dakota

The Council made a grant of £5,000 to the Friends of Metheringham Airfield to enable a hangar to be built for the group's World War II Dakota aircraft. Taking the aircraft away from exposure to the elements will help with maintenance. It is hoped it will contribute to the enhancement of the excellent aviation tourism offer in North Kesteven.



Conservation Area Review

Revisions to the Conservation Area in Waddington were proposed and residents invited to provide their comments. Once adopted it will be used to develop a robust framework for planning decision making.

Working Towards Net Zero Emissions

All NKDC buildings are on zero emissions 100% renewable electricity tariffs, with work underway on increasing energy efficiency and the phasing out of gas and oil.

Discussions are underway to improve heating and energy efficiency at leisure and culture facilities, looking to switch to a 100% renewable, green provision.



Historic Water Fountain

The Council provided support for the restoration of the historic Bristol Water Fountain in Sleaford. The functioning water fountain is available for public use and it is hoped to divert people away from single-use water bottles.

Transport Fleet

Vehicle maintenance was brought in-house from 1st April 2020.

Investigations are underway looking at how the impact of the waste and recycling fleet can be reduced, including a watching brief on the use of electric and bio-fuelled vehicles elsewhere.

New refuse freighters have technology in place to ensure they are being driven with optimal fuel efficiency.

Trees and Open Space

The Council is committed to increasing tree cover and changing the management of open spaces in support of enhanced biodiversity.

Bids are planned to the Urban Tree challenge Fund to escalate tree planting, in recognition of a tree's many benefits in mitigating against floods, filtering air pollution, capturing carbon, balancing air moisture and improving wellbeing.

Riverside Improvements

Working in partnership, major ecological improvements are planned for Sleaford's riverside areas to deliver environmental, economic and community benefits. This forms part of a £1.29m project, with European Regional Development Fund support secured to meet 60% of the costs. It will include improvements to habitat in and along the river as well as to footpaths.



Priorities - Our Communities

Ambitions

- ▶ Clean, safe and inclusive communities NK
- ▶ Healthy, fit and vibrant NK
- ▶ Supportive NK
- ▶ Safe and inclusive NK

Performance Indicators:

- ▶ 198,488 visitors using Countryside NK's Stepping Out network activities and events
- ▶ 893,733 visitors to indoor leisure facilities and sports outreach services
- ▶ 136,294 visitors to NK Arts Partnership events, activities and education
- ▶ 293,294 visitors attended the Whisby Natural World Centre
- ▶ 523 homelessness cases prevented through advice and prevention tools



Service Statistics

92% of all missed bin collections were put right by the end of the next working day.

Over 45% of all household waste was sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

95% of the 858 Digital Hub customers felt that their confidence with computers had increased as a direct result of engagement sessions throughout the year.

With only 17.7% of children and young people in the District classified as 'less active', NK is best in the county and 11.3% better than the national average.

The ASB team received 731 reports of ASB during 2019/20, and also worked on additional reports with the police.



Priority Delivery Actions

Parkrun

Supported by the Council and its leisure partner, BETTER, community volunteers introduced a junior parkrun in Sleaford. Over 100 juniors took part in the first month.

Community Champions

The authority's annual Community Champion awards evening saw a record 30 finalists, their guests, nominators and others celebrate those who work tirelessly and quietly in their communities for the benefit of others.



Armed Forces Day

More than 100 people attended the annual Flag Raising Ceremony to mark Armed Forces Week. The ceremony was followed by a Veterans' Lunch at which 14 former servicemen and women were presented with their Veteran's Badge.

Equality and Diversity

Full Council unanimously backed the move to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism, with the definition now built in to the Council's Equality and Diversity policy.



Cycle Fest

Along with Access Lincoln, Lincoln BIG and Lincolnshire County Council, NKDC organised a new, free family day out, Cycle Fest. Held in June, at Doddington Hall it featured a mountain bike track, led routes throughout the day, a treasure hunt and other entertainment.

Fund NK

Seven organisations were awarded FundNK grants. This grant scheme aims to support community projects in the District of North Kesteven. Projects supported included intergenerational story-telling workshops to bring together tots and care homes, a WW2 bomber crash war memorial and a cycle trail.

Digital Hubs

Four digital hubs across the District continued to help hundreds of residents grow in their confidence and competence with their digital devices, stay connected with friends and family, and use online services such as shopping and banking.

Two further hubs are planned in response to demand.



Priorities - Our Communities

Health Trainer Programme

224 clients were supported by the NK Health Trainer and the weekly GP Health Trainer clinic continued at Sleaford Medical Group.

The Health Trainer achieved Make Every Contact Count (MECC) accreditation. MECC is a Public Health England programme.

The first 12-month, health and wellbeing programme - Be the Better You - was delivered with 30 people taking part in all. The overall weight loss for the year was 11 stone 10 lb, and 100% of those who took part found it beneficial.



Snowdrop Walk

The fourth annual Snowdrop Walk was held on Saturday 8th February. This important event provides an opportunity to remember those lost, and plant a snowdrop in their memory. Despite a last minute date change due to inclement weather conditions and Storm Ciara, 153 people came along and £234 was raised for Child Bereavement UK.

Breastfeeding Project

There is a direct correlation between breastfeeding and maintaining a healthy weight. In a bid to increase breastfeeding, and subsequently play a part in reducing childhood obesity, the District Council created its own Breastfeeding Friendly sticker that will be displayed in cafes, restaurants and shops. This will be rolled out further in 2020/21.



NK Youth Council

An average of 20 young people from secondary schools across the District continued to attend the Youth Council meetings. Working hard to raise their profile and remain on target with their peers, the Youth Council has rebranded itself to the Student Council.

Neighbourhood Plans

Since April, one additional Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted, bringing the total number of adopted plans in the district to eight. Another 19 communities have and are being supported with their Neighbourhood Plans.



Priorities - Our Council

Ambitions

- ▶ Customer focused NK
- ▶ High-quality, value for money NK
- ▶ Open and accountable NK



Performance Indicators:

- ▶ 90% of customers were able to contact the Council via their preferred communication method
- ▶ 73% of residents felt that the Council provides good quality services
- ▶ 93% of complaints are responded to within 15 working days.

Service Statistics

Of the 107 complaints received, only 14 progressed beyond the first stage of the complaints process. This means 87% of complaints were settled at the first stage of intervention. In addition, in the same period, 91 customer compliments were received for excellent customer service.

Over 830,000 customer contacts were made through the website last financial year, along with nearly 88,000 telephone calls and 17,000 face-to-face interactions.

The availability of critical network infrastructure and applications in our IT systems saw an uptime of 99.95%.



Priorities - Our Council

Elections

It was a busy year in terms of elections, beginning with the NKDC elections, Parish and Town elections and the European Parliamentary elections in May, followed by a by-election in July and the General Election in December.

The Council, along with 10 other authorities across the country, delivered the Cabinet Office's voter identification trial for the district and parish council elections. This involved electors showing either one form of photo ID or two forms of non-photo ID in order to test options for addressing voter fraud. Since then, the principle of Voter ID has been brought forward in the Queen's Speech as potential legislation.

Thanks to great work from across the Council an incredible 99.64% of voters arrived with the right ID and were able to vote.



Member Induction and Code of Conduct

Following the elections, a Councillor Induction Programme was run for all new Councillors. This included 20 newly-elected first-time District Councillors.

The Council approved and adopted a new Member Code of Conduct following a Review. It came into effect in May 2019 as part of the new administrative period following the elections.



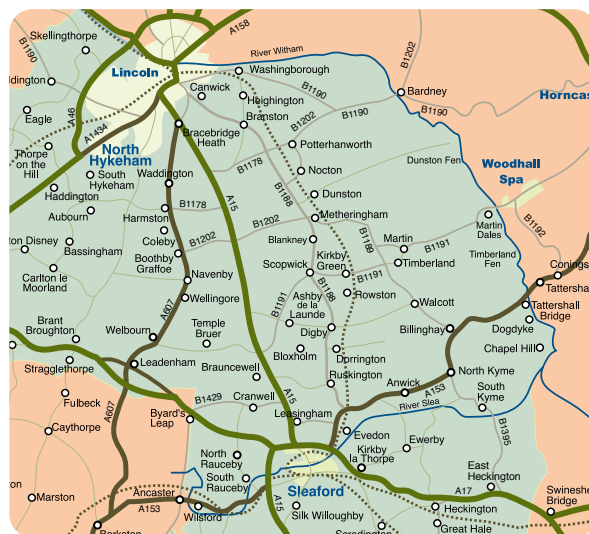
Boundary Review

A Boundary Review for North Kesteven was started in 2020. As part of Stage 1 of the process, NK sent a submission on proposed sizing of the Council which took account of a Member Working Group set up to consider proposals.

The Review continues into 2020/21.

Local Democracy Week

Councillors and Officers worked together to deliver events for secondary schools on local democracy. A range of games and activities were organised, from campaigning to voting.



Financial Review:

- ▶ General Fund
- ▶ Housing Revenue Account
- ▶ Capital Expenditure
- ▶ Future Financial Plans



Financial Review: General Fund

Financial Environment

The financial year began with the setting of the budget in February 2019. The following sections describe the actual performance against this budget.

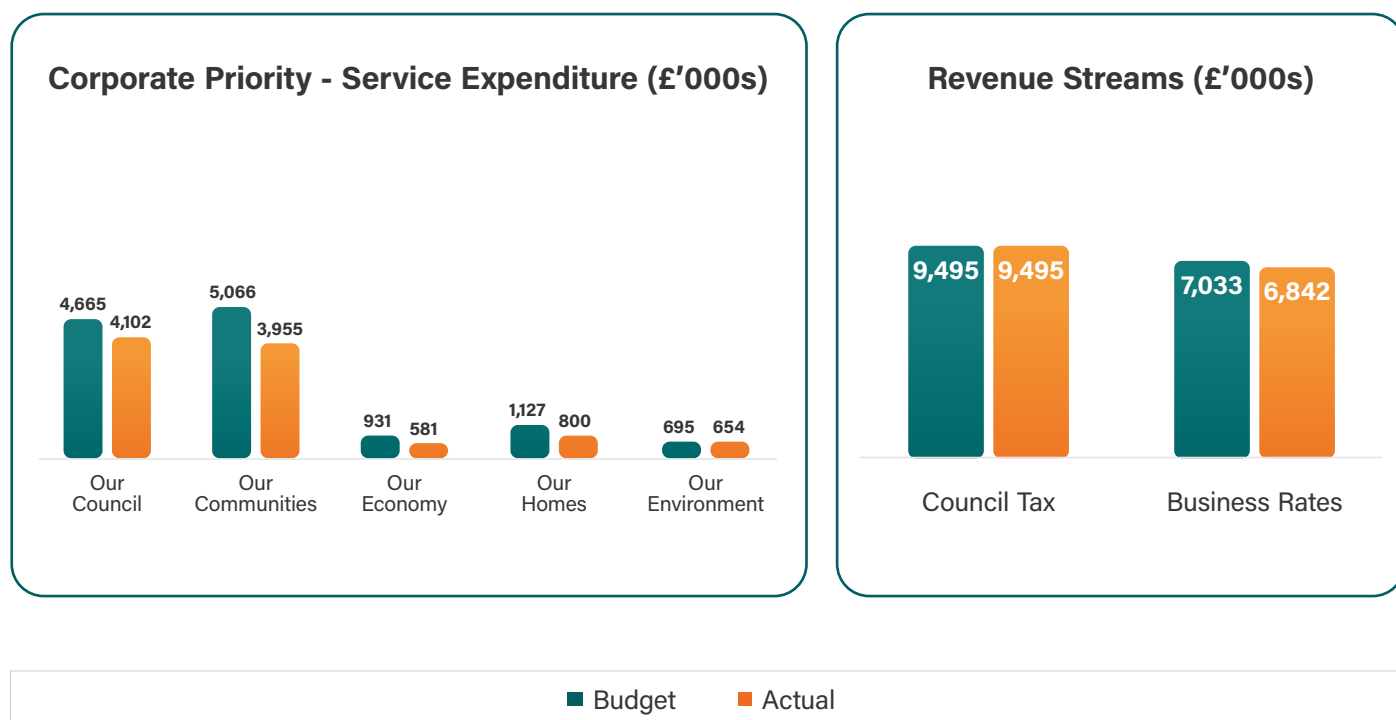
In common with the rest of local government, the Council has seen significant reductions in its core funding, creating an increasing reliance on Council Tax and the need to seek alternative income sources to maintain service delivery.

Therefore, difficult decisions have been taken by the Council in order to establish a balanced financial plan for the next three financial years, given the finite resources that will be available. The Council has proactively sought to find ways to protect services and has found the majority of savings from efficiencies and increased income, rather than cuts to service delivery.

General Fund

The General Fund covers all net spending by the Council on services other than those accounted for in the Housing Revenue Account. General Fund services are funded via contributions from Business Rates and Council Tax, Fees and Charges, as well as Government Grants.

The graphs below show both the expenditure of the General Fund, broken down by Corporate Priority, as well as the revenue stream from which this money came.



Financial Review:

Housing Revenue Account

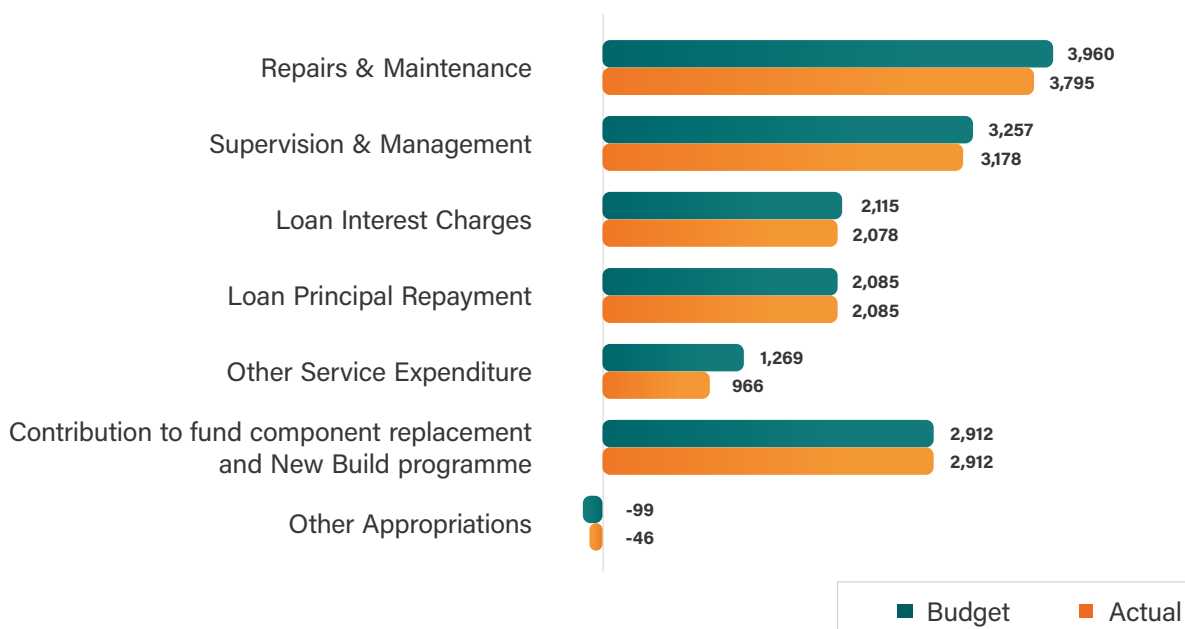
Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has to be maintained as a separate account and contains all the expenditure and income relating to the Council's function of managing and maintaining Council-owned dwellings as a social landlord.

For 2019/20, the approved budget for the year showed a balanced income and expenditure.

The actual net expenditure for the year reflected a surplus of £537,865.

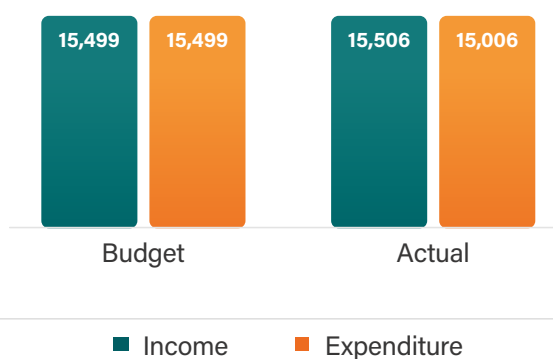
Housing Revenue Account Expenditure (£'000s)



As at 31 March 2020, the Council maintains a working balance for the HRA to cover any unforeseen expenditure in the operating of the Council's housing stock and any unforeseen financial risks.

The In-Year surplus was transferred to the HRA Earmarked Reserve (£206,900) and the Major Repairs Reserve (£851,427).

HRA Income vs. Expenditure



Financial Review:

Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure

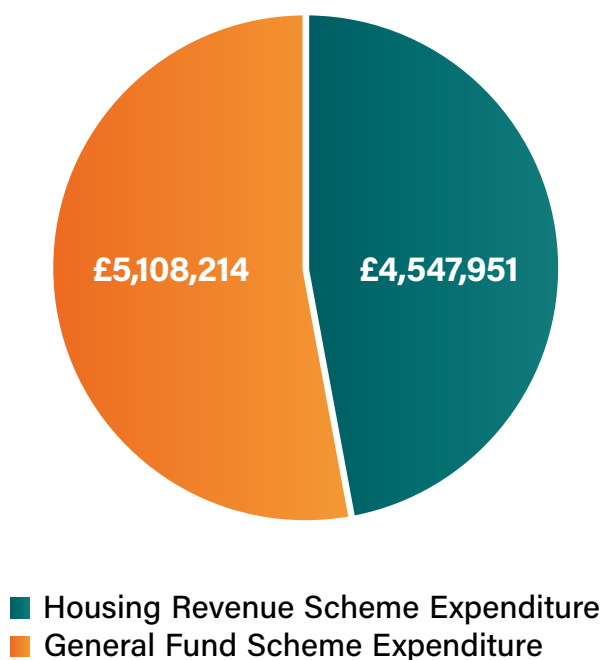
The Council's capital expenditure on the provision of new or enhanced assets is largely met from reserves and borrowing, but also to a lesser degree from Government grants and contributions from third parties.

Capital expenditure for the financial year amounted to £9.6 million compared to the approved capital programme budget of £21.6 million, representing an underspend of £12 million.

The Council is embarking on the most ambitious capital programme since the mid-1980s. The Housing Capital Programme consists of both investment in the current housing stock, in order to maintain to the NK Standard and the New Build Programme.

The General Fund Capital Programme is focused on the delivery of market rental properties through its wholly-owned company, Lafford Homes Limited, the Heart of Sleaford Scheme and the refurbishment of the National Centre for Craft and Design.

Capital Spend Programme 2019/20



Financial Review:

Future Financial Plans

Corporate Plan and Vision:

The Council's Corporate Plan for 2019-22 set the framework for Members, Officers, communities, organisations and individuals to work together to deliver our vision of "a district of flourishing communities".

The NK Plan is about making a difference for people and communities in North Kesteven. It is a plan designed to ensure that the Council continues to deliver excellent services for the flourishing communities in North Kesteven, whilst tackling the main challenges facing the District.

Key Focus Areas



Our Economy

- Complete the masterplan with Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park
- Take a proactive approach to the opportunities and challenges that BREXIT will pose for our local economy
- Work closely with businesses across the District and facilitate business investment



Our Homes

- Begin construction of at least 19 new Council properties
- Work with developers to deliver more homes, including affordable homes, in the District
- Complete the Newfield Road regeneration scheme
- Continue to invest in accordance with the Lafford Homes business plan to acquire further properties for the local rental market
- Bring back into use at least 20 more empty homes



Our Environment

- Fully develop our new Environment priority
- Conclude and implement the open spaces strategy
- Champion further sustainability and reduction in emissions across NK



Our Communities

- Implement our new leisure partnership arrangements
- Implement with partner authorities the new waste management strategy for Lincolnshire
- Continue to implement key strategies for homelessness and welfare

Corporate Functions:

- ▶ Governance
- ▶ Our People
- ▶ Access to information
- ▶ Complaints



HR - Our People

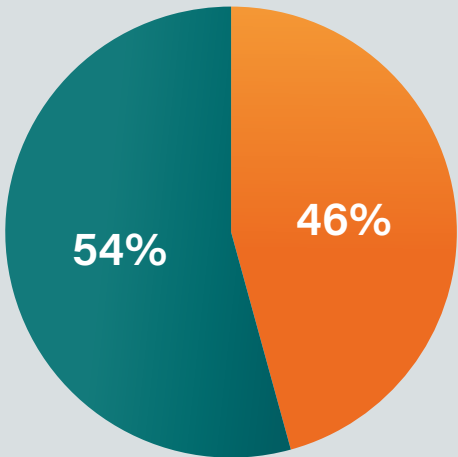
North Kesteven District Council employs over **380** members of staff in over **190** different roles across multiple sites.

The average age of employees is **45 years**.

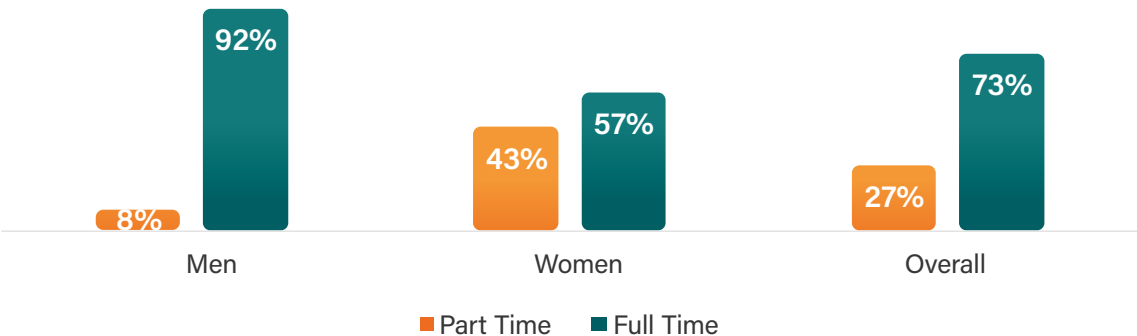
The average length of continuous service for Council employees is **10 years**.

Gender mix of Council employees

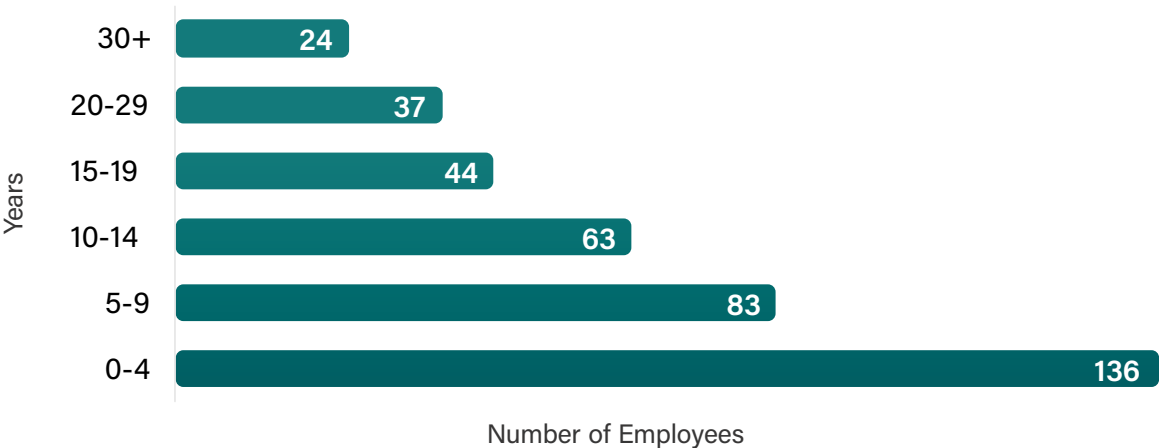
Men (177)
Women (210)



Contract Type: Part/Full Time



Length of Service



Access to Information

Access to information consists of: Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests, Data Protection Act (DPA) requests and Subject Access Requests (SAR).

These Regulations cover almost all areas of the authority giving the public access to information about the operations and activities of the Council. This in turn creates an atmosphere of openness and transparency which will lead to an increase in public confidence in the authority.

Key Statistics for 2019/20:

668 FOI Requests

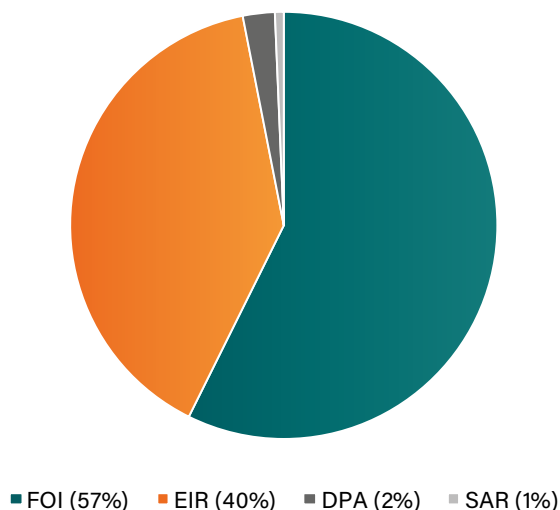
475 EIR Requests

29 DPA Requests

8 Subject Access Requests

1,108 overall requests

Information Requests 19/20



How we performed this year:

90%

of all requests were completed within the statutory time frame.

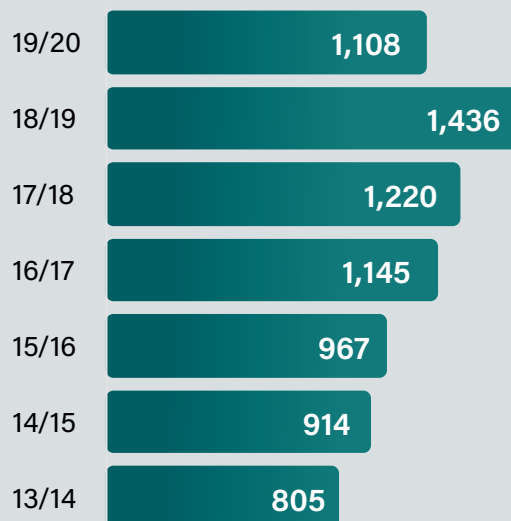
Since 2010 there have been over 9,000 requests, including:

6,002 FOI Requests

2,976 EIR Requests

166 DPA Requests

Total Requests Per Year



Complaints Management

The Council takes complaints very seriously and deals with them quickly and efficiently. We are committed to provide excellent customer service, but realise that sometimes things can, and do, go wrong.

We want to know if our residents are unhappy or dissatisfied with our services so that, wherever possible, we can try to put things right. We value residents' roles in helping us to improve our services.

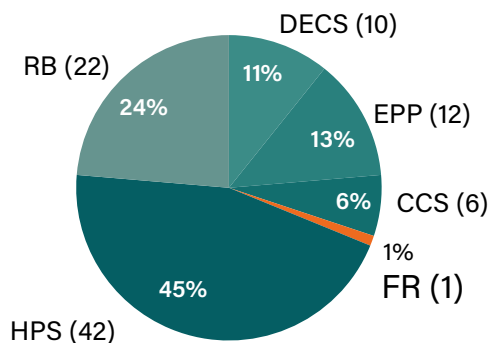
Key Statistics for 2019/20:

- 107 complaints in total, 93 first-time complaints and 14 escalations
- 28% of all complaints made were upheld to some extent
- 93% of complaints were answered within the 15 day timeframe

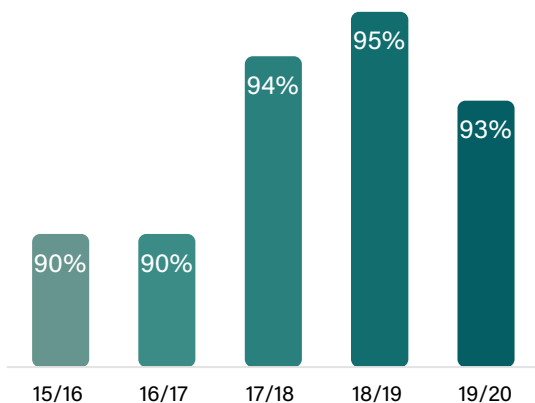
Service Area:

- DECS: Development, Economic and Cultural Services
- EPP: Environment and Public Protection
- CCS: Corporate and Customer Services
- FR: Finance and Resources
- HPS: Housing and Property Services
- RB: Revenues & Benefits Shared Service

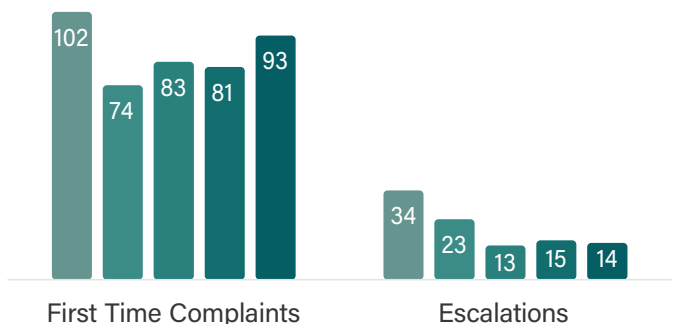
Complaints by Division



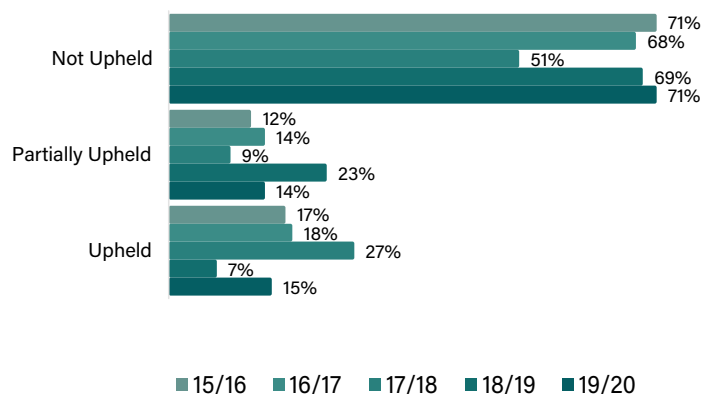
Complaints Responded to on Time



Overall Complaints Received



Complaints Outcomes



Consultation

Surveys are one of the Council's preferred methods for engaging with the public. They offer a straightforward way of contacting a targeted audience on a variety of different topics. They are both affordable and effective for data collection with a rapid turn around.

This financial year we have received more than 8,600 consultation responses from residents on topics including tenancy, corporate planning, customer and council services.

We currently offer two different methods for completing our surveys, in order to be as inclusive as possible, a paper and an online version. This helps us to get views from a wide demographic mix.

Survey	Total Responses
Customer Service Satisfaction	2,723
NK Plan Consultation	Over 1,750
Star Survey	1,175
Household Survey	2,308
Purple Bin Trial	442
Council Tax Consultation	202

The Headlines from our Surveys



Support for the NK Plan priorities stood at just over 90%, in line with previous years.



73% of residents are satisfied with the quality of the Council's services

The cost of heating a home was identified by residents as the top most important housing issue (60%)



99% of recipients of a disabled adaptation were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall adaptation process



Overall 89% of Council Housing tenants are satisfied with the Housing and Property Service provided by NKDC



98% of residents feel that recycling is a good idea and 85% rate their general understanding and knowledge of waste and recycling as good or very good



89.75% of residents who contacted our customer services team found it either easy or very easy to access the service they required

Decision Making:

- ▶ Political Structure
- ▶ Executive Board
- ▶ Overview and Scrutiny Panels:
 - » Performance and Resources
 - » Environment
 - » Communities and Economy



Political Groupings and Decision Making

Political Structure

The Council has a total of 43 Councillors spread over 26 Wards. The role of an elected Member includes setting strategy, allocating resources, monitoring performance, representing people within their Ward and community leadership and engagement.

There are:

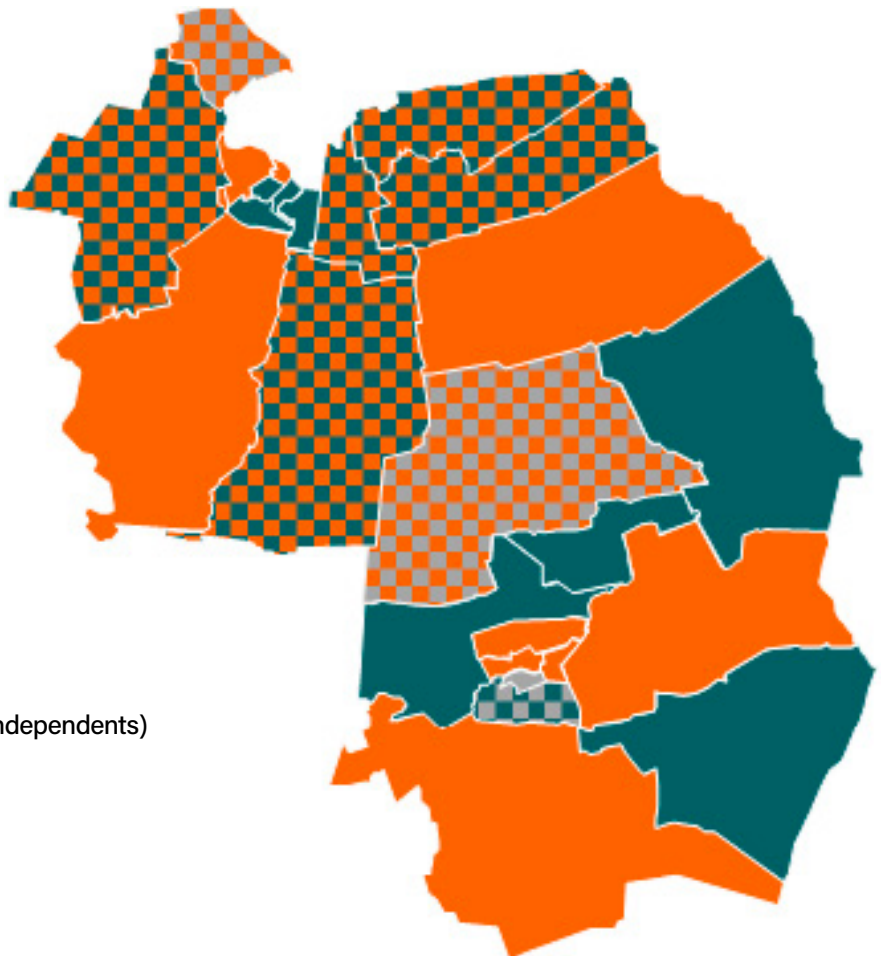
- 21** Councillors from The North Kesteven Administration Group
- 18** Councillors from the NK Independent Group (Lincolnshire Independents and Independents)
- 4** Unaligned Councillors

(all information correct as of June 2020)

Ward Political Distribution Map

Legend:

-  The North Kesteven Administration Group
-  The Independents Group (Lincolnshire Independents and Independents)
-  Unaligned



Executive Board

The Executive Board:

- Provides leadership at a top level.
- Recommends the budget and key policy proposals to Full Council for agreement.
- Decides some policies and is responsible for implementation of major plans and strategies.
- Prepares and publishes a rolling Forward Plan every month, covering the four months from the date of publication. This plan contains matters that the Executive Board thinks will be the subject of a key decision during the period of the Plan. A key decision is one likely to involve expenditure or savings of more than £50,000 of revenue expenditure or £100,000 of capital expenditure, or to have a significant effect on people living or working in two or more wards; and
- Takes most of the key decisions within the budget and policy framework agreed by Full Council.

Executive Board Members



Cllr Richard Wright
(Leader)



Cllr Ian Carrington



Cllr Lindsey Cawrey



Cllr Ray Cucksey



Cllr Mervyn Head



Cllr Steve Clegg

A flavour of the decisions made:

- Approval of the Corporate Plan - The NK Plan 2020-23 - with a focus on climate change reflected throughout the plan structure
- Approved the new Customer Strategy 2019-22
- Approved the Plastics Reduction Policy
- Approved regeneration scheme for Grinter House and Grinter Close, North Hykeham, to provide 34 Housing Revenue Account properties
- Approved the purchase and acquisition of the land for the construction of the Discovery Court Workshop scheme, providing an additional 15 units.



Performance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Key Actions for the Year:

As well as their regular performance updates on Finance Monitoring, Treasury Management, the NK Plan and Lafford Homes, Members received the Target Budget for the year ahead; and one Task and Finish Group was initiated. Other highlights include:

Revenues and Benefits Performance Update – June 2019:

Members were presented with an update on the Shared Revenues and Benefits Service, which had been in operation since 1st June 2011. The Panel were pleased to note that the service was performing exceptionally well despite numerous changes to legislation and government policy, such as Universal Credit.

Council Tax Support Schemes – November 2019:

Members were presented with the annual Council Tax Support Scheme Report, which was presented by the Revenues and Benefits Manager. Members supported the proposed increase in the Council Tax Empty Homes Premium, and felt that the Council should take advantage of all opportunities provided for by government legislation.

Gender Pay Gap – November 2019:

The Gender Pay Gap report was presented by the Corporate Information Manager. Members were assured that the Council was doing everything possible to overcome positive discrimination, and gender-neutral language was being used in job advertisements.

Corporate Risk and Risk Management Strategy Update – November 2019 / March 2020:

This was presented by the Governance and Business Resilience Manager. Members were assured that the Risk Strategy was reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it was fit for purpose; the Operational Risk Register covered those risks which could directly affect the Council's ability to provide a service and that all risks should be updated every six months. If this was not the case, then the Governance and Business Resilience Manager liaised with Heads of Service to enforce. Broader community risks such as flooding, epidemics and pandemics were part of the Community Risk Register for Lincolnshire, however consideration would be given to how the NKDC Risk Register could reflect such issues.

Procurement Lincs 2018/19 Annual Report – November 2019:

Members were presented with the Procurement Lincolnshire Annual Report, by the Senior Commercial and Procurement Officer. This outlined the services, support and benefits provided by Procurement Lincs to NKDC. The Panel were pleased to learn that over £6.5m had been cumulatively saved since 2006, and that 60% of contracts were awarded locally (within 20 miles of the border of Lincolnshire).

Risk Task and Finish Group:

A Task and Finish Group (TFG) was formed to investigate if the Risk Register was being utilised effectively. Councillor Anthony Brand was chosen to Chair the Group. The report is expected imminently.



Cllr Stephen Roe
(Chairman)



Cllr Anthony Brand
(Vice-Chairman)

Service Areas

- Audit, Risk and Governance
- Democratic Services and Member Development
- Efficiency and Value for Money
- Financial Services
- Human Resources and Corporate Training
- Insurance
- Payroll and Exchequer
- Performance
- Procurement
- Revenues and Benefits Client

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Key Actions for the Year:

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel have engaged in some valuable scrutiny over the past year, with a range of internal and external representatives being invited to discuss a range of issues. Some highlights include:

New Depot (Metheringham) Progress Report – June 2019:

This was presented by the Environment Manager (Waste and Street Scene). The new depot was opened along with seven industrial units in 2018 and had celebrated its first anniversary on 31 May 2019. Members were assured that the depot had been designed to reduce as many potential hazards as possible, with the site safety rules created in conjunction with the staff to increase worker engagement. Members were informed that the vehicle workshop was currently out-sourced, but plans were being explored to bring this service in-house opening up the potential for increased commercialisation/income from the site.

Local Plan Review – September 2019:

This item was presented by the Housing Strategy and Growth Manager. In January 2019 the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (CLJSPC) approved a review of the Local Plan prompted by the update to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2018. The first consultation stage on issues and options had been completed and a report would go to the CLJSPC on 23 September 2019. These responses will be considered and inform the further draft of the Local Plan for consultation in early 2020.

Abellio EMR – November 2019:

The Economic Development Manager presented information regarding Abellio, who had recently been granted the franchise to run East Midlands Railways. Members were informed that the Dutch-owned company would focus on cleanliness, accessibility and inclusivity.

Our Environment Priority – 2018/2019:

The Sustainability Initiatives Officer frequently attended Panel meetings to discuss the 'Our Environment' Priority. Members were particularly pleased to learn that there had been a considerable reduction in corporate greenhouse gas emissions, which were down more than 60%.

The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Lincolnshire – September 2019:

Members were frequently kept up to date on the progress of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Lincolnshire, by the Head of Environment and Public Protection. The Panel were informed that food waste collection trials were now in to their second year in South Kesteven, and that parts of NKDC were to be used to trial paper and card collections.

Motion regarding control of fireworks – March 2020:

During Council in January 2020, Members referred a Motion relating to fireworks and pets to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Public Protection Manager and Rebecca Lowe of the RSPCA provided evidence in support of the Motion and how NKDC could support it as a Council. After careful consideration, Members unanimously endorsed that the proposed RSPCA motion and recommended methods of implementation to be recommended to Council.



Cllr Chris Goldson
(Chairman)



Cllr Stewart Ogden
(Vice-Chairman)

Service Areas

- Building Control
- Emergency Planning
- Enforcement
- Environmental Services and Public Protection
- Health and Safety
- Local Plans Team
- Licensing
- Open Spaces and Trees
- Street Scene
- SustainNK
- Waste Management

Communities and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Key Actions for the Year:

As well as regular updates from Economic Development, including Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park, Heart of Sleaford project, leisure contracts and health scrutiny throughout the year, the Communities and Economy OSP invited a range of internal and external representatives to discuss a range of issues. Some highlights included:

Citizens Advice Mid-Lincolnshire 2018/19 Monitoring Report July 2019:

The Partnerships Manager updated the Panel on Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire (CAML). Members were informed that the District Council and CAML had developed a good working relationship, with NKDC granting £60,640 each year to the service; new premises were being sought in Sleaford by CAML to reduce overheads; and the recent relocation in North Hykeham to the OneNK Centre and had seen a significant increase in clients as a result. It was thought that this was due to accessibility and increased promotion.

Homes England Compliance Audit - September 2019:

The Property Services Manager informed Members of the function of Homes England and described their Compliance Audit process for grant funding. The Panel were assured that the Council had been audited positively and that Homes England considered NKDC as a successful investment partner. The Panel were pleased with the relationship the District Council had established and developed with Homes England.

Community Safety Partnership Report - October 2019 and the Community Safety Partnership - Domestic Abuse update - March 2020:

The Panel welcomed Chief Inspector Vickers of Lincolnshire Police for this item, along with the Community Safety Manager who presented a report in relation to the Community Safety Partnership. This outlined crime level and anti-social behaviour, and described prevent activities and responsibilities in North Kesteven. Members were informed that the reason for increased crime statistics in the District was due to a change in crime recording methods. For example, domestic abuse was now recorded as individual crimes per incident reported and not as one crime overall. Members were assured that the current Police Community Support Officers were being encouraged to apply for Police Officer positions.

As a follow up to the October 2019 meeting, the Housing Services Manager attended the March 2020 meeting and informed Members of the current position on Domestic Abuse for Lincolnshire and North Kesteven. Members were assured that measures had been put in place to increase awareness of the issues relating to Domestic Abuse, the support available and referral pathways.



Cllr Peter Lundgren
(Chairman)



Cllr Bozena Allan
(Vice-Chairman)

Service Areas

- Community Safety Partnership
- Strategy and Business Transformation
- ICT
- Communications and Graphics
- Corporate Information
- Cultural Services - Leisure Client, Sports, Arts, Tourism and Heritage
- Customer Engagement
- Economic Development and Development Control
- Partnerships NK and Community Initiatives
- Property Services
- Strategic Housing (Private Sector, Housing Tenants and Landlord Services)
- Community Initiatives

Communities and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Key Actions for the Year (continued):

Cycling Strategy – January 2020 and Bike Rental March 2020:

The Housing Strategy Manager presented the report in relation to the Cycling Strategy and provided a summary of the achievements the Council had over the last year. Members were informed that the Cycling Strategy aimed to increase the number of people cycling in the District by improving cycling infrastructure, information and safety. Members were informed about the achievements of the Cycling Strategy, including: Regular contacts with local cycling clubs with the aim of supporting further expansion; The first NK Family Cycling Festival (in partnership with Giant and Access Lincoln), which took place in June 2019; The Council had successfully partnered with Active Lincolnshire to promote the 'Go Explore Lincolnshire App', and had twelve digital routes available. Members were particularly pleased to learn that the Council had funded the improved cycle routes to Teal Park and Discovery Park.

In March 2020, Members welcomed the Access Lincoln Project Manager for LCC, Phil Watt to the meeting. Phil provided an insight into the Bike Hire Schemes in Lincoln and North Hykeham, and possible new routes into North Kesteven. The contract for the Lincoln Bike Rental scheme was currently out to tender. LCC were asking tenderers to explore opportunities to expand the current area with the villages of Washingborough, Branston and Waddington being considered as extensions to the current network. Members were informed that LCC and NKDC were looking to improve the cycle and walking plan network for Sleaford. Members also learned of a cycling and walking network plan, which was being developed as part of the wider Lincoln Transport Strategy. Work on the Sleaford plans was due to start in April 2020.

Rent Consultation and Setting 2020/21 – January 2020:

The Assistant Housing Services Manager presented the report in relation to Rent Consultation and setting 2020/2021. Members were informed that the Regulator of Social Housing introduced a new Rent Standard. The New Rent Standard would take effect from 1st April 2020, which the Housing Team used to propose a 2.7% increase for 2020/2021. This increase would give the Council the opportunity to help fund service improvements, investment in energy efficiency schemes, component replacement and new build opportunities.

Mental Health Provision Task and Finish Group:

In March 2020, the Panel agreed to the formation of a Task and Finish Group to investigate NK's role in mental health provision and addressing mental health issues in North Kesteven. This Task and Finish Group is currently still in operation.