

# Annual Report

Our performance 2014/15

An update on performance and projects in South Kesteven



*well run council*

# Welcome to our Annual Report

**The last year has been busy and exciting for South Kesteven District Council. This annual report looks back on what we achieved and how we performed. It also sets out some of our plans for the challenging and exciting year that lies ahead.**

One of the many highlights was our Gravity Fields Festival which celebrates the life and work of Grantham's most famous son Sir Isaac Newton – the world's most famous scientist.

Over the five days of events audiences totalled 65,000 and our second biennial event has now put Grantham and the rest of the district firmly on the map through the development of its association with science.

The Festival has also created a sense of civic pride and raised the aspirations about the growth ambitions of the town.

And word about Grantham and the Festival is getting out. More than a quarter of the total audience were inbound visitors to Grantham and 1,850 of them stayed overnight contributing to the economic impact of the event calculated at £518,315 using the industry standard equation.

This work underpins our major goal which is to grow the economy and

provide high value jobs by utilising our excellent rail links (one hour from London), the fact that the A1 runs right through our district, and we have easy road access to the major Midlands cities. We also have relatively inexpensive housing, excellent schools, a low crime rate and a quality of life that is the envy of many.

Good health is also important to us and that is why we are so pleased that 823,671 people passed through our leisure centres during the year and 3,062 people enjoyed swimming lessons.

And imaginative use of space at the Meres Leisure Centre in Grantham also allows sports hall space to be transformed into a 1,200 seater theatre which has attracted national acts including comedian Jimmy Carr and Brendan Cole from the BBC's Strictly Come Dancing.

Our housing strategy also plays an important part in reaching our broader goals. We recognise that it is important that the district has high quality affordable homes to buy and rent, that we improve standards, that we facilitate access to housing and wellbeing services and that we promote sustainable neighbourhoods and communities.

**“Our major goal is to grow the economy and provide high value jobs by utilising our excellent rail links (one hour from London), the fact that the A1 runs right through our district, and we have easy road access to the major Midlands cities.”**

That is why we were delighted that by March 31 this year we had successfully completed 13 of the 33 new homes we are building on land owned by the council and the balance will soon be finished and available for rent. These are the first new council homes to be built in the district for more than a decade.

Finally, it would be wrong not to acknowledge that the future is challenging. Ongoing public spending reductions are likely to continue but we are confident that our creative approach will help us to meet those challenges and we will continue to provide good services for our residents and businesses.



**Leader of the Council**  
Cllr Bob Adams



**Chief Executive**  
Beverly Agass

## Who we are and what we do

South Kesteven covers 365 square miles in beautiful South Lincolnshire and has a population of 135,000 which is forecast to grow to just under 163,000 by 2036.

The area has four major centres. The largest is Grantham where most of the growth will be located, the jewel in the crown is Stamford which the Sunday Times voted as the best place in Britain to live in 2013, Bourne is regarded as the home of British Racing Motors and Market Deeping and the surrounding areas are home to fine 17th Century stone houses and companies that do business across the world.

Our headquarters are in Grantham but we also have area offices in Bourne, Stamford and Market Deeping where customers can contact us.

But increasingly our customers want to do business with us online and that is why – after consultation with local people

– we have re-designed our website to make it quicker and easier to use than ever before.

The new design at [www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk) means residents and businesses are never more than a few clicks from being in touch with us on a site which we believe meets our customer expectations and is also equality act compliant.

We are a business with a £100 million turnover providing a wide range of services to residents, businesses and visitors that vary from offering business support, providing housing solutions, emptying bins, dealing with planning applications, managing award winning parks and organising events.

As well as the Gravity Fields event described on the previous page we also organise the biennial Stamford Georgian Festival first held in 2013 which attracted

22,000 visitors on one day alone.

Enterprise Week is another of our events when a full programme of events was targeted at organisations varying from the very large to the micro small.

Business focused events included an introduction to blogging, Using LinkedIn effectively, Achieving your financial goals and the Psychology and Emotions of Selling. More than 400 people took part.

Our 56 councillors represent 30 wards. The controlling Conservative group has 45 seats, the Independents have 6, Labour has 3, there is 1 Unaligned Independent and 1 UKIP member.

We operate a Cabinet which is made up of the Leader, Deputy Leader and four portfolio holders.

Find out much more at

[www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk)

## This is our vision

South Kesteven has been identified as a growth area and that means we are proactively planning for new homes, employment and infrastructure.

Growing our economy is our major priority and we have already created new business opportunities which will eventually create 350 jobs and Marks & Spencer have clearly seen the potential of Grantham as they have just returned to the town that they left more than four years ago.

Home and garden store The Range has planning permission for a site in Grantham, restaurant Prezzo wants to open in the same town as has Cafe au Chocolat which is due to open in Neal's Yard in Stamford.

Retail occupancy in our towns is 94.9% - well above both the national and regional figures. We have also responded to 166 new business enquiries, more than 14,000 visitors have been to our Economic Development/Grantham Growth website and more than £264,000 of Capacity Funding has been received from Central Government to help resource our growth plans.

We have planning permission for a six screen cinema in Grantham which also includes new office and restaurant space when the development commences it will provide a real boost to the evening economy.

### Our goal is...

**“To create vibrant communities where people want to live, work and invest”**

We recognise that there are many pieces in the jigsaw that complete the picture that will attract investors.

One of the pieces is providing quality cultural activities for people when they are not at work. That is why we have continued to develop our arts centres in Grantham and Stamford which welcomed 927,550 visitors last year.

We also hosted internationally famous former Queen legend Brian May who played to a packed house at the Meres Live in Grantham.

Housing is another key area for us. As well as building our own homes we are helping others to provide affordable housing across the district.

We have also launched a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which means that first time buyers can get onto the property market with a deposit of only 5% because the council guarantees up to a further 20%.

So far more than 60 local buyers have been helped and the council has recently raised the limit of the qualifying purchase price to £210,000 and the scheme is available throughout the district.

Keeping the district clean, green and healthy is another piece of the jigsaw. We know people value the quality of their environment and that is why we have been working hard to increase the attractiveness of our district even further.

We've reduced anti-social behaviour and raised awareness of the issues of litter with our Love SK hate litter campaign on lamppost banners and our own refuse freighters. Fly-tipping is still an issue but we are continuing to remove the debris within three working days and we are using CCTV at dumping hotspots to catch the culprits.

We continue to recycle at a high level (47%) and we have increased the number of green waste customers to 28,300 and a resounding 85.5% of our customers are satisfied with our parks.

# Our year in pictures

APRIL



A rail underpass in Grantham between Station Road and Huntingtower Road was given a spring clean thanks to a multi-agency community action day. Network Rail, SKDC's waste and recycling team, East Coast Trains, British Transport Police and Huntingtower Community Primary Academy all sent teams who contributed to the effort.

MAY



Wartime aviation nostalgia took over St Peter's Hill Green with a special D-Day Commemoration event organised by SKDC and attended by America's Air Attache Colonel Travis Willis. It included the launch of the Heritage of Flight publication tracing the role of local airfields backed by a new pocket guide trail map to help visitors explore the district's aviation heritage.

JUNE



Cashless car parking was introduced in Stamford and Grantham. Motorists are able to pay parking charges by phone and so avoid the need to overpay because they have no change.

## JULY



Hundreds of children from across South Kesteven competed in the Summer Street Games at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.

## AUGUST



SKDC unveiled its first new council homes in the district in over 10 years.

## OCTOBER



New 'Shop Local' maps produced by SKDC were launched in Stamford and The Deepings after extensive consultation in the town.

## SEPTEMBER



Thousands of people turned out for our second Gravity Fields Festival celebrating the life and work of Sir Isaac Newton.

## NOVEMBER



Planning permission was granted for a new 6 screen multiplex cinema.

## DECEMBER



Food producers lined up alongside a Father Christmas on stilts, jazz and guitar music and a Christmas 'Cake Off' to celebrate SKDC's Small Business Saturday.

## FEBRUARY



College students partnered with SKDC to promote National Voter Registration Day which encouraged people to make sure they were registered to vote.

## JANUARY



A new campaign launched to encourage residents to love our towns and villages and hate litter and flytipping.

## MARCH



Councillors agreed to budget a further £8 million to deliver a range of properties in rural and town locations. Around 80 new council homes will be built across South Kesteven over the next three years as the authority continues to invest in affordable housing.

# Grow the economy

**Our district acts as a gateway into greater Lincolnshire as it benefits from superb accessibility due to its A1 and East Coast Mainline connections. Within Lincolnshire, it has the highest levels of average resident earnings, the highest employment participation rates and enterprise density, the lowest unemployment rates, is second lowest on the index of multiple deprivation and has strong NVQ2 skills and excellent schools.**

South Kesteven hosts a strong manufacturing footprint and the highest proportion of construction activity in the Local Enterprise Partnership area.

The district also supports a high quality of life and was ranked 14th in the 2015

Halifax Best Place to Live in Britain list which uses a scoring matrix which takes into account factors including health and life expectancy, crime rate, weather, employment prospects, broadband access and personal wellbeing.

## **Our ambitions for growth focus on:**

- More and “better” jobs – to address the relatively low job density, the low workplace productivity, occupational profile, and the relative poor density of employment in high growth, high value sectors;
- Strengthening skills progression by building on our excellent schools to ease progression to NVQ3/4 and higher level skills alongside a strategy that takes advantage of our excellent quality of life to encourage enterprise and employment alternatives to commuting;
- Encouraging innovation and

enterprise – to build upon business strengths (engineering, agri-food, specialist manufacturing, financial/business services, visitor economy to improve competitiveness, productivity and our reputation for attracting and retaining business investment;

- Place-making: making our places, particularly our four towns as employment centres (and especially the town centres within these), work well to support businesses in order to retain and attract investment and jobs – a strong focus to be on our ambition to establish Grantham as a leading sub-regional centre.

**The key strands to our economic prosperity are therefore focused on innovation and enterprise.**





Our role is to create the conditions for growth and investment in the local economy. A healthy economy creates jobs, which in turn creates demand for houses, goods and local services, as well as supporting our infrastructure, such as health and education provision. Improving the quality and quantity of jobs creates more spending power for our retail and leisure businesses. It helps businesses to grow and prosper, and enables our residents to meet their own aspirations. Having more people in work and in higher skilled jobs also impacts on reducing the demand on benefits, lowering anti-social behaviour and improving educational attainment.

**Support and facilitate the growth of business**

Close contact has been the key to working with the business community all across the district in order to create the ideal setting for these organisations to develop and prosper.

We have established an Economic Forum to create a strong network of business groups within the district to help to shape projects, deliver key services and improve our understanding of the local economy.

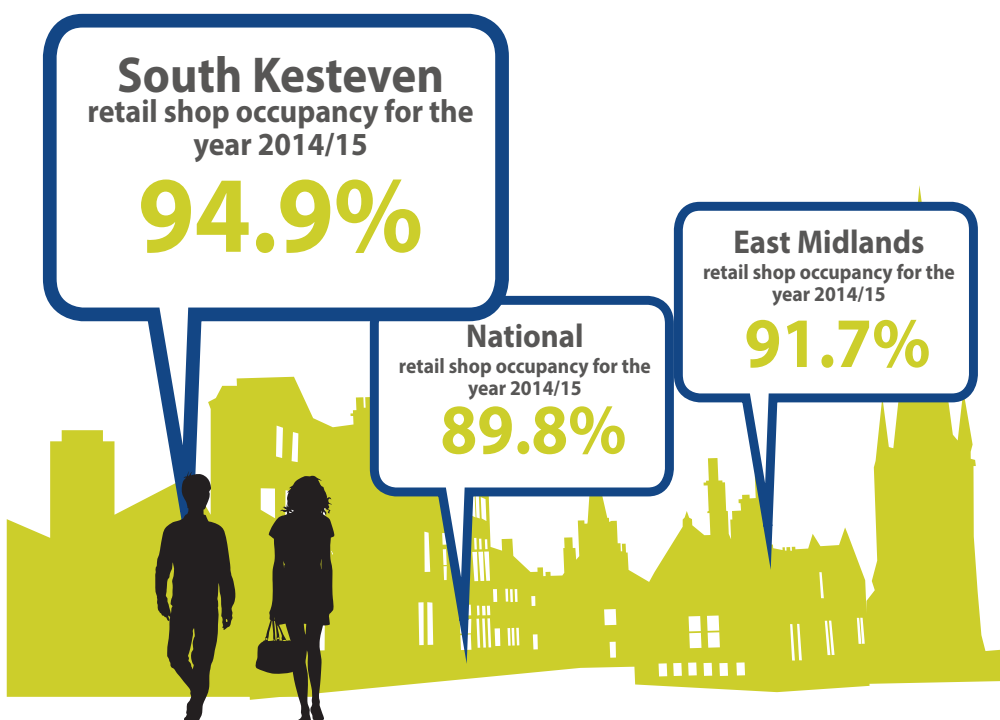
Representatives attend on a regular basis from business organisations across the district and the Department for Work and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus).

We offer Business Support to overcome barriers and issues around growth and we have actively engaged with the 30 top businesses in the district. We have developed a key account management process to enable confidential discussions that help to retain and attract investment.

Improving our town centres is also important to us and we have worked hard to create pleasant environments which show off what the shops and businesses have to offer and which can act as a great advertisement to potential investors.

In Grantham a total of five shop front improvement schemes were completed during the year and the sixth started in June. A further six schemes have 'in principle' approval including the 1930s art deco building occupied by

Addaction which will shortly be returned to its former glory. Take up remains strong and negotiations are taking place with Historic England to release further funding for 2016/17.



**This highlights that retail shop occupancy in the towns of South Kesteven perform collectively better than the Regional and National statistics. Previous trends show a picture of minor fluctuations. However, shop occupancy across South Kesteven has remained consistently between 92-96% occupied throughout the past three years.**

### Skills development

We have built on the reputation of our excellent schools to ease progression of residents into NVQ3/4 and higher level skills, ensuring a skilled workforce to meet current and future business needs. We also support those most vulnerable in the labour market.

### Apprenticeship programme

The Skills and Employment Group (Making the Lincs) was formally established as a partnership between Jobcentre Plus, Grantham College, Lincolnshire CVS, and the Skills Funding Agency to explore the opportunities of working collectively to secure new job and training opportunities for local people. Working together the group has already advised a company on their initial recruitment plans and we will be working with the contractor on the Southern Relief Road to explore potential for apprenticeships and work placements.

### Management of inward investment enquiries

We encourage new investment and jobs within the District. In 2014/15, 15 significant investment enquiries which were successfully supported led to 96 new jobs and £4.4million of new investment.

### SKDC 4 Business

This is a business support scheme across the District for micro to small businesses. Through partnership working, new and growing businesses have the opportunity to discuss their ideas with qualified business advisors free of charge. In addition to this, a retail support programme has progressed in order to help retailers develop their ideas. The scheme also encourages new enterprises and an entrepreneurial culture within the District and there is specific support for growing businesses. Specific achievements are that more than 25% of the initial business ideas have been taken forward and more

than 300 business people have made use of the scheme.

### Enterprise Week

The event took place in March (9-13) when a full programme of events for all business organisations from micro to large was hosted. The aim was to promote business networking and encourage the take-up of business support initiatives. Throughout the week, the programme looked to equip businesses with new skills, networking opportunities, improvement to business process and motivational talks. The sessions took place across the four market towns and more than 400 participants took part. The event was delivered in partnership with the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce, Total Networking, Grantham Business Club, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Department for Work and Pensions.

**SKDC 4 BUSINESS**

Would your business benefit from a discussion with a FREE business advisor?

Paul will be at Eventus on Monday 17th August and available for meetings with businesses between 9am – 2:30pm

Paul Parkinson: a friendly and business oriented professional, advises on the specific nature of your business, looking at new start-ups, possible expansion projects and sustainable business planning so that individuals and organisations alike can take the next step.

Topics for discussion include:

- Business Development
- Increasing Profitability
- Online Potential
- Business Planning
- Funding

To book your place today contact [yvonne.kent@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:yvonne.kent@lincolnshire.gov.uk) if you would like a meeting at an alternate date, please call 0300 3000 101

**Enterprise WEEK**  
9-13 March 2015

**Monday 9 March**

**Come blog with me**  
12noon – 2pm. Eventus, Market Deeping £6 includes a light lunch

**Understanding the cyber threat for business**  
12noon – 2pm. The Meeting Venue, A1, Grantham £6 includes a light lunch

**To Tweet or not to Tweet**  
6pm – 8pm. The George Business Centre, Stamford £3.50

**Growing your business online**  
6pm – 8pm. Alive Church, Grantham £3.50

**Business for Business Networking Fair**  
6pm Bolton Woods Hotel, near Grantham

**Tuesday 10 March**

**Will your idea work online?**  
12noon – 2pm. Guildhall Arts Centre, Grantham £6 includes a light lunch

**Know your Intellectual Property rights**  
3pm – 5pm. Stamford Arts Centre. £3.50

**A World Class service – expert customer service advice**  
5.30pm – 8pm. Alive Church, Grantham. £3.50

**The psychology and emotions of selling**  
6pm – 8pm. Stamford Arts Centre £3.50

**Get yourself LinkedIn**  
6pm – 8pm. The Meeting Venue, A1, Grantham £3.50

**Wednesday 11 March**

**Business problem solving event**  
9.30am – 4.30pm. Stoke Rochford Hall £40 includes a light lunch

**Top telephone techniques**  
12noon – 2pm. Stamford Arts Centre £6 includes a light lunch

**Understanding the cyber threat for business**  
12noon – 2pm. Eventus, Market Deeping £6 includes a light lunch

**ABC – Apple Business Challenge**  
From 5pm. Stoke Rochford Hall. See website for entry details.

**Total Networking Summit**  
6.30pm – 10pm. Stoke Rochford Hall £15 includes a buffet

**Thursday 12 March**

**Bourne Business Chamber Trade Fair**  
9am – 4pm. Bourne Com Exchange. Free

**Employment Skills Day**  
10am – 1pm. Alive Church, Grantham. Free

**Apprenticeship Skills Show**  
2pm – 5pm. Alive Church, Grantham

**To Tweet or not to Tweet**  
6pm – 8pm. Alive Church, Grantham. £3.50

**Social Retailing**  
6pm – 8pm. The George Business Centre, Stamford £3.50

**Friday 13 March**

**Employment Skills Day**  
10am – 1pm. Stamford Arts Centre Free

**Can you achieve your financial business dreams?**  
12noon – 2pm. Stamford Arts Centre £3 includes a light lunch

Organised by South Kesteven District Council [www.skdcenterpriseweek.co.uk](http://www.skdcenterpriseweek.co.uk)

**HERITAGE OF FLIGHT**  
in South Lincolnshire

CELEBRATING OUR AVIATION HISTORY

# Performance highlights



**166**  
new business enquiries received

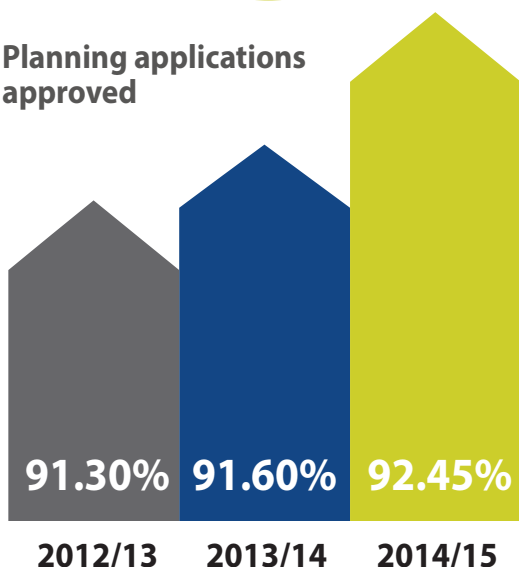


**81%**  
of major planning applications were determined



**98.4%**  
of Business Rates collected

## Planning applications approved



## Footfall within key shopping areas

Town	2014/15	2013/14	Direction of Travel
Grantham	97,051	97,582	0.5% ←→
Stamford	70,199	66,276	6% ↑
Bourne	27,753	26,205	6% ↑
The Deepings	9,500	8,943	7% ↑
Total	204,503	199,006	3% ↑

Footfall across the market towns has generally remained healthy overall there has been 3% increase year on year. This is a snapshot taken during April, August and December in each main town.

## Promoting the District and supporting the visitor economy

We hosted a D-Day event celebrating aviation heritage and the launch of a new aviation guide and trail.

We also ran a Love Your Market Day and hosted a food festival to support Small Business Saturday. As part of Gravity Fields we worked with local business to promote a food safari, competition trail and a targeted local food promotion called Science of the Lincolnshire Ploughman's.

Our overall aim is to increase day visitors but more importantly over a longer time to get visitors to stay longer, recognising the role of the District as an attraction in its own right but also as a gateway into Lincolnshire, Rutland and neighbouring areas.

## Looking forward to the year ahead

- Determination of the Southern Quadrant planning application
- Introduction of the new planning software system to speed up decision making
- Launch new Economic Development Strategy
- Progress consultation on the new Local Plan for South Kesteven
- Start to implement our new Strategic Housing action plan
- Support for the start on site of the Grantham Southern Relief Road
- Delivery of Phase 1 of the new Cultural Quarter for Grantham town Centre

# Support good housing for all

**The housing vision sits within the broader vision of the council which aims, by 2021, 'to create vibrant communities where people want to live, work and invest.'**

The council recognises that strategic use of its housing stock can play an important role in helping to achieve the council's broader objectives, consistent also with the four strategic housing priorities set out in the Housing Strategy 2013 – 2018:

- High quality new affordable homes available to buy or rent
- Improved housing standards across the district and for all tenures
- Access to housing and wellbeing services
- Promotion of sustainable neighbourhoods and communities

**The key priorities for investment over the next five years can be summarised as:**

- Investment in sustaining and improving the existing council housing stock;
- Developing new housing - flexible by design to better meet lifetime challenges, and;
- Delivering value for money across all aspects of housing services.



## **High quality new affordable homes available to buy or rent**

South Kesteven is ranked in the top 40% nationally in terms of the affordability of home ownership and for levels of home ownership but for many households on lower incomes home ownership still remains unrealistic.

We aim to increase the supply of new affordable housing designed to meet lifetime challenges, help tenants reduce their cost of living and reduce the environmental impact of house building.

During the year the updated Housing Revenue Account Business Plan was published which outlines our five year plan. It demonstrates how investments in housing assets will be utilised to deliver strategic housing priorities and how that significant financial input will also support the wider economic and environmental priorities.

As a Housing Delivery Enabler our emerging action plan for 2015/16 onwards will focus on

- community leadership, including the new Local Plan for South Kesteven
- creating housing opportunities
- business leadership
- management of housing supply, and
- shaping a stronger housing finance market

Our role will increasingly become to facilitate, enable and encourage as well as be a provider. We are developing our approach with a range of tools to facilitate and enable others to provide affordable housing with a mix of tenure to meet our aspirations to deliver affordable housing across the district. The Council's land and property assets have been assessed to identify sites for further allocated investment in new housing over the next two years.

There is a positive impact on the local economy from spending on

new housing. Every £1 spent on construction output generates a total of £2.84 in total economic activity creating opportunities for employment and for the local supply chain. The capital cost of the committed works is approximately £3m and the total economic activity likely to be generated is £8.5m.

## **Improved housing standards across the district for everyone**

The age profile of South Kesteven's housing stock is more modern than the national average, with 63% built after 1944, but 60% of the private rented sector is pre-1914.

We need to assess the suitability of future options for poorly performing stock and non-standard properties, and ensure our own homes are maintained in good condition.

More of the homes in our district have reached affordable warmth standards and the energy efficiency of our stock continues to improve. We have achieved this through investment in external wall insulation and replacement boilers which has also reduced costs for our customers and ensured that affordable warmth is available to those who live in the council's housing.

It has also contributed to reducing carbon emissions by approximately 36 tonnes of CO2 per dwelling limiting the environmental impact of the housing stock. This was carried out in 1,187 of our local authority houses.

Investment in mobile technology has improved the productivity of the responsive repairs team and helped to drive performance in striving towards a "right first time" approach to service delivery. Further investment in the next financial year will see more benefits to the void and repairs turnaround times making more of the stock available at



any point to meet housing need and achieve consistently high levels of customer satisfaction.

#### **Healthy homes**

Warmer and more energy efficient homes reduce the impact of fuel poverty and increase the quality of private rented stock.

We have also been able to remove serious home hazards from 106 private rented home and 1,000 local households have registered for Lincolnshire Energy Switch which has collectively saved £70,000 and helped to reduce fuel poverty.

We have also taken court action which has reduced overcrowding and forced improvements to rented properties. Some 128 empty homes were brought back into use and 12 of these were awarded an Empty Homes Grant.

13

New council houses completed. First in over 10 years

92

New affordable homes made available

### Supporting the elderly and disabled

South Kesteven, in common with most districts, has an ageing population and increasing numbers of people with disabilities and long term illnesses. These needs are reflected in the further challenge of supporting the delivery of the county council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy; promoting health improvement and independent living. The housing strategy has an important role to play in creating the conditions and delivering actions which improve the quality of housing and ensuring the effective delivery of support services.

We ensure housing options and advice are available to assist households in finding housing. Our aim is to make sure that social housing, provided by both SKDC

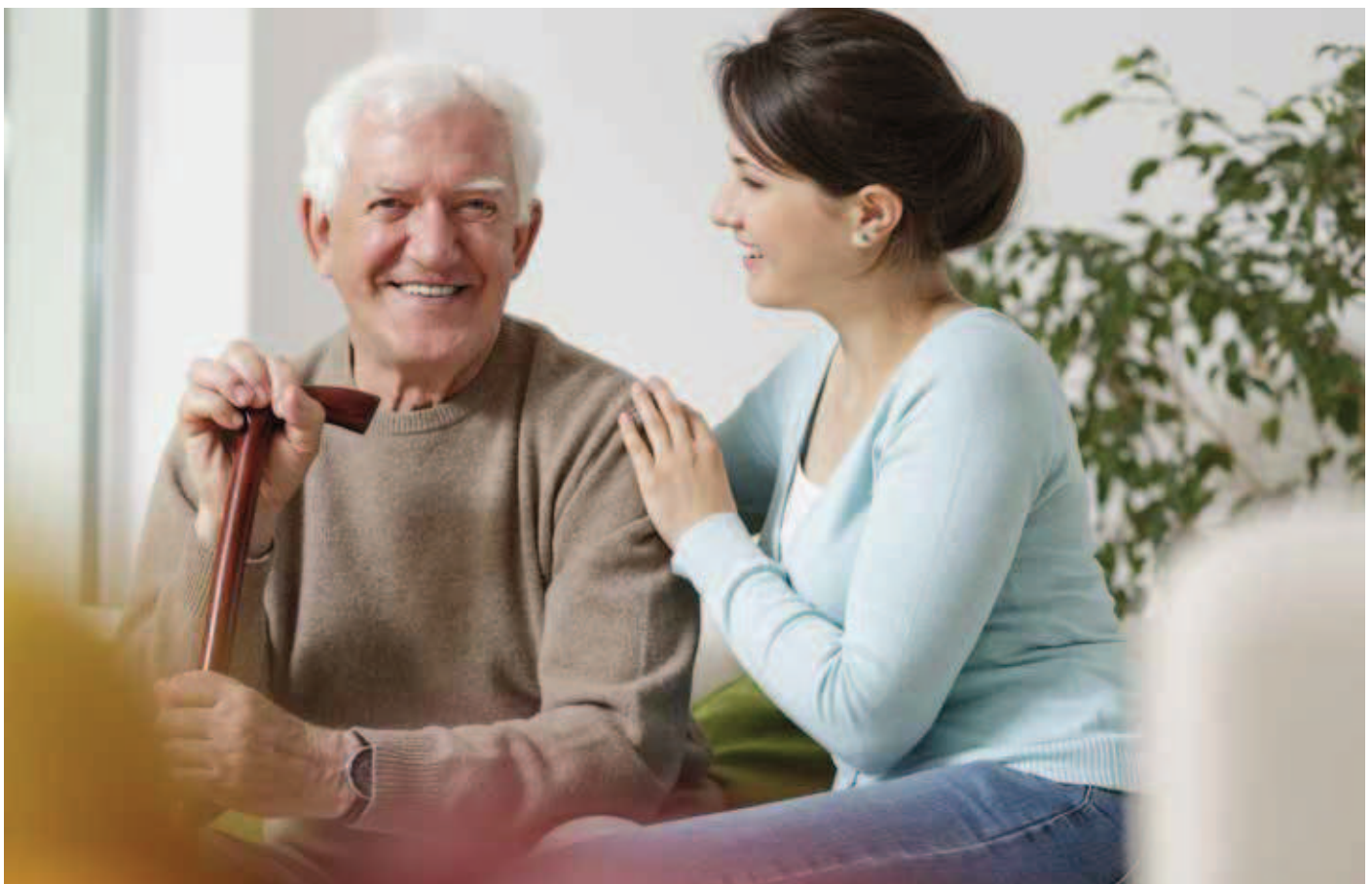
and Registered Providers in the district, is fairly and effectively used to meet housing needs. We also strive to make services available to help vulnerable households remain safely in their homes and live life to the full. As a result 307 households were prevented from becoming homeless.

We have reviewed the way homelessness is administered. This has substantially reduced the cost associated with this form of temporary accommodation and more importantly minimised the amount of time homeless households spend in Bed and Breakfast accommodation which is acknowledged as the least desirable form of temporary accommodation. This has been achieved by a focus on earlier intervention and advice and appropriate use of partner accommodation available to us.

We have maximised the initial and ongoing benefit derived from investment in adaptations in order to support independent living and the wellbeing of communities. In the year SKDC invested £470k in adaptations to our stock ensuring tenants are able to live as independently as possible.

### Promotion of sustainable neighbourhoods and communities

- We aim to ensure the District has well managed neighbourhoods in which citizens enjoy the best possible quality of life in homes which are affordable in use and meet their housing needs and where crime and anti-social behaviour do not adversely impact on the quality of life.



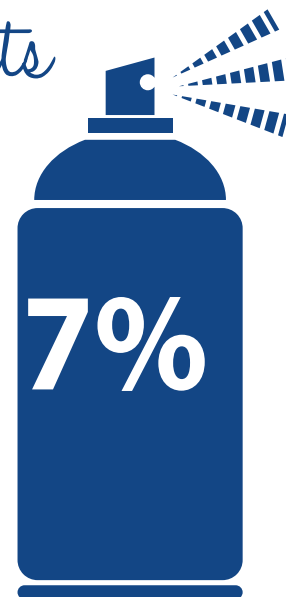
# 646

New homes built  
across the district

## Review of empty homes in the district

- There are a number of long term empty properties in the district that we are encouraging the owners to bring back into use by offering grants
- We are reducing the number of long term empty properties to ease the housing shortage in the district
- **92** affordable homes delivered increasing the availability of good quality local housing
- **646** new homes built across the district, **37%** increase on 2013/14
- **13** new council houses built, first in over 10 years
- Since 2013/14 incidents of anti social behaviour reported have reduced by **7%** placing us as the second lowest in Lincolnshire
- **20%** of “housing needs” enquiries resulted in a homelessness claim
- **100%** of LA properties meet Decent Homes Standards
- **13** new mortgages awarded through the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme during the year bringing the total since the project was launched to 62 new mortgage completions

## Performance highlights



**Reduction in anti social  
behaviour reports  
placing us as the second  
lowest in Lincolnshire**



Typical empty homes

## Looking forward to the year ahead

- Further 20 new council homes due to complete
- Developing the allocations policy framed to most effectively meet the housing needs of the district
- Deliver and enable affordable homes across the district
- Increasing the availability and choice of affordable housing, flexible by design to better meet lifetime challenges
- Deliver an improved repairs and maintenance service for our housing tenants through enhancement of mobile technology
- Delivering a range of tenancy services available on line 24/7
- Reinvigorate tenant engagement. We are looking to develop a menu of involvement for our tenants. This could range from being involved in preparing articles for our tenants' magazine to areas of policy development and neighbourhood issues
- Cultural change with our housing tenants. Reinforcing and balancing tenant rights and responsibilities to generate a principal of “something of something.” This has started to some extent with rechargeable repairs but more work is required to ensure the “contract” with our tenants going forward is equitable in terms of making best use of our housing assets
- Integrated approach to neighbourhood issues

# Clean Green and Healthy

**Creating the environment to keep SK clean, green and healthy is a priority for us and we recognise the importance and value this has to our residents – refuse collection, street cleansing, recycling and green spaces.**

**So we will continue to invest in this, making sure they are both high quality and low cost. We also know that there is a strong link between people's health and their environment and that there are a wide range of factors that impact on health outcomes.**

## **Active healthy lifestyles**

We recognise that we can contribute to improving the health of our residents by encouraging active healthy lifestyles. This has been done by providing 24 Fit Kids and 25 Cookery Skills courses which have helped to encourage physical activity and contributed to reducing the number of obese children.

## **Clean and safe neighbourhoods**

If we can increase the attractiveness of South Kesteven as a place, we can not only improve the quality of life for our residents but can also encourage external investment. We have achieved this by:

- Our Love SK hate litter campaign has raised awareness of issues with residents and visitors
- Invested in extended hours of street cleansing team and machinery which

led to improved street cleanliness, with 97.7% of streets achieving grade A

- While reports of fly tipping increased from 807 to 1067 per year, we continued to remove them on average within three working days
- Use of CCTV in hotspot areas has led to a reduction in environmental crime
- 4 ASBO orders were obtained, leading to a safer environment for residents and retailers

## **Protecting the environment for the future**

Key to this was maintaining high levels of recycling in order to reduce waste going to landfill. Alongside this was the ability to reduce our carbon footprint which would bring energy savings across our buildings. Creating appealing and safe parks has the benefit of ongoing physical activity and play.

- Registered a combined recycling rate of 47% and low levels of residual waste (466kg per household) in comparison to other authorities.





# Performance highlights

- Increased by 3% the number of green waste customers to 28,300 per year
- Reduced CO2 emissions in council owned buildings by 23% over the last seven years
- Re-secured Green Flag status and obtained Heritage Lottery funding and WREN funding for Wyndham Park
- Opened a new children's splash play area
- Recorded that 85.5% of customers were satisfied with our parks



**47%**

of household waste was recycled



**97.7%**

of our streets achieved a Grade A cleanliness rating

**28,300**

customers participate in our Green Waste Service

- Obesity in children (year 6) reduced to **16%** previously 19.2% this now significantly better than the English average **19.1%**
- CO2 emissions in council owned buildings have reduced by **23%** over the last seven years

## Looking forward to the year ahead

- Action plan for Grantham Air Quality Management Area
- Contributing to the Lincolnshire Waste Management Strategy
- Integrated approach to neighbourhood issues
- Preparing to advise and enforce changes to minimumise energy standards in private rented properties
- Review of licensing policy
- Enhancing our health and safety culture
- Improved customer access through online services
- Develop future Heritage lottery bids to enable further enhancements to be carried out at Wyndham park



# Promote Leisure, arts and culture

**The district has a relatively wide cultural and leisure offer, in line with other districts of a similar size and provides a good quality of life for our residents.**

It is recognised, however, that the quality and variety of the offer is not the same across the district and current provision may not address the needs of all sectors of the community.

We have a strong ambition to deliver planned, sustainable growth in the district and increase the level of jobs, housing and opportunities for residents. This supports our Grow the Economy priority to improve cultural and leisure provision in the area which in turn will assist in encouraging new businesses to move to the district which would have a positive impact on providing new jobs, create demand for housing, goods and services.

Our hugely successful Gravity Fields festival generated more than £500,000 for the local economy and 30.6% of business reported a positive impact on the business and a similar number recognised that their business had been exposed to new customers.

The Festival also brought in new audiences to cultural events with 9.5% of the audience being first time visitors to a major cultural attraction and a further 14.4% had not been to a cultural event for more than a year.



Colossus Awakes, Gravity Fields Festival



Chantry Dance Company, Gravity Fields Festival



The Wonderful World of Mr E, Gravity Fields Festival



Giants of Science, Gravity Fields Festival



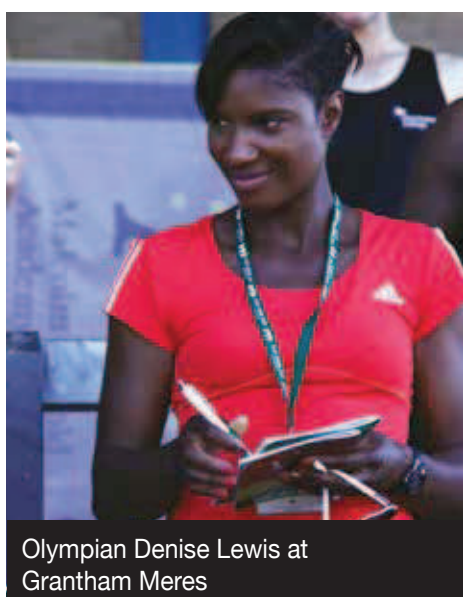
Kirsty MacKay at the Meres



St Mary's School process into the stadium



Lincolnshire sport Mascot Max



Olympian Denise Lewis at Grantham Meres

Our leisure centres at Bourne, Market Deeping, Grantham and Stamford offer a wide range of activities and attracted a total of 823,671 visitors during the year.

There are established swimming clubs at Grantham and Market Deeping which host Lincolnshire swimming galas and there were 3,062 swimmers undertaking lessons across the four sites.

Grantham Meres hosted large school games including inspire+, the David Ross Education Trust and the Sainsbury's School Games which were attended by Olympic and Paralympic athletes and former golden girl Denise Lewis.

And a massive 96.9% of visitors to the leisure centres were satisfied with the facilities and 5,224 people took part in our summer activities against a target of 4,300.

Our arts centres in Grantham and Stamford continued to offer a balanced culture and arts programme and we welcomed 927,550 visitors.

## Performance highlights



**96.9%**

of visitors are satisfied with our leisure centres



**8,693**

more visitors attended shows/events at our arts centres increased by

**Attendance at our summer activities increased by 19%**

## Looking forward to the year ahead

- Stamford Georgian Festival to take place during September 2015
- Refurbishment of the gym facilities at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre
- Secure grant funding from the Premier League and FA Facilities to redevelop our astro turf pitches to 3G facilities at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.

# Well Run Council

## To help us to deliver our four main priorities we recognise that we need to be a Well Run Council.

We understand we have to:

- Maintain a focus on ensuring the council continues to deliver real value for money
- That our resources are correctly targeted
- Maintain a strong governance and clear decision making culture
- Ensure all decisions are based on clear and accurate information
- Strongly focus on delivering efficiencies and doing things for less
- Ensuring our services are run very effectively and are accessed in ways that are convenient to the customer

## We have centralised key budget areas to ensure economies of scale and to make the most of our purchasing power.

A major project to relaunch our website to make it modern and more transactional has been completed and includes a customer portal which enables residents to access information specific to them and do business with us when and how if they wish. This improves the customer experience and allows people to transact with us at a time convenient to them.

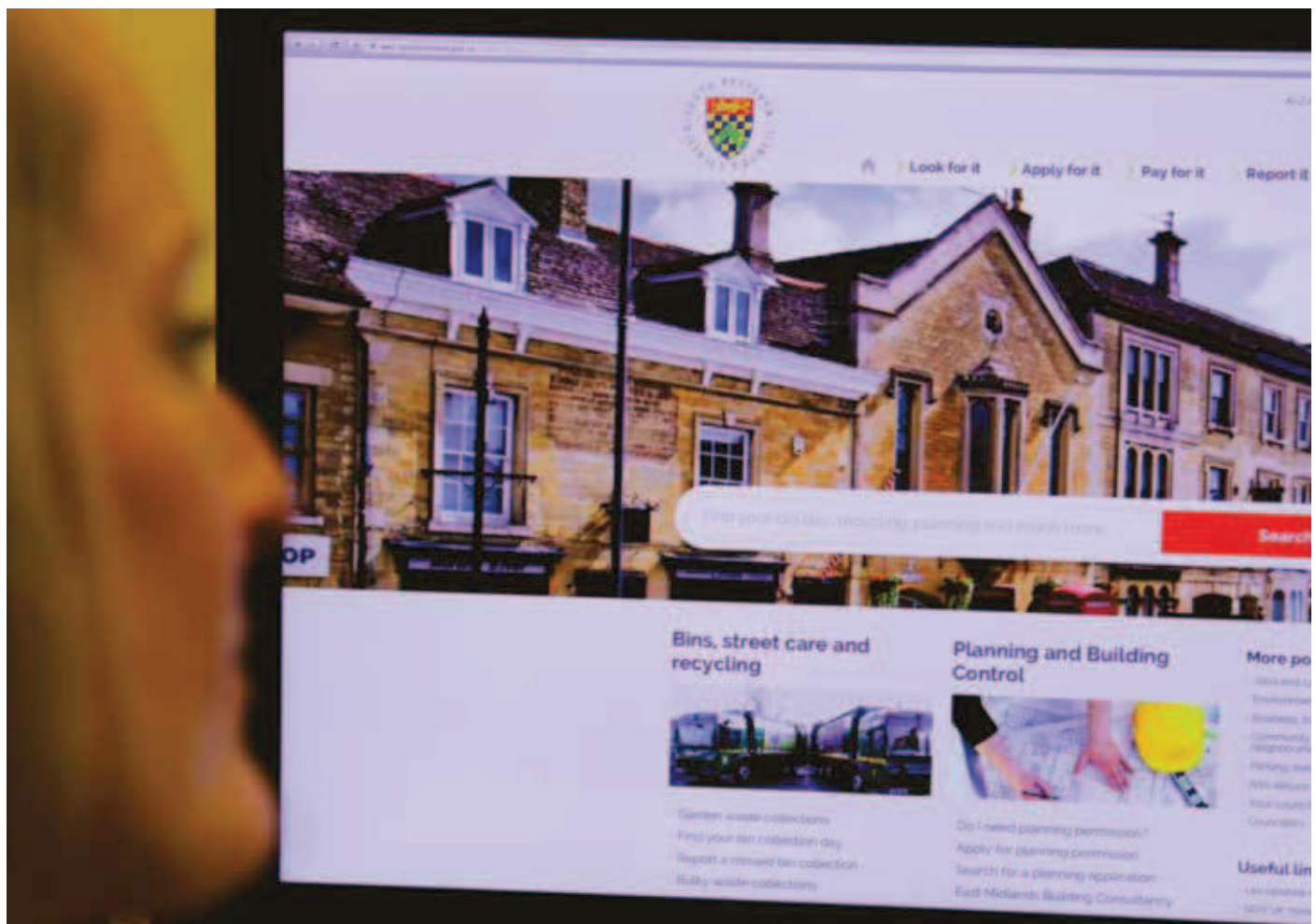
We have also replaced the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Using the very latest technology will make us more efficient and therefore reduce costs.

Staff are able to access information

quickly in a cost effective way and a single customer view allows us to use a one-council approach.

Feedback from customers tells us we have improved the customer experience. The Green Waste service was the first to go live on the new CRM and more than 26,000 interactions were dealt with in the first few weeks.

We also had the statutory obligation to implement the new Individual Electoral Registration on behalf of the Cabinet Office. We maximised awareness of the new Electoral Registration system through mail outs and traditional methods and also through an imaginative social media campaign which encouraged online registration.



We are looking at using our assets more effectively, for example we have made 240m<sup>2</sup> of our office space available to our colleagues at CCG.

During the year our internal management structure has also been redesigned to ensure we have in place a structure that supports the effective and ongoing delivery of the council's objectives.

We have reduced the number of senior managers and there are fewer management layers in line with recognised best practice.

Areas of responsibility have been logically grouped and reshaped to ensure clarity, accountability and flexibility.

We have also reviewed our HR policies to make sure they are up to date and reflect best practice which are aligned with the direction and culture of the organisation. We have ensured that the policies are concise and easily understood to better support managers and encourage a greater degree of self-service and self-sufficiency.

We are always evaluating alternative delivery models. This gives us the opportunity to understand how we can most effectively service our customers and get the most out of our available resources. This year we have set up a Building Control Partnership with Rushcliffe Borough Council called East Midlands Building Control (EMBC) consultancy. The partnership is award winning and has moved both councils into a positive income position for this service area.

## Performance highlights

**98.71%**  
of Council Tax  
was collected



Savings of  
**£1.38m**  
achieved during  
2014/15

**91%**  
of FOI's were responded  
to within 20 days

## Looking forward to the year ahead

- Launch of our new 'website' to make it easier for people to transact with the council 24/7
- The foundations to support mobile technology have now been put in place. This will be introduced during 2015/16
- A new intranet solution is being designed to support teams working in different ways, often in the community or from remote sites. The solutions will reduce the need for officers to return to the council offices, reducing travel time and costs along with reducing the council's carbon footprint
- Continue to make better use of the data we hold to further support factual decision making

## What did we spend the money on?

The summary of the accounts below gives a brief overview of our spending and income it shows our financial position for the last financial year. More detailed information on our full statement of accounts can be found on our website.

### WHAT DID WE SPEND THE MONEY ON?

The table below provides a summary of our income and expenditure for the 2014/2015 year against the different services the council provides.

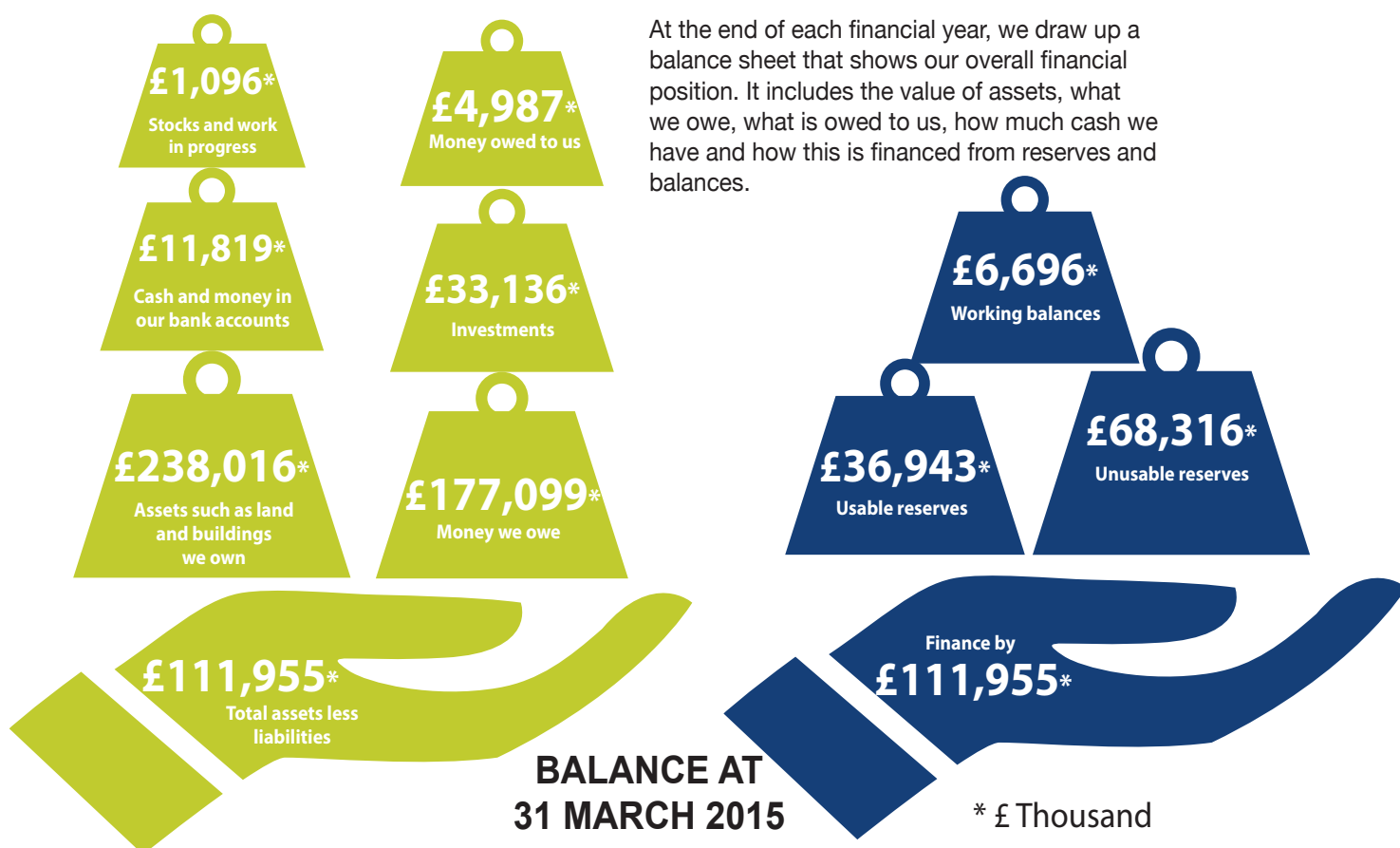
What we spend the money on:	2014/2015 Net £ thousands
Central services to the public (Includes: Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates, Council Tax Benefit, Elections and Land Charges)	1,066
Cultural and related services	3,891
Environmental services	5,013
Planning services	1,322
Highways, roads and transport services	(52)
Housing services	(8,752)
Corporate and democratic core	2,208
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>4,696</b>
Other net operating costs	7,395
<b>Net operating spend</b>	<b>12,091</b>

Money into our account from government grants and local tax	2014/2015 Net £ thousands
General government grants	(7,366)
Council tax income	(7,629)
Non-domestic rate income	(2,454)
<b>Net surplus for 2014/2015</b>	<b>(5,358)</b>

On 31 March 2015, the general fund working balance was £1.9million.

## What are we worth?

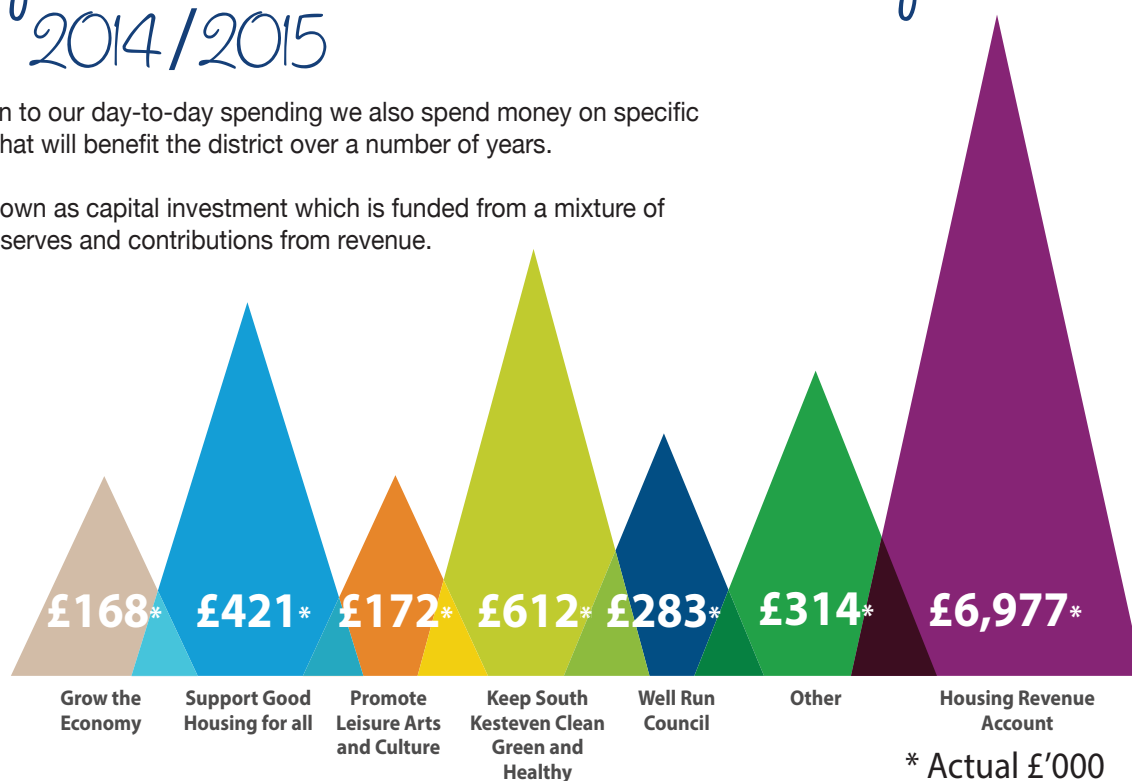
At the end of each financial year, we draw up a balance sheet that shows our overall financial position. It includes the value of assets, what we owe, what is owed to us, how much cash we have and how this is financed from reserves and balances.



## Capital investment - what did we spend? 2014/2015

In addition to our day-to-day spending we also spend money on specific projects that will benefit the district over a number of years.

This is known as capital investment which is funded from a mixture of grants, reserves and contributions from revenue.





*your council working for you*

**South Kesteven District Council**

STAMFORD • GRANTHAM • BOURNE • THE DEEPINGS