

Annual Report – 2012/13

Welcome to the North Kesteven District Council Annual Report 2012/13.

The annual report is a summary of the achievements and progress North Kesteven District Council has made during the last year against its vision, strategic objectives and corporate priorities.

This was a successful year for North Kesteven, despite the challenging national and economic climate. The Council has made impressive progress with regards to the local economy. This was largely due to huge investment in remodelling the Sleaford Leisure Centre, which includes the provision of free surplus heat from the Straw Burning power plant. This is an innovative project that will have a positive impact on the environment, but is also expected to create 80 permanent jobs. Also in Sleaford, Tesco's has reconfirmed their commitment to providing an 80,000 square foot superstore in the town, which will bring more than £100 million of investment to the area; up to a thousand new jobs created; vastly improved roads and transport links; and the refurbishment of The Maltings. At the other end of the District, there is continued development of the Access LN6 project in North Hykeham, which is a £6.5 million programme with a key objective of improving sustainable transport options in the area.

In addition, there was successful management of the Olympic Torch relay event, which included a procession through Sleaford attracting 18,000 visitors and residents. The Arts Council also awarded National Portfolio Status to the National Centre for Craft and Design. This forms a programme providing funding for a national portfolio of 696 organisations, which includes the English National Opera and London Symphony Orchestra.

There has also been a massive £46 million investment by the Council in new council housing with the key objective of building 300 to 400 new homes over the next 10 years. In addition, 113 new affordable homes have been delivered in the District through social rented, shared ownership and assisted purchase schemes, plus 23 long-term empty properties have been brought back into use during 2012/13.

North Kesteven has continued to be a high performing low cost authority and has increased our already high levels of performance during 2012/13 with 84 percent of performance indicators on or above target. Nevertheless, 2012/13 has been another challenging year financially as the economic climate remained largely unchanged, with weak economic performance impacting on the level of fees and charges income the Council receives, as well as increasing demand for some types of services such as Housing Benefits and Council Tax. Despite this, the Council has continued to accommodate significant reductions in its grant from central government and has successfully completed the second year of its two year Budget Savings Action plan designed to achieve savings of £2 million. The financial challenge is not new for the Council which has been required to demonstrate efficiency savings for a number of years and, because of the

responsible action the Council has taken in managing its budgets previously, it stands in a good position to ensure any new savings are achieved in a considered way in order to help protect the delivery of the frontline services it provides to the public.

These are just some of the key activities the Council has achieved for the District and you will see throughout the publication that there are many more which we are all very proud of.

Despite challenges facing local government, the North Kesteven District remains a great place to live, work and visit. Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

Councillor Marion Brighton OBE
Leader of the Council

Ian Fytche
Chief Executive

VISION, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND CORPORATE PRIORITIES FOR NORTH KESTEVEN DURING 2012/13

Vision:

100 Flourishing Communities

Strategic Objectives:

Working in partnership to improve the quality of life, economic performance and environmental sustainability of North Kesteven.

Inspiring community participation in the delivery of public services and the achievement of community aspirations.

Corporate Priorities:

Our Economy

To promote the prosperity of North Kesteven

Our Homes

To provide good-quality housing to meet the diverse needs of the communities in North Kesteven.

Our Communities

To promote the sustainability, wellbeing, safety and health of North Kesteven's Communities.

Our Council

To deliver high-quality, value for money services for North Kesteven.

Vision: 100 Flourishing Communities

The Council has held this well-established Vision for a number of years. Various inspection regimes have praised the Vision as being mature, having clarity, relevance and most importantly, being widely understood and owned throughout the Council and the District.

Strategic Objectives

The Council's strategic objectives are based on 'partnership' and 'participation':

- The 'partnership' objective recognises the need for organisations to work together to deliver challenges, which increasingly require an integrated approach. Population growth requires a joined-up approach to housing growth, infrastructure provision, service developments, utilities, highways,

and transport issues. Provision for older people, likewise requires an integrated approach. The 'partnership' objective therefore provides a focus for the Council to identify innovative partnership arrangements to add value to delivery of the priorities for the District.

- The 'participation' objective recognises that service users are no longer simply the passive recipients of services provided by statutory bodies. Customers are increasingly involved in the development and delivery of services, defining service standards and engaging in delivery options. For example, housing tenants participate in defining service standards for housing and property services. In addition, local services and local priorities are increasingly influenced by local communities and local people – hence greater participation by the Council with its parish and town councils. The 'participation' objective therefore provides a focus for engagement and participation, inspiring involvement in service delivery and improvement.

Corporate Priorities

The Council's priorities reflect the main issues or challenges facing the district in the short to medium term and contain key objectives that the Council will address if our vision is to be achieved. They are reviewed annually with reference to the 'State of the District' research report to identify the challenges facing the district and as the basis of consultation with our residents, businesses and visitors.

The Corporate Priorities are supported by a corporate planning framework that links operational service delivery plans with the overarching vision and strategic focus of the Council, ensuring that the council's resources and finances are focused on delivering the 'right' things for the District.

Core Values

In May 2012, a consultation event was undertaken with colleagues to choose the core values of the Council. This resulted in five values close to the heart of the organisation:

- Customer Focus
- Can-Do Attitude
- Clarity, Integrity and Transparency
- Care, Respect and Valuing Diversity
- Cost conscious and efficient

An ethical, customer-driven and efficient organisation, which delivers a positive contribution to all the members of our community.

OUR ECONOMY

To promote the prosperity of North Kesteven

During 2012-13, a period of financial uncertainty has continued, which in turn has made it even more important to safeguard jobs and drive investment into the District. We want to build upon the existing landscape to be an area full of enterprise and innovation with a diverse economy.

Encouraging economic development and ensuring North Kesteven maintains a vibrant economy for its residents and businesses remained a priority for the Council.

Key Highlights

- Developed 14 industrial units at Bracebridge Heath, which are now all occupied
- Maintained 92% occupancy of the Councils workspaces throughout the year, despite the economic recession
- The Energy from Waste Plant in North Hykeham is part of a £145 million investment, which will treat up to 150,000 tonnes of household waste per year and will produce enough electricity to power over 10,000 homes and businesses
- Continued development of the Access LN6 project, which is a £6.5 million programme which aims to improve sustainable transport options in the LN6 area. Access LN6 will increase opportunities to walk, cycle and use public transport, as well as making improvements to infrastructure in the area
- Major visitor attractions also survived the economic downturn with 198,142 visitors to the Whisby Natural World centre and a record number of 108,161 visitors to the National Centre for Craft and Design, the latter of which hosted the Transformers exhibition focusing on how enabling design has transformed disability
- Successful management of the Olympic Torch relay event, which passed through two of North Kesteven District's communities and attracted visitors from all over the county, as well as Nottinghamshire, North Lincolnshire and even Australia. This included a procession through Sleaford that attracted 18,000 visitors and residents and inspired the re-launch of Sleaford Carnival. In Bracebridge Heath an arts event was held in the evening over 5,000 people in attendance

What we did in 2012-13

- As part of the Sleaford Masterplan, the £2.8 million refurbishment of Sleaford Leisure Centre commenced in October 2012
- The major remodelling of the Sleaford Leisure Centre included the provision of free surplus heat from the Straw Burning power plant, which is due to be

operational in 2014. This was a large investment on behalf of the District Council for an innovative project that will have a positive impact on the environment by saving around 250,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions every year, and is expected to create 80 permanent jobs

- Work is continuing to deliver a number of strands within the Sleaford Masterplan, which include developing a visioning event on the future of Sleaford Town Centre; continued negotiations to deliver perimeter car parking and housing; and working with retail consultants to support town centre retail
- Tesco's has reconfirmed their commitment to providing an 80,000 square foot superstore in the town with a link road and associated infrastructure. This will bring more than £100 million of investment to Sleaford; up to a thousand new jobs created; vastly improved roads and transport links; and the refurbishment of The Maltings (a building of great historical significance)
- The Council is developing a partnership proposal with a local developer to deliver 20,000 square feet of bespoke office space in Teal Park in North Hykeham. This will be a joint scheme between North Kesteven District Council and Taylor Lindsey and will see 10 new workshops provided ranging from 1,000 square feet to 5,000 square feet
- The Council let a contract to a local business advice agency to offer bespoke business support to new and existing businesses.
- The Council-run portfolio of workshops has continued to support business development across the District.
- A Business Breakfast event was held to promote business and commercial development in the District, with 70 businesses attending and 100% of respondents rating the event as 'very good' or 'good'
- The launch of the successful LINBIS project. LINBIS is a new business support network designed to encourage business start-ups and entrepreneurs and help boost the local economy. North Kesteven District Council, the City of Lincoln and East and West Lindsey District Councils are working in partnership with the private sector to provide one-to-one face-to-face professional support to create a robust, sustainable local market for business support
- Facilitated 21 different investments to attract new businesses to the area
- Launched the Connect2 cycle/path way from Leasingham to Sleaford
- 388 participants took part in the 2012 Spires and Steeples Challenge
- The Arts Council awarded National Portfolio Status to the National Centre for Craft and Design. This is a funding programme, which provides funding for a national portfolio of 696 organisations, including the English National Opera, London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal National Theatre
- For the first time in its history the Natural World Centre staged an innovative Christmas Fayre and Market to accompany the Christmas Craft Exhibition. Crafty Christmas drew visitors from out of the county and was a resounding success with record day visits at 1,351

- North Kesteven District Council worked with the Royal Air Force to put together a series of aviation heritage 'Behind the Scenes' events which were attended by 135 people. These events comprised of individual tours of the three RAF Stations within NK - RAF Waddington, RAF Cranwell and RAF Digby. The tours were fully booked and received both a national and local response
- Delivered National Armed Forces Day events
- Launched the 'discovernk' promotional identify on all new literature and increased their presence at Exhibitions and on the internet
- Utilised social media to promote events at leisure and venue centres, such as Terry O'Toole Theatre, Whisby Natural World Centre, and the National Centre for Craft & Design
- The economic impact of tourism was £99.97 million, which is a 5 percent increase on previous years; whilst the District attracted over 2 million visitors. In addition, employment supported by tourism activity is 1,704 full-time equivalent employees, representing a 3.5 percent increase on previous years
- Development of a consultation event to discuss the Sleaford Leisure Centre timetable of events and how it can be re-structured to reflect the needs of the community today

What people said:

“This Link Road is Sleaford’s big chance. It’s more than just a new road, it’s a crucial ingredient in unlocking significant regeneration opportunities, enabling regeneration of Southgate, attracting new retailers, supporting existing town centre landowners and securing at least 1,000 new jobs; all at no cost to the public purse”.

Paul Wheatley, Lincolnshire County Council’s Economic Development Unit

“As the LN6 Business Group approaches its third birthday, it continues to go from strength to strength in reflecting the views of those who trade from LN6 to local government and others, and connecting businesses to each other. As a location-specific trading group, I am delighted that other businesses continue to treat LN6 as both valuable and needed and more businesses are joining all the time”.

Sophie Atfield, Solicitor, Chair of LN6 Group

In advance of their participation in the 2012 Paralympic Games, part of the Egyptian team visited the National Centre for Craft and Design to view the unique Transformers exhibition. Head coach for table tennis, Hossam El-Shobary said, “The exhibition had been really interesting to see and fascinating to see how design and technology had helped people with disabilities to progress and excel in life. It’s marvellous, very nice. These things are important for my work and it’s the first time I have seen something like it. I hope it helps to inspire the team”.

Head coach for table tennis, Hossam El-Shobary

“Projects such as this do not make headway without constructive and co-operative engagement between a developer and a local authority; the success of this project owes a lot to the careful, considered and scrupulous support of those at North Kesteven District Council. Their positive response has been critical and they deserve recognition for this”.

Dr Andrew Toft, Eco2’s Director of Projects speaking of the Sleaford Renewable Energy Plant

Robin Taylor of Taylor Lindsey thanked North Kesteven, members and officers for the support and commitment to the Seven-O-Seven project. “We are delighted to have worked in partnership with North Kesteven District Council. Together we identified a need and have managed to re-develop on a Brownfield site which is great for the area”.

Robin Taylor of Taylor Lindsey

“We have worked on a number of projects with the District Council over the past 25 years and now, as their Commercial Property Managers, have a very strong working relationship at all levels within the Authority. It is refreshing to work alongside a public sector body that is actively looking at ways of bringing commercial activity to the fore in these difficult times”.

Sam Elkington, Hodgson Elkington LLP

“I believe that the excellent working relationship between Sleaford REP and NKDC is a beacon of best practice for others across the UK to follow. The achievements speak volumes: up 80 local jobs relating to the Plant when operational, apprenticeships for local young people, free heat to public buildings, delivering community funding along with Parish Councils, upgrade of local footpaths, and helping the redevelopment of Sleaford Swimming Pool. Whilst the Plant is providing the funding, the Council has pressed hard to get these benefits for its communities from our development. I am sure this relationship can only prosper further in the future”.

Mike Harrison, Sleaford REP Communications Manager

OUR HOMES

To provide good quality housing to meet diverse needs of the communities in North Kesteven.

The population of North Kesteven is likely to increase significantly over the next 20 years and, as a result, an increased requirement of 42,800 homes is predicted across the Central Lincolnshire area. Central Lincolnshire represents the districts of North Kesteven, West Lindsey and City of Lincoln, whose Councils, alongside Lincolnshire County Council, are working together in partnership to develop an overall plan for the strategic development of the central area. This plan will influence the provision of jobs, homes and supporting infrastructure such as schools, health provision, roads and transport for the future.

The Council continues to invest in the delivery of its own housing stock and works with partners to meet a range of diverse needs, including households with a need for specialist housing. Developing plans for the delivery and maintenance of housing and supporting infrastructure continues to be a key element of the Councils commitment to the District.

Key Highlights

- 100% satisfaction with the Sanctuary Scheme. The Sanctuary Scheme has been developed for people who find themselves affected by domestic violence and abuse in North Kesteven
- 100% of tenants satisfied with their new build council property
- 99.13% of tenants satisfied with repairs to their property. This includes the structure of the property; gas and electrical appliances; and shared parts of a building or housing estate
- Overall tenant satisfaction stands at 90.20% (1,616 respondents)
- Prevented 474 households from becoming homeless through the use of advice and prevention tools, exceeding the target of 320
- 92% of Housing Support (homelessness) cases were closed with positive outcomes
- 100% satisfaction with the Housing Support service

What we did in 2012-13

- £46 million investment programme by the Council in new council housing with the objective to build 300 to 400 new homes over the next 10 years
- The Local Plan was developed by the Joint Planning Committee for Central Lincolnshire, which brings together an integrated approach to economic development, housing and infrastructure for the North Kesteven and West Lindsey Districts and the City of Lincoln

- Provided five new Council properties, which are being let at affordable rents. In addition, the Council is believed to be only the second authority to have gained the approval of the Homes and Communities Agency to charge rents at this level for new build properties
- 113 new affordable homes delivered in the District through social rented, shared ownership and assisted purchase schemes
- 23 long-term empty properties bought back into use
- 1,881 properties achieving the NK Homes Standard
- Reduced the period that Council houses are unoccupied to an average of 20.96 days highlighting an effective use of Council housing stock
- Tenant scrutiny has been introduced, which involves bringing real experiences of tenants to bear on decisions and policies and provides a variety of ways for all tenants to get their voices heard and contribute their views
- 86% of Domestic Abuse cases were prevented from becoming homeless as a result of advice and assistance by the Council
- 36% increase in number of clients experiencing Domestic Abuse contacting the Council for housing advice and assistance
- 25% increase in number of clients who are worried about losing their home contacting the Council for housing advice and assistance
- Introduced a Choice Based Lettings scheme, Lincs Homefinder, that enables applicants to apply for housing online and interactively
- Approved a new five year Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy and local action plan

What people said:

“We are over the moon to get one of these new houses. They’re really nice and I think we’ll be really happy here,” said Kelly. Her mum Sue said that the Council had done well to satisfy local demand whilst expanding opportunities for people in need of affordable housing. “I think they’re brilliant. We’ve had no trouble at all during the building and I think we’re all looking forward to welcoming the new people into Pound Road and Penny Lane,” she said.

Kelly Howesman and her daughters Ellie-May and Sara-Anne are among the new tenants at Penny Lane, Martin

“We’re very pleased with what we’ve achieved for people by pioneering a new era of building council houses, using match-funding from Government, and are now even prouder to start to build again, wholly through our own resources”.

Cllr Stewart Ogden, the Council’s Executive Board Member with responsibility for Housing

“The Homes and Communities Agency is committed to supporting local authorities to deliver their housing strategy, including tackling empty properties. We are pleased to work in partnership with North Kesteven in delivering this local priority with £120,000 investment to redevelop and bring back into use 15 properties to meet local housing priorities. We recognise that this is a challenging programme to deliver and as such the Council’s proactive approach with the appointment of an Empty Property Officer is welcomed”.

Sandhya Ward, Area Manager, Homes and Communities Agency

“It is refreshing to be able to sit around the table and talk openly and freely about the ways we can bring homes forward together in the true spirit of partnership”.

Paul McSorley, Lindum Group Ltd

“We enjoy a positive and professional working relationship with North Kesteven District Council and hold the officers of the Council in high regard. We provide town planning and landscape architecture advice to a number of Local Authorities, but it is particularly rewarding to be able to work with the District Council in the area in which we are based”.

Robert J C Doughty MRTPI, Managing Director, Robert Doughty Consultancy Limited

OUR COMMUNITIES

Promoting the sustainability, wellbeing, safety and health of North Kesteven's communities

The Council continues to place a huge importance on ensuring the wellbeing of our communities, which means maintaining and enhancing local services; ensuring there are opportunities for both young and older people; encouraging healthy lifestyles and maintaining the District as a safe place to live.

Key Highlights

- Retained the North Kesteven District as the seventh safest place in the country
- Collected 339.64 kgs of waste per household, of which 55.5% was recycled
- Over 850,000 visits were made to sports, leisure and cultural venues in the District
- 100% of people engaged by the Health Trainers in the Fit for Life sessions said their health had improved as a result
- 92.60% of residents were satisfied with the way the Council dealt with anti-social behaviour, which is a huge increase from 73% in the previous financial year
- 95% of customers were satisfied by the service received at the first point of contact with the Council

What we did in 2012-13

- NKDC was praised by the Government for its excellent response to the flooding in Summer 2012
- 935 residents engaged at outreach events and given tailored advice, which included supporting the Natural World Centre's 'Grow Your Own' event
- Over 400 residents in receipt of the Sustainability newsletter
- A new campaign 'Would you recycle a dead pheasant?' was introduced to reduce recycling bin contamination, which drew huge media interest, plus talks were given to community groups
- Engaged 60 schools and businesses providing tailored environmental sustainability advice, which included onsite business environmental audits
- Delivery of a Business Breakfast, which promoted carbon reduction, attended by 45 representatives from 31 organisations, which resulted in the formation of the Low Carbon NK Partnership
- Launched a Low Carbon NK Charter for organisations to commit to, plus a Low Carbon NK Plan, which sets a 20% emissions reduction target by 2020 for the District

- Musicmagpie project supported schools to raise money by collecting unwanted CDs, DVDs and games which will then be reused, rather than sent to landfill
- The overall crime recorded for North Kesteven has reduced by 16.53% in 2012/13 compared to 2011/12
- Anti-social behaviour in North Kesteven has reduced in both the levels reported to Lincolnshire police and to the Council
- The introduction of Sentinel has enabled a co-ordinated approach to reduce the number of repeat and vulnerable victims of anti-social behaviour in North Kesteven. Sentinel manages the exchange of information between the Council, Lincolnshire Police and other partners to assist with the Prevention and Detection of Crime and Disorder, including Anti-Social Behaviour
- A pilot scheme has been introduced for victims of anti-social behaviour, which has proved beneficial to those accessing this service, and as a result, the Police and Crime Commissioner has agreed to resource this service across Lincolnshire
- 13 events delivered as part of the Countryside and Stepping Out Walks, with two new walks established at Doddington Hall and Hill Holt Wood
- Delivered 14 new health walks across the District, substantially exceeding the target of 2
- The Council participated in Global Corporate Challenge as the first Council in Lincolnshire to participate, with 16 teams comprising 112 participants. Global Corporate Challenge is the world's largest workplace health and wellness programme lasting sixteen weeks with colleagues wearing a 'pulse' and recording their daily step count in a bid to get healthy and active
- Engaged with 210 residents to encourage positive lifestyle changes through health, exercise and dietary advice, which exceeds the annual target of 152
- Four Fit for Life sessions with a total number of 60 clients losing in excess of 31 stone between them
- New access methods provided to support the Green Waste Brown Bin Charging initiative, which included extended hours allowing for accessibility in the evenings for our customers for the first time
- Continued the success of the NK Community Champion Awards, which celebrates significant contributions to the community by residents, with over 100 nominees
- Co-funded plans for Better Broadband access across Lincolnshire, which included allocating £600,000 from the Council which will result in improved efficiency for businesses, better connections with customers and more exposure to an expanding global market

What people said:

“NKDC has one of the best recycling rates in the country. This is a real credit to the partnership we have with our residents and it's important that we continue to maintain our excellent record. Because our recycling is hand sorted initially it is important to make sure only the right things are recycled. Because getting this wrong costs the Council around £100,000 we have worked exhaustively in ensuring all residents have the right information they need to get it right first time”.

Councillor Richard Wright, Executive Board Member with responsibility for waste

“This successful order [sentencing of a man found guilty of threatening abuse towards members of the public in Sleaford who was banned from all licensed premises in the county for two years] is another result of persistent and diligent partnership working between the police, Sleaford BID, local business and NKDC’s anti-social behaviour team. North Kesteven remains one of the safest places to live and we will continue to work together to ensure our good record on this is maintained”.

Councillors Mike Gallagher, Chairman of NK Community Safety Partnership

“It’s great that some really inspiring people have been recognised in this way – it has been a real privilege to meet them this evening and to commend their efforts to make their communities a better place to live. Each one has shown such selfless commitment to others. They are all winners all my eyes”.

John Marshall, Lincs FM presenter

“Overall I was hoping to become fitter, but actually the Health Trainers have made me more motivated and more aware of food and choices. I’ve made new friends, built confidence, feel part of a team and was made to feel at ease and had a laugh as well”.

Resident supported by the Health Trainers

“NKDC is an active and valued partner in the collaborative work to improve the health and well-being of the population and tackle health inequalities across Lincolnshire. This is demonstrated by the Council co-ordinating many local health improvement schemes commissioned by Public Health, for example, the Walking for Health programme and the Health Trainers in the North Kesteven area”.

Philip Garner, Specialist Programme Manager, Public Health

OUR COUNCIL

To deliver high quality, value for money services for North Kesteven

North Kesteven District Council has a strong track record backed by continuous improvement, high performance and value for money. The Council has been widely recognised as an innovative organisation that delivers high quality services. It continually challenges itself to improve services and to deliver value for money through business transformation programmes, service reviews and some shared services. We have continued to strive to be an excellent council during this past year.

Key Highlights

- Council tax was still one of the lowest in the country amounting to £135 per year for a Band D property and 77% of households pay less than this
- 94% of residents think that the Council performs well with the money it has available
- 98% of residents feel the Council provides good quality services
- 79% of residents are satisfied with the way the Council runs things
- £53,000 savings from the Transformation programme so far
- 99.90% of business rates collected and 99.10% of Council Tax collected, providing one of the most efficient and cost-effective revenue recovery services in the country
- 84% of performance indicators on or above target
- 5,368 residents participating in consultation and engagement events

What we did in 2012-13

- Initiated a 3-5 year Business Transformation Programme to transform the way we undertaken our services, and to ensure we are using our time and resources in the best way.
- Reviewed the Council's governance, decision-making and communication agenda to ensure transparency in our operations and outcomes
- Engaged with 86 young people as part of Local Democracy Week, which involves organising events that bring together elected local politicians with future generations of electors
- Reduced the Councils Business Mileage still further, in our commitment to the green agenda; and more efficient working
- The Council's buildings have been audited by Anglian Water, confirming that we are using water efficiently. We continue to work with Anglian Water on an action plan to ensure water use is kept to a minimum and the Council was able to support them during extreme weather events, for example, drought

- A new Contact Centre Solution has been implemented which allows better handling and management of the Councils telephone calls and allows the Council to offer other ways of contacting us in the future
- Third year running NKDC has reduced energy cost of its operations - 19% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and on track to meet aim of reducing by 25% in five years
- Achievements within the Workforce Development Plan include a development programme designed to challenge managers; implementation of a new HR and Payroll system; and extremely positive results from the Annual (Staff) Survey

What people said:

“You are the residents of North Kesteven of the future and some of you may be the council representatives of the future, either working for, or elected to, councils across the country, making decisions that affect your peers, your families and your futures. “It’s always worth remembering that participation is what makes successful communities”.

Janet Campbell, Branston Community Academy’s Vice-Principal

“I have been on the Youth Council for just over three years now and have learnt many useful skills that I will continue to use throughout my life. Being a member of the Youth Council has given me great opportunities, has improved my confidence, and enabled me to be a voice for young people. As a member of the Youth Council, we create campaigns and magazines on issues that affect young people in our local area. This has given me pleasure, knowing that I have contributed to my community, tackling sensitive issues and helping youngsters overcome problems such as eating disorders and low self esteem. Being on the Youth Council has given me opportunities that I wouldn’t have learnt at school. Whilst learning these valuable skills and experiences, it has also given me a chance to work with students of a similar age, making friends and building relationships with others. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Youth Council and would thoroughly recommend it to anyone. I am looking forward to next year and hope to continue being a voice for young people”.

Lauren Graves, Member of the North Kesteven Youth Council

“Local Democracy Week has been one of the highlights of the academic calendar for students of Citizenship within Sir William Robertson Academy. Through a range of activities and scenarios students are able to engage with and grasp both the workings of their local council and, in the wider context, the democratic process. This is a far better way for students to learn as they are able to apply their skills and knowledge to real world events and to take away valuable lessons that stay with them long after the day has concluded. All future citizens, whether part of the big society or the global village, should be engaging with their local, national and international community, and the Local Democracy Week events are the perfect spring board for this to happen”.

Mr Seymour, Sir William Robertson Academy

“The council has a number of recent achievements of which it can be rightly proud, including significant progress on major large-scale growth and regeneration projects like the Teal Park business park, the Sleaford Renewal Energy plant, very low crime rates, a series of successful housing, leisure and arts projects”.

**Jean Hunter, Chief Executive, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Lead Peer**

MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL

Political Management

North Kesteven District Council had 43 councillors that represent 26 wards. The role of an elected Member is a rewarding form of public service, where individuals can make a difference to the quality of other people's daily lives. Members have to balance the needs and interests of their residents, voters, political parties and the Council.

The Member's role includes:

- Representing the ward
- Decision-making
- Policy and strategy review and development
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Regulatory duties
- Community leadership and engagement.

District council elections take place every four years; with the most recent taking place in May 2011 when 13 new Members joined the elected Council.

Decision Making in the Council

Ultimate responsibility and accountability for the performance of the Council rests with the elected councillors. The Political leadership is key to ensuring the Council has the right policies in place. This needs clear vision, a focus on improvement, with personal and collective accountability and all councillors play a vital role, through the Executive Board, Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committee.

High-quality council services rely on strong corporate governance from elected members and it is the responsibility of these members to ensure there is an emphasis on providing quality services the public want.

North Kesteven District Council has adopted a Leader and Executive system. The Executive comprises five members plus the Leader of the Council. The Executive meet regularly – normally every month – and make key decisions on behalf of the council, which include approval of the Council's vision and key strategies, allocation of Council resources and initiating and implementing key Council policies.

The most important policy decisions must be considered and taken by the whole Council, which is attended by all Councillors. For example, the council's annual budget must be approved by the Full Council, as must key policies and strategies.

In addition, the Council has three committees, known as Overview and Scrutiny Panels, drawn from those councillors who are not Executive Board Members.

They contribute to the Council's development, monitor and review council policies and procedures. They also monitor the performance of the services and review performance targets. The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2012/13 will be presented to Council in June 2013.

The Council also has regulatory powers and responsibilities, and has established committees to carry out these key functions relating to development control, enforcement, and licensing.

There are also specific committees – the Audit Committee and the Standards Committee – to ensure the council operates prudently, and meets effective standards of governance.

In addition, the Council is committed to working in partnership with regional bodies and the other local statutory agencies including the police, NHS, fire service and with local businesses and community organisations, towards shared community goals. During 2012/13 the Council was a key partner in PartnershipNK, the Local Strategic Partnership.

Officer Management

NKDC employed approximately 371 people during the year. The Chief Executive, Ian Fytche, had overall responsibility for the management of the Council. There were also two Corporate Directors, Alan Thomas (also the Deputy Chief Executive) and Karen Bradford; and a further five Heads of Service managing broad service areas. The senior management team has reduced by 27 percent since 2008 and the Council has one of the smallest senior management teams within the county.

Performance Management and Data Quality

The performance management arrangements provide a framework at the highest level for action planning, performance focus, delivery and achievements – aligned to the Council's strategic objectives and key priorities.

Data quality plays an important part towards contributing to the delivery of the Council's priorities and services and developing and maintaining a well managed and publicly accountable organisation.

The data presented in our Annual Report is correct at the time of going to print. Should changes be required as a result of audit or review, they will be published on our website.

How we Measure Success and Performance Against our Priorities

During 2012/13 the Council monitored its performance against a framework of indicators, measuring success against the Council's Priorities, the corporate health of the organisation and underlying service delivery expectations. In addition, the framework also included the monitoring of partnership working to

ensure that these continued to deliver improved outcomes – including the Primary Care Trust (PCT), Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Police.

These performance indicators enabled the Council to monitor the progress, they allowed us to compare with other Councils and importantly provide our residents with information about how well we are performing and whether we are achieving targets set to improve services.

Each service area also has indicators which measure local standards and targets that are considered to be important in maintaining outcomes of the highest standard for the district.

A selection of these indicators are shown at various points throughout the annual report. However, the Council publishes its key performance indicators on a quarterly basis for scrutiny by officers, councillors and members of the public.

Equality and Community Engagement

NKDC is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. As an employer, NKDC is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity within its workforce. NKDC will not tolerate any discrimination, directly or indirectly in relation to the protected characteristics detailed in the 2010 Equality Act.

The Council actively engages with its communities to gain their opinions and views on a wide range of subjects. We often consult with community and parish groups, tenant representatives, representatives from local businesses, support and voluntary groups, as well as inviting individuals to specific focus sessions. In addition the Council has an active viewpoint panel with over 1,000 residents who give up their time to let us have their opinions on Council services, plans, policies and their local area. During the year, these consultees have completed surveys and taken part in forums, discussions and workshops.

ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF THE COUNCIL

This section of the Annual Report summarises the environmental impact of the Council's activities in relation to some key indicators. The information relates to the environmental impact of carrying out the Council's business.

Waste

The table below shows how much waste we recycled from the Council offices over the last 6 years:

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	total
tonnes of waste recycled	5.61	21.16	20.8	18.8	19.8	19.8	105.97

Actions in 2012/13:

- An introduction to environmental sustainability and NKDC practices is now incorporated into inductions for new colleagues.

Energy

Energy usage from the main Council buildings for the last 6 years is given in the table below:

Building	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
	(kwh)	(kwh)	(kwh)	(kwh)	(kwh)	(kwh)
Eastgate Offices	1,227,050	1,191,946	990800	941250	855,510	999539
Metheringham Depot	45,553	36,865	62558	113492	38,551	48170
Total:	1,272,603	1,228,811	1053358	1054742	894,061	1047709

Actions in 2012/13:

- Since 2007/08 we have reduced our energy usage from our main Council buildings by nearly 18%.

Water

Water usage for the last 6 years is given in the table below:

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
	M ³	M ³	M ³	M ³	M ³	M ³
Eastgate Offices	2,483	1,997	2319	2484	2552	1814
Metheringham Depot	331	301	329	447	208	211
Total:	2,814	2,298	2648	2931	2760	2025

Actions in 2012/13:

- Working in partnership with Anglian Water audits are now complete for the above sites and we are looking to improve monitoring in order to keep our consumption at low levels.
- Since 2007/08 we have reduced our water consumption by over 28%

Transport

There are two main components of the Council's transport, these are mileage undertaken by the workforce and elected members on Council business and fuel used by the waste fleet, primarily in undertaking refuse collection.

The data for the last 6 years is detailed below:

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Workforce/Member mileage	544,251	518,399	516,720	512,012	432,448	381,149
Litres of fuel used by refuse fleet	336,796	334,450	314,949	311,682	313,950	304,961

Actions in 2012/13:

- During 2012 we set a reduction target to reduce our workforce/Member mileage by 5% per year over 5 years. After one year we are ahead of target having reduced our mileage by over 10%
- Since 2007/08 we have reduced the amount of fuel used by our refuse fleet by almost 10%

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Council calculates on an annual basis its total greenhouse gas emissions resulting from carrying out our Council's operations. This includes areas that have been outsourced to other organisations to run such as our leisure centres.

The scope of our carbon footprint is as follows:

- Energy use in council-owned buildings
- Energy use in buildings used for outsourced council functions
- Fuel use in council owned fleet
- Fuel use in fleet providing outsourced council functions
- Business travel for the workforce
- Business travel for outsourced council functions

Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
tonnes greenhouse gases	3546.45	3373.52	3251.26	2979.64

During 2010, the Council developed a Corporate Carbon management Plan which included an aspirational target to reduce our emissions by 25% over 5 years. The data will be available in July 2013 to report on our progress for 2012/13.

FINANCIAL REVIEW OF THE YEAR

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 paid for from Government Grants, contributions from Business Rates and Council Tax. For 2012/13, the approved net expenditure budget for the Council's General Fund was £11.4 million. This included the budget savings of £2 million from the Council's Budget Savings Action Plan.

The gross expenditure of the Council against the General Fund for the year was £43,276,000. A surplus of £14,900 was likely to accrue on the Council's General Fund for 2012/13 after allowing for £111,400 of project costs to be transferred into the Earmarked Reserve in order to be finalised during 2013/14. An Executive Board report has recommended that the surplus is transferred to the Refuse Vehicle Replacement Reserve within the Council's accounts.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has to be kept 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 landlord. HRA Self Financing, which came into effect from 1 April 2012, has allowed the Council to have greater freedoms over the money it collects from its tenants and how this is spent. During 2011/12, the Council had to 'buy' its self out of the previous finance regime around HRA Subsidy with a one of payment of £57million. This has meant that it now keeps all the money raised through tenants rents and is reinvesting it back into its housing stock and its new build programme. The Council has established a detailed and robust 30 year Business Plan and financial plan charting its long term aspirations in the provision of local government housing.

The gross expenditure of the Council against the housing revenue account for the year was £12,439,000. The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) showed a net operating surplus of £306,000. Budget carry forward requests relating to the HRA totalling £47,000 have been received and Supporting People grant to support the District Plan of £148,000 has also been carried forward in the Housing Services Reserve in order for this to be delivered during 2013/14.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Council's capital expenditure on the provision of new or enhanced assets is largely met from revenue contributions, borrowing, government grants and contributions from third parties.

The gross expenditure of the Council against the capital programme for the year was £6,022,000. The Council's Housing Capital Programme showed an under

spend of £1.0 million whilst the General Fund Capital Programme showed an underspend of £775,000. The main reasons for this variance are due to delays on the Council's new build programme and most of this outstanding expenditure will be incurred in 2013/14.

Since 2010 the Council has embarked on a number of new build schemes and has been successful in receiving funding in order to achieve this. For 2012/13, the Council has been able to use the money that would have previously been paid over in the form of housing subsidy to assist in funding its new build schemes resulting in an additional 16 new build properties and four other acquisitions during 2012/13. The housing capital programme for 2013/14 onwards has £41 million to increase the Council's housing stock.

Resources available for investment in non-housing capital assets and schemes have been increasingly scarce in recent years and the Council continues to work hard with stakeholders and partners in order to provide investment in non-housing assets.

The Council will continue to support Disabled Facilities Grants totalling £360,000 per annum and is investing £1.2 million in a Regeneration Fund and £0.3 million for Rural Workshops. The non-housing capital programme 2013/14 - 2015/16 also includes for £0.6 million helping facilitate improved Broadband within the district and £2.8 million to refurbish the Sleaford Leisure Centre.

EARMARKED RESERVES

The Council began the year with £4.3million in Earmarked Reserves for specific purposes across the Council's General Fund, HRA and Capital programme. The largest of these relates to the Greater Lincolnshire Transport Strategy (£0.6m), Capital (£0.6m), New Homes Bonus (£0.5m) and Regeneration (£0.3m) all of which the Council is planning to invest into infrastructure, growth and its asset base.

During 2012/13, the Council received a further New Homes Bonus amount of £1.1 million which has initially been allocated to the reserve. It also contributed £4.5 million to the HRA Major Repairs Reserve from the HRA to fund the capital expenditure on its housing stock and new build programme. Other contributions to reserves totalled £1.3 million. Use of reserves, mainly on the housing capital programme, totalled £4.9 million which gave a position at 31 March 2013 of £6.3 million in Earmarked Reserves.

THE ACCOUNTS

The Council's accounts for 2012/13 was approved by the Deputy Chief Executive as the Council's Chief Finance Officer at the end of June 2013 with the Full Council approving the final audited version by the end of September 2013. A "Summary of Accounts" will be provided once this has been completed.

FUTURE FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The most challenging aspects for the Council remain meeting further reductions in central government grant announced for 2013/14 and 2014/15, while introducing changes such as the Localising of Council Tax Support and Business Rates Retention that will significantly alter the way in which the Council will be financed from 2013/14. With little sign of economic growth and the Government currently going through its next spending review for 2015/16, it is likely that the Council will have to keep finding further savings in its budgets for the foreseeable future.