



Report To: Cabinet

Date: 30 June 2026

Subject: Derelict and Untidy Sites – Task Group Report

Purpose: To retire the Derelict and Untidy Sites Policy.

Key Decision: No.

Portfolio Holder: N/A.

Report Of: Andy Fisher, Executive Director – Programme Delivery.

Report Author: Marc Whelan, Strategic & Operational Property Manager.

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards.

Exempt Report: NO,

Summary

The Derelict and Untidy Sites Policy was introduced by South Holland District Council in 2022 to address unsightly and neglected properties across the district. The policy aimed to proactively engage with landowners, provide guidance and escalate enforcement where necessary.

However, at the Policy Development Panel meeting on 23rd September 2025, concerns were raised about the policy effectiveness, duplication of existing powers, and lack of demonstrable outcomes. The process of appointing a task group was implemented and met on the 15th January 2026. This process has now concluded, with recommendations made to PMP in May and PDP in June.

Recommendations

1. That the existing Derelict & Untidy Sites Policy should be retired and replaced with a guidance signpost document.
2. A concise 2–3-page Member and Parish Council Guidance Signpost Document be developed, covering several areas:
 - How to identify relevant issues

- What information to gather
- Which service to contact
- Realistic expectations of timescales
- Links to public reporting methods

Reasons for Recommendations

The policy should be retired and replaced with a signpost document which will help new and existing councillors understand what various departments do to help them with untidy or derelict sites within their ward.

Other Options Considered

1. Amending the current document- not recommended
2. Do nothing- not recommended

Background

The Derelict and Untidy Sites policy reviewed by the Task Group originally introduced to provide a structured approach to addressing untidy or neglected sites across the district in the post-COVID period; since adoption, it has become evident that the policy was largely duplicative of existing statutory powers available to Planning, Environmental Health, Anti-Social Behaviour and Building Control teams. Those services routinely deployed legal mechanisms independently of the policy, which had not enhanced any departmental or corporate enforcement capability.

The policy did not fill a gap in service delivery or governance, nor did it introduce any new powers or frameworks beyond existing procedures; its presence had not demonstrably improved outcomes or operational efficiency and was considered to have very little strategic or practical application.

From a legislative standpoint, robust powers already existed within various Acts, including but not being limited to:

- The Town and Country Planning Act, 1990
- The Environmental Protection Act, 1990 and
- The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014

The statutory powers provided within these and other Acts already offer effective routes for intervention, making the need for a supplementary policy duplicative.

Councillors agreed that a task group should be established to assess whether the policy should be retired, retained, or repurposed as an informative document.

1. Report

The task group, consisting of Cllr Ashby, Cllr Geaney, Cllr M Le Sage, Cllr Barnes and Cllr Reynolds were tasked to review the original aims and objectives of the Derelict and Untidy Sites Policy (2022).

They Identified overlaps or duplication with existing council powers, departments, or enforcement mechanisms.

They assessed the policy's value as an informative tool.

It was decided that the recommendation to retire the document be sent to the Council's Policy Development Panel for consideration and replaced with a supporting document specifically built for councillors to reference against.

2. Conclusion

The Task Group agreed the following recommendations.

That the existing Derelict and Untidy Sites Policy should be retired and replaced with a robust guidance signpost document.

A concise 2–3-page Member and Parish Council Guidance Signpost Document would be developed, covering:

- How to identify relevant issues
- What information to gather
- Which service to contact
- Realistic expectations of timescales
- Links to public reporting methods

The guidance document would be for Members and Parish Councils, not the general public.

This new guidance signpost document could enable Members and Parish Councillors to report issues regarding derelict and untidy sites to the direct department, making the process more effective and efficient. Officers would help members direct enquiries internally and provide regular updates to the Member/Parish Council who had reported the issue.

The signpost document would also link to a robust and detailed reporting mechanism where Performance Monitoring Panel could track progress with the relevant department

Following debate, PDP agreed that the policy should be retired and replaced with a signpost document which will help new and existing councillors understand what various departments can do to help them with untidy or derelict sites within their ward.

Implications

None

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

None

Corporate Priorities

None

Staffing

None

Workforce Capacity Implications

Prevents duplication if the current policy is retired and the signpost document is implemented for councillors to reference against.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

None

Data Protection

None

Financial

None

Risk Management

None

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Working group have spent considerable amount of time discussing with relevant departments to arrive at this conclusion.

Reputation

None

Contracts

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

None

Health and Wellbeing

None

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

None

Acronyms

None

Appendices

Appendix A

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

APPENDICES	
<i>Appendix A</i>	<i>Task Group Final Report – Untidy & Derelict Sites</i>

Chronological History of this Report

The task group report was considered by the Council's Policy Development Panel on 21 April 2026 who made the recommendations set out in this report to the Cabinet.

Report Approval

Report author: Marc Whelan, Strategic & Operational Property Manager

Signed off by: Andy Fisher, Executive

Approved for publication: Councillor Paul Barnes (Chair of the Working Group)