

County Council elections – 1 May 2025

Candidates and Agents Briefing



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome – Karen Bradford
 - Deputy Returning Officer for County Council Elections
 - Local Returning Officer for Combined County Authority Mayoral Elections
 - Returning Officer for Town Council By-Election
- Introductions:
 - Graham Watts, Assistant Deputy Returning Officer/Deputy Local Returning Officer
 - Julie Edwards, Electoral Services Manager
 - Nigel West, Lincolnshire County Council Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer
 - Mike Billam, Lincolnshire Police Single Point of Contact



Contents of Presentation

- Elections taking place in South Kesteven
- Key dates of the election timetable
- Qualifications and disqualifications
- Nominations and Agents
- Access to electoral register and absent voters lists
- Registration and Absent Vote applications
- Postal votes
- Voter ID
- Campaigning and polling day
- Lincolnshire Police Economic Crime Unit Single Point of Contact
- Verification and Counting of votes
- Candidate spending
- Introduction to Lincolnshire County Council
- Contacts/useful information



Information and Guidance

- Information and guidance included in candidate nomination packs
- Electoral Commission guidance for candidates and agents - available on their website
<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england>
- Candidates and agents are strongly recommended to read all parts of guidance



Polls taking place in South Kesteven

- **County Council elections:**
 - 14 Divisions
- **Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Mayoral election**
- **Any by-elections:**
 - Grantham Town Council – St Vincent's Ward

Electoral Division boundaries can be viewed at www.election-maps.co.uk



Election Timetable

Timetabled Process	Deadlines
Publication of Notice of Election	Wednesday 19 March
Close of Nominations / Candidate withdrawals / Appointment of Election Agents	4pm Wednesday 2 April
Deadline for registering to vote on 1 May	Friday 11 April
Deadline for new postal vote applications/changes to existing postal or proxy vote applications	5pm – Monday 14 April
Deadline for applications for new proxy votes	5pm – Wednesday 23 April
Deadline for applications for a Voter Authority Certificate or Anonymous Elector's Document	5pm - Wednesday 23 April
Polling day – 7am – 10pm	Thursday 1 May
Return of Election Expense Returns	Friday 6 June (for LCC election) Friday 30 May (for Town Council)



Standing for Election - Qualifications

Candidates must satisfy criteria on the day they are nominated **and** on polling day:

- ✓ Be at least 18 years of age
- ✓ Be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights.

Also at least **one** of the following:

- ✓ Registered local government elector for the local authority area
- ✓ Occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in the local authority area during the whole 12 months preceding nomination
- ✓ Principal or only place of work (including unpaid) during last 12 months in the local authority area
- ✓ Lived in the local authority area during the last 12 months



Disqualifications

A person **cannot** be a candidate if they:

- ❖ Are **employed by the local authority** or hold a paid office under the authority (including joint boards or committees). Candidates may be 'employed by the local authority' if they work at certain schools, fire services, police or health services
- ❖ Are subject of a **Bankruptcy Restrictions Order** (or interim restrictions order)
- ❖ Have been **sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more** (including suspended sentence) without the option of a fine, during the 5 years before polling day
- ❖ Are serving a disqualification due to being found guilty of a **corrupt or illegal practice** by an election court
- ❖ Hold a **politically restricted post**
- ❖ Are subject to the **notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003**

If in doubt a person is advised to take their own independent legal advice



Nomination Papers

The documents that must be submitted by all candidates by

4pm Wednesday 2 April :

- the nomination paper (form 1a)
- the home address form (form 1b)
- the consent to nomination (form 1c)

Party candidates will also need to submit by **4pm Wednesday 2 April:**

- a certificate authorising the use of a party name/registered description on the ballot paper (form 2) **must be original**
- a written request to use one of the party's emblems on the ballot paper (optional) (form 3)

In addition, appointment of elections agent – if applicable (form 4)

Please also complete the contact details form to provide telephone number and email address.

Nomination packs are available - request from the elections team:

01476 406080, email: elections@southkesteven.gov.uk



Nominations – Key Points

- **Commonly used names**

- Can use commonly used name if commonly known by a name other than your full name and wish to use it instead
- Commonly used names apply only to statement of persons nominated, notice of poll and ballot paper.
- Candidate's actual name should appear on other documents such as the imprint and candidate's spending returns

- **Description**

- Leave blank; or
- Independent; or
- Party candidates can use party name or one of the registered descriptions :
 - Must be authorised by a certificate issued by or on behalf of the Nominating Officer of the party
 - Description included on nomination paper must match exactly the description authorised by the party



Nomination - Subscribers

Subscribers:

- 2 subscribers – proposer and seconder
- Must sign and print their names
- Must be registered local government electors for the division on 1 March Electoral Register – if not registered in the division they can't subscribe
- Elections team can check register and provide electoral number details
- Only ask subscribers to sign **after** the name and description details have been completed
- Subscribers can sign only one nomination in single seat divisions
- When collecting subscriber information, you should point out what the information will be used for, that it will be shared with the Returning Officer.
- Names of proposers and seconders will be published on the Statement of Persons Nominated and Notice of Poll



Home address form

PART 1: All candidates must complete:

- Your full name and home current address – no abbreviations
- Your qualifying addresses for each of the qualifications you have declared on your consent to nomination (a, b, c and/or d)
- The full name and home address in full of the witness to your consent to nomination

PART 2: Complete only if you do not want your home address to be made public:

- the name of the ‘**relevant area**’ in which your home address is situated – (name of district, for example “South Kesteven”)
- if you live outside the UK, the name of the country in which your home address is situated.

Both Parts 1 and 2 must be submitted.

Do not complete or sign Part 2 if you want your home address to be made public.



Consent to Nomination

- Confirm which of the qualifications apply – must match the qualifications indicated on the home address form
- Strike through any qualifications that do not apply
- Date of birth and signature
- Date of consent - no earlier than one calendar month before deadline for nominations – **2 March**
- Witness' name and signature (witness name and address entered on the home address form)
- Disqualification rules must be attached to Consent to Nomination



Submitting Nomination Papers

- Take care when completing your nomination papers as mistakes may invalidate your nomination
- PLEASE complete early
- Arrange for an informal check – forms can be emailed in advance of formal submission to **nominations@southkesteven.gov.uk**
- The nomination paper, home address form and consent to nomination **must be formally delivered by hand** and cannot be submitted by post, fax, email or other electronic means
- **Make an appointment for delivery - contact the elections team on 01476 406080 or email nominations@southkesteven.gov.uk**
- No restriction as to who can deliver – responsibility of the candidate
- Annotated and example completed nomination papers available on Council website www.southkesteven.gov.uk/elections2025



Where to Submit Nomination Papers

Location :

South Kesteven District Council,
South Kesteven House, Civic
Building, St Peter's Hill, Grantham,
NG31 6PY (St Peter's Hill
entrance only)

Dates:

From Wednesday 19 March to
Wednesday 2 April (4pm deadline)

Times:

Monday to Friday – 10am to 4pm
(excluding bank holidays)

Book an appointment - Anyone arriving without an appointment will be seen but will be asked to wait until an officer becomes available.



Election Agent

- Election Agent responsible for the proper management of the election campaign, particularly its financial management
- Notification of appointment must reach the Deputy Returning Officer, South Kesteven House, St Peter's Hill by **4pm on 2 April**. Form included in nomination pack
- **Any candidate who does not appoint an election agent will become their own agent by default** – note: address will be published on Notice of Election Agents
- No provision for the appointment of an election agent at Town and Parish Council elections



Other agents

- Other agents can be appointed to attend postal vote openings, polling stations and the count on your behalf.
- **Postal vote agents:**
 - Written appointment must be made in advance of the opening session
 - Advise the elections team in advance (minimum of 24 hours notice) of attendance at any of the postal vote opening sessions
- **Polling agents Counting agents:**
 - You must give notice in writing of any people appointed as polling and counting agents by **24 April** (midnight)
 - You will be advised of the maximum number of counting agents you can appoint after the close of nominations – the number allowed will be the same for each candidate



Access to Electoral Register and Absent Voters Lists

Available to candidates - once you **officially** become a candidate:

- **Earliest date : Tuesday 25 March 2025** (latest date for publication of Notice of Election)
- Must make written request to the ERO – forms included in the nomination packs
- Can submit request form earlier for supply on 25 March 2025
- **Only use data for permitted purposes!**
 - ✓ To complete the nomination form
 - ✓ To help you campaign
 - ✓ To check that donations/loans are permissible
- Must not be used for any other purpose
- Keep the electoral register secure
- Securely destroy when no longer needed



Registration and Absent voting applications

Registration applications

- The deadline for registering to vote at the election is Friday 11 April
- Individuals can apply to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.
- National insurance number, date of birth and address required

Absent voting applications

- Electors can now apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote or www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote
- National insurance number, date of birth, signature and address required
- Deadlines for applications:
 - Postal vote applications – 5pm Monday 14 April
 - Proxy vote applications – 5pm Wednesday 23 April

Paper applications can also be submitted to Electoral Services at SKDC by post or by email (scan or photograph) to elections@southkesteven.gov.uk



Postal Votes Issue and Opening

- Postal vote issue dates:
 - Main issue : 12 April (for applications received by 1 April)
 - Final issue : 22 April
- Postal vote opening sessions:
 - From 22 April to 1 May

Further details of the sessions will be provided to candidates for contested after the close of nominations



Absent voting - campaigners

- Campaigners cannot handle postal votes for other electors who are not close relatives or someone for whom they provide regular care
- Campaigners may handle postal voting documents if that's a feature of a job they hold (e.g. a postal worker)
- Limits on the number of postal votes that can be handed in – a maximum of five plus their own for each poll

A campaigner is:

- a candidate at the election(s)
- an election agent
- employed by the candidate (for the purposes of the candidate's activities at the election)
- a member of a registered political party who is carrying out activity to promote a particular outcome at an election
- someone employed by a registered political party in connection with that party's political activities



Completed postal votes handed in to polling stations

- Postal votes can be handed into polling stations within the voting area (within the Division or Ward)
- **Anyone returning postal votes by hand must complete a postal vote return form, otherwise the postal vote will be rejected**
- Polling station staff may assist anyone wishing to hand in postal votes to complete the relevant form
- An individual may hand in a maximum of 6 electors' postal votes (their own and five others) per poll
- If the individual is a campaigner they may only handle their own postal vote and those that belong to close family members or people for whom they provide care
- Polling station staff will not be able to provide advice about whether someone is a campaigner, but they may reject postal votes if they have reasonable cause to believe an individual is a campaigner
- If postal votes are handed in not in accordance with the rules, they are required to be rejected



Completed postal votes handed in to council buildings

- Same restrictions as for polling stations apply
- An individual may hand in a maximum of 6 electors' postal votes (their own and five others) per poll
- Postal votes for all contested electoral areas may be returned by hand to SK House, St Peter's Hill Grantham during office hours
- Staff authorised by the Returning Officer may assist anyone wishing to hand in postal votes to complete the relevant form
- **Postal votes posted into council letter boxes or dropped off to reception or other council office desks or locations without completing the postal vote return form will be rejected and will **NOT** be counted**



Voter Identification

- Voters will need to provide a form of accepted photographic ID to vote in person at a polling station
- Out of date photographic ID can be used so long as the photograph is still a good likeness
- Includes those who are voting as a proxy for another person
- The name on the ID should be the same name as the one on the electoral register
- If a voter fails to present a form of accepted photographic ID they will not be issued with a ballot paper
- Voters without ID or with the wrong type of ID will be able to return later with the correct ID



Accepted forms of Voter ID

- Voters should be encouraged to check whether they have one of the forms of accepted photographic ID well in advance of the election
- If a voter does not have an accepted form of photographic ID, they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate either online www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-to-vote or using a paper application form.
- Electors who are registered anonymously must have an Elector's Document to vote in person
- Any applications must be received by the ERO by 5pm on the 6th working day before the poll – 5pm on Wednesday 23 April



Accepted forms of Voter ID(1)

International travel

- ✓ Passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory
- ✓ Passport issued by an EEA state, or a Commonwealth country (including an Irish Passport Card)
- ✓ Passport or passport card issued by an EEA state or a country whose citizens are Commonwealth citizens

Driving and Parking

- ✓ Driving licence (issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state)
- ✓ A Blue Badge



Accepted forms of Voter ID(2)

Local travel

- ✓ Older Person's bus pass funded by the UK government
- ✓ Disabled Person's bus pass funded by the UK government
- ✓ Oyster 60+ Card funded by the UK government
- ✓ Freedom pass
- ✓ Scottish National Entitlement Card issued in Scotland for the purposes of concessionary travel
- ✓ National Entitlement card issued by a local authority in Scotland
- ✓ 60 and Over Welsh Concessionary Travel Card
- ✓ Disabled person's Welsh Concessionary Travel Card
- ✓ Senior SmartPass issued in NI
- ✓ Registered Blind SmartPass or Blind Person's SmartPass issued in NI
- ✓ War Disablement SmartPass issued in NI
- ✓ 60+ SmartPass issued in NI
- ✓ Half Fare SmartPass issued in NI



Accepted forms of Voter ID(3)

Proof of age

- ✓ Identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)

Other Government issued documents

- ✓ Biometric immigration document
- ✓ Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identify Card)

- ✓ Ministry of Defence Form 100 (HM Armed Forces Veteran Card) **for elections taking place on or after 1 May 2025**
- ✓ Nationality identity card issued by an EEA state
- ✓ Electoral Identity Card issued in Northern Ireland
- ✓ Voter Authority Certificate
- ✓ Anonymous Elector's Document



Campaigning dos and don'ts

- Imprints required on all your campaign material, including digital material and websites
- Comply with planning rules relating to advertising hoardings and large banners.
- Make sure outdoor posters are removed 2 weeks after the election.
- Do not produce material that looks like a poll card.
- Do not pay people to display your adverts (unless they display adverts as part of their normal business).
- Do not handle any postal voting documents you are not entitled to
- Don't use the SKDC logo



Campaigning on polling day

Campaigning outside Polling Stations:

- Allowed to put your messages to voters on polling day, including **public** spaces outside polling places – Not within the polling place premises
- Keep access to polling places and the pavements around polling places clear to allow voters to enter
- Must not campaign near polling stations in a way that could be seen by voters as aggressive or intimidation (for example large groups of supporters carrying banners)
- Comply with requests by polling station staff or the Deputy Returning Officer



Campaigning – Notices on Highways

- Can only be sited 25-200 metres from the entrance to polling place (must not be within 25 metres)
- No more than two posters per candidate within the permitted area of each entrance
- **Not to be erected earlier than 48 hours** before polling day and removed within 14 days after close of poll
- Objections and queries relating to display of posters to be addressed directly to Place Directorate, Lincolnshire County Council (email cschighways@lincolnshire.gov.uk). More information provided in nomination packs.
- Posters displayed on private land are excluded from these restrictions



Candidate & Agent Briefing

Lincolnshire Police Economic Crime Unit
2025 Elections

Local Elections

Lincolnshire County Council

Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire (Combined County Authority)



Introduction

- Single Point of Contact (SPoC) in respect of Election Malpractice
- My role is to deal with allegations of unlawful conduct arising from electoral malpractice
- The purpose of speaking to you today is to provide points of contact, sources of information and briefly explain the common issues we encounter and how to report matters



Conduct of Candidates and Supporters

- 2 key principles (Electoral Commission)
 - Candidates and supporters should assist in the efficient and secure administration of elections and uphold the secrecy of the ballot
 - No candidate or supporter should place themselves in a situation where their honesty or integrity, or that of their party or candidate, can be questioned



Sources of Information

- Electoral Commission <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>
- Guidance for
 - Candidates or Agents
 - Campaigners
 - Political Parties
- Specific Electoral Commission Guidance
 - <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england>
 - www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-combined-authority-mayoral-elections
- Local Electoral Services team



Key Principles of APP

- All allegations should be reported to the SPoC
- Advice from Electoral Services can be sought first
- The complainant is expected to provide an evidential statement. Hearsay not acceptable, evidence needs to be provided.
- SPoC's are aware that malicious allegations can be made to discredit opponents which can themselves lead to criminal proceedings.
- Police are sensitive to how and when a matter is investigated
- Specialist Crown Prosecutors



Common Offences

- False statements in nomination papers (S65a RPA)
 - False proposer details
 - False statements regarding qualifications / ineligibility
- Imprints
 - Missing or incorrect details
- False statements as to candidates (S106 (1) RPA)
 - False statement of fact in relation to the candidate's personal character of conduct
- Election expenses (S81 & S82 RPA)
- Registration of Pecuniary / Non-Pecuniary Interests (Localism Act)



Common Offences - Imprints

- Imprints (S110 RPA) on publications / printed material
 - Applies to printed leaflets, posters, articles & paid adverts
 - Must include: name and address of printer and promoter and name and address of any person on behalf of whom the material is being published (who is not the promoter)
- Digital Imprints (s41 Elections Act 2022)
 - New rules for digital / electronic material
 - Applies to digital material available to the public in the UK. Includes videos / audio.
 - Applies to Paid adverts – if it is “political material” (i.e. influencing public relating to political opinion at any time, not just in election period)
 - Applies to Other (Organic material) – if it is “election material” (i.e. influencing voters) and produced by / on behalf of a political entity (candidate, agent, party)
 - Must include: name and address of promoter and name and address of any person on behalf of whom it is published (who is not the promoter)
 - Must be part of the material (or directly accessible) even when shared

Further information available on Electoral Commission website



Personal Safety

- Freedom of political debate and disagreement
- Personal safety of candidates and your supporters is important
- Harassment and violence is not acceptable
- Read the guidance “When it goes too far” on the Electoral Commission website
- Ask the Electoral Services staff for advice
- Contact Police on 101 or 999 to seek advice or report other crimes, including personal safety
- Once elected, security advice will be available from the Force Elected Official Advisor (FEOA) – Andrew Kirk under “Op Ford”



and finally.....

- Read the guidance on the Electoral Commission website
- Ask the Electoral Services staff
- If you need to report electoral malpractice, report it to me using email elections@lincs.police.uk

I wish you all well and hope you have a safe campaign.





Polling Day



- Polling stations open 7am-10pm
- Office phone lines open 7am to 10pm for enquiries
- Postal votes – can be handed in to polling stations within the Division/Ward until 10pm (on completion the relevant hand over form)
- Voters in the polling station or in a queue at 10pm can apply for a ballot paper or hand in a postal vote
- Voters in this election will need to present photographic ID in the polling station



Verification and Count

The Meres Leisure Centre



Attendance at verification and count

- Candidates, election agents, limited number of counting agents and one guest may attend the verification and count
- The permitted maximum number of counting agents will be advised after nominations have closed
- Only those notified will be admitted – no entry if not registered
- All attending required to register on arrival
- Refreshments available –designated area for candidates and agents
- Candidates and agents for all elections may attend the verification process
- Only Mayoral candidates and their appointed agents can attend Mayoral Count



Verification Thursday 1 May

- Final postal vote opening session from **8.30pm**
- Verification will start at **10pm**
- Verification of ballot papers for both Mayoral and County Council elections plus any by-elections
- Allocation of divisions to count tables
- 7 count tables
- On completion, ballot papers sealed in ballot boxes for each division until Friday morning Count.
- Only Mayoral candidates and appointed agents can remain for Mayoral Count

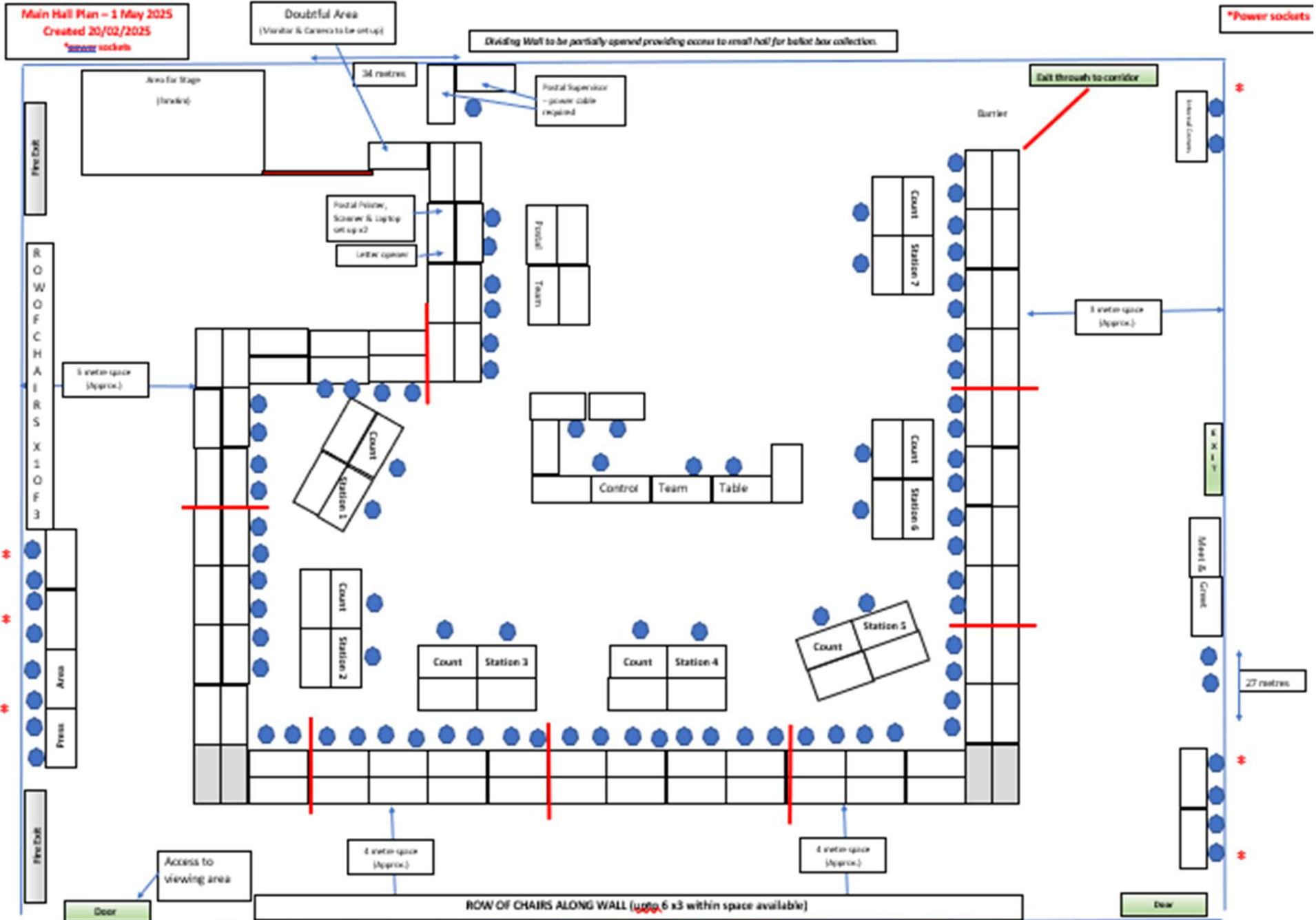


County Council Count Friday 2 May

- County Council count will start at **11am on Friday 2 May**
- 14 divisions: counted in 2 phases - 7 count stations
- Candidates, election agents, limited number of counting agents and one guest can attend
- Doubtful votes
- Equality of votes process in the event of a tie – pick name out of a hat



Count layout – main hall



Candidate Spending

- Expenses 'used for the purposes of the candidate's election' after the date they officially became a candidate
- Responsibility of election agent
- Maximum expenses limit:
 - £960+ 8p per elector in Division on the register as at 1 March 2025
 - Maximum reduced for joint candidates
- Must obtain and keep receipts for payments over £20
- Refer to Electoral Commission Guidance
www.electoralcommission.org.uk



Spending Returns

- Returns due 35 calendar days after result of election (28 days for Parish and Town Council elections)
- Returns to be submitted to:
 - County candidates: Election Expenses, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL
 - Town Council candidates: Electoral Services, South Kesteven District Council, Council Offices, The Picture House, St Catherine's Road, Grantham, NG31 6TT
- Returns made public by Returning Officer
- Sample of returns may be reviewed by the Electoral Commission
- Failure to submit an expenses return is a criminal offence enforceable by the police **even if you do not spend anything**
- No spending will be reimbursed.



Support for county councillors

Nigel West – Head of Democratic Services
and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Nicola Calver – Member Services Manager



The Council

- Where we sit – parishes, districts, county
- LCC - 70 councillors each representing an area known as a 'division'
- Four-year term of office (subject to Local Government Reorganisation)

Responsibilities of LCC

- Adults and Children's Social Care
- Schools
- Culture and Tourism
- Trading Standards
- Emergency Planning
- Roads
- Home to School Transport
- Corporate Parenting
- Strategic Planning
- Waste disposal
- Fire Authority
- Local Government Pensions

(...to name but a few)

Executive/scrutiny model

Decisions taken by:

Council

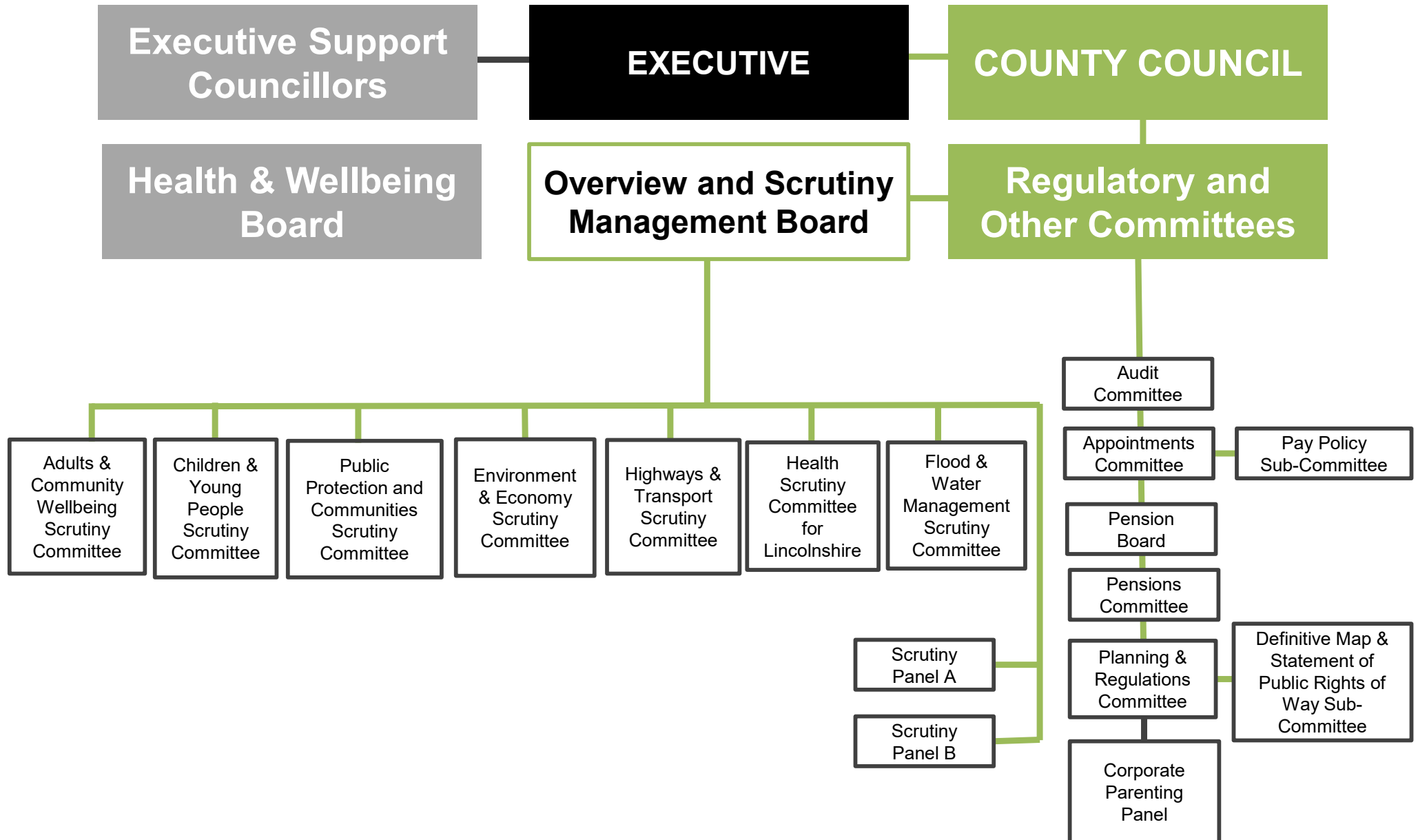
Executive

Executive councillors (within their portfolios)

Chief officers

...But NOT by scrutiny committees, who challenge as a critical friend and hold the Executive to account

Committee Structure



**Executive
or
Overview &
Scrutiny**

**Community
Champion**
(70 Divisions)



Regulatory

Politician

What it involves

[Becoming a councillor | Local Government Association](#)

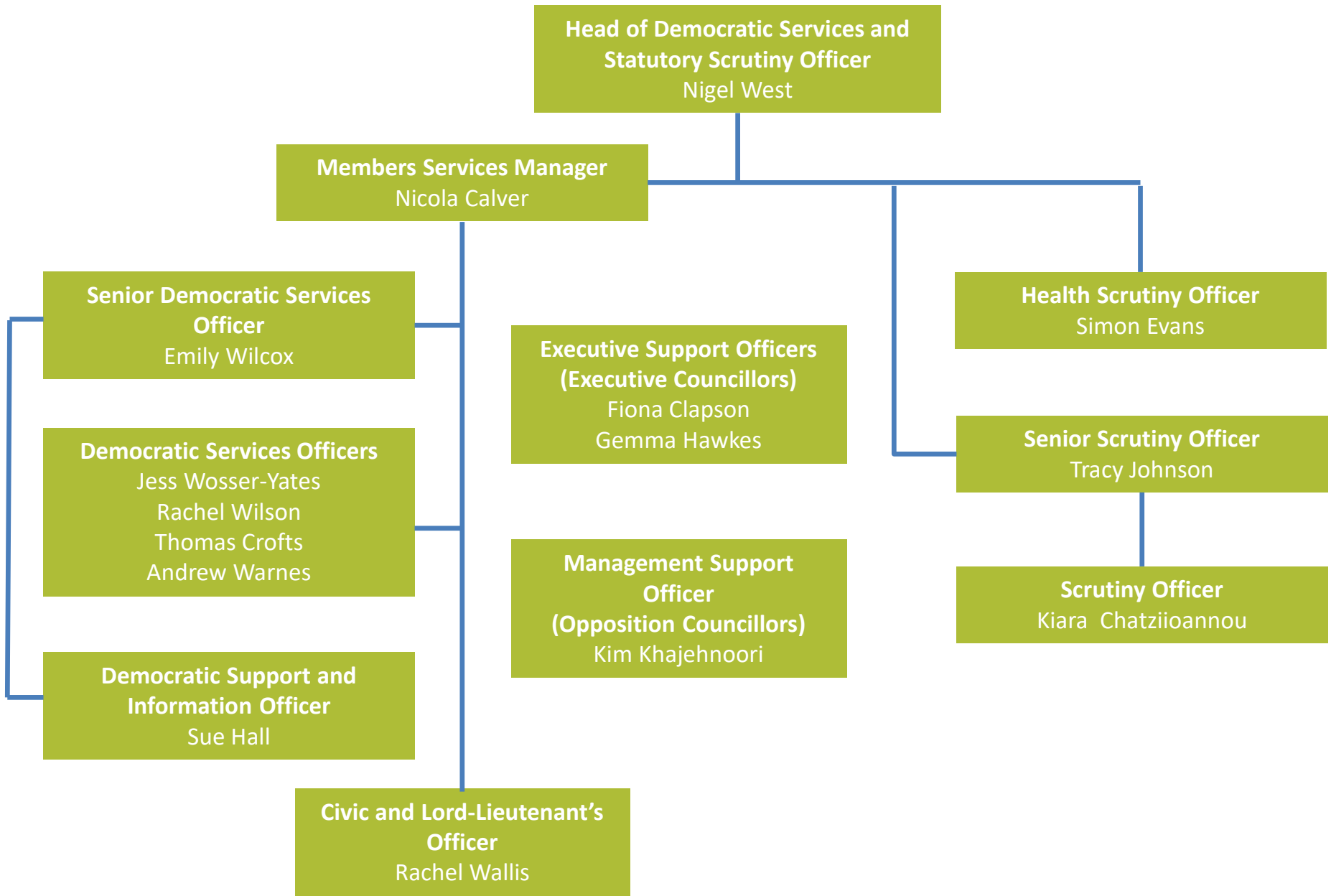
(average 22 hours per week [LGA survey]. It's really up to you)

Voice of your residents

Allowances (not a salary) currently basic allowance of £12,157.27; SRAs?

Democratic Services are there to provide support

Democratic Services



Providing the glue...

Help at hand through:

- Induction
- Proportionality and political group support
- Diary management
- Research
- Contact with officers
- Constitutional advice
- Form filling (DPIs; substitutions)
- Allowances (what is an approved duty?)
- Training – cross party Councillor Development Group
- IT
- Health and Safety

Member Code of Conduct

- Nolan Principles
- Code owned by the Audit Committee
- Complaints handled by Monitoring Officer
- Local Arrangements

Interests / Social media

- Register of interests
- Register of gifts/hospitality
- Use of social media

Questions?

Contacts - SKDC

- Elections Team :
 - 01476 406080 elections@southkesteven.gov.uk
- Informal checks of Nomination Papers and booking appointments:
 - nominations@southkesteven.gov.uk
- Julie Edwards, Electoral Services Manager
 - 01476 406078 julie.edwards@southkesteven.gov.uk
- Website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk/elections2025



Any Questions?



SOUTH
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