

# AGENDA



For a meeting of the
<b>COMMUNITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP</b>
to be held on
<b>THURSDAY, 17 MAY 2012</b>
at
<b>2.30 PM</b>
in
<b>WITHAM ROOM, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM</b>
Beverly Agass, Chief Executive

Group Members:	Councillor Kelham Cooke, Councillor Phil Dilks, Councillor Breda Griffin, Councillor John Nicholson (Chairman), Councillor Mrs Jean Taylor, Councillor Jeff Thompson (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor Raymond Wootten
Portfolio Holders:	Councillor Teri Bryant (Good Housing) Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright (Grow the Economy and Economic Development) Councillor John Smith (Green, Healthy and Arts)
Support Officer:	Jo Toomey (01476 40 61 52) j.toomey@southkesteven.gov.uk

**Members of the Group are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed below.**

**1. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

The Group to be notified of any substitute members.

**3. APOLOGIES**

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare an interest in matters for consideration at the meeting.

**5. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2012**

**(Enclosure)**

**6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

**7. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

**8. LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

The Housing Solutions Service Manager will make a presentation.

**9. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

For information. The Head of Development and Growth will present an update on the National Planning Policy Framework.

**10. CAR PARKING STRATEGY WORKING GROUP**

The PDG will receive an update from the car parking strategy working group.  
**(Enclosure: update)**

**11. WORK PROGRAMME 2012-13**

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT**

## MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 8 MARCH 2012      2.30 PM



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### GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Kelham Cooke  
Councillor Breda Griffin  
Councillor Charmaine Morgan  
Councillor John Nicholson (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs Jean Taylor  
Councillor Jeff Thompson (Vice-  
Chairman)  
Councillor Raymond Wootten

### OFFICERS

Strategic Director – Development and  
Growth (Ian Yates)  
Property Develop Manager (Neil  
Cucksey)  
Benefits Manager (Lee Sirdifield)  
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)  
Income Recovery Officer (Debbie  
Mewes)

### PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Councillor Terl Bryant (Housing)  
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright  
(Economic Development)

### OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Terl Bryant  
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright  
Councillor Nick Craft

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## 44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wootten declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 'Fire and Rescue' as a member of Lincolnshire County Council, which was the authority with responsibility for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. Later in the meeting Councillor Wootten also declared a personal interest in an item of any other business on street processions in South Kesteven as a member of Lincolnshire County Council, which was the responsible authority for Highways.

Councillor Mrs Taylor declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, as her husband was a former fire fighter and in receipt of a pension from fire and rescue services.

During the meeting Councillor Morgan declared a personal interest in the item of urgent business on street processions as a member of the group responsible

for organising Grantham carnival.

**45. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2012**

The action notes from the meeting on Thursday 5 January 2012 were noted.

**46. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

During previous discussions on the draft skin piercing byelaw, which was adopted at full Council on 1 March 2012, a question had been raised about under what authority SKDC officers could enter premises. An answer would be provided.

**47. FIRE AND RESCUE**

At its meeting on 5 January 2012, the PDG considered a response to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England consultation. As a result of discussion Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Nick Borrill was invited to attend the meeting.

Mr Borrill gave an overview of the consultation document from Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's perspective. The Government produced a framework every 3-years, which set out the government's priorities and objectives. The framework was strategic and did not prescribe how fire and rescue services should undertake operations.

Three broad areas were laid down for fire and rescue: identifying the full range of risks in the area, making appropriate provision for protection and prevention and national resilience capabilities. Accountability was also emphasised in the draft framework.

The key strands of the strategy formed Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's core business, which was based on an integrated risk management and planning process. Plans were available on Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's website.

Further emphasis had been placed on national resilience and fire and rescue's role in preparing for major emergencies. Specialist units that could be accessed nationally included urban search and rescue, high volume pumping and mass decontamination. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue suggested greater clarity was required on the structure through which national gaps could be identified. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue had urban search and rescue and water rescue capabilities.

There were mechanisms in place to ensure the scrutiny of the fire service however a further requirement was the introduction of assurance statements. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue had asked for further clarification on what that meant.

Members of the PDG were given the opportunity to ask questions of Mr Borrill.

Following media coverage of incidents nationally, Mr Borrill was asked to explain Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's policy on responding to an emergency situation. Mr Borrill explained that the incident commander on-site would be responsible for conducting a dynamic risk assessment, considering the equipment available and training of personnel to and decide on the response to that situation.

In considering national resilience, councillors were advised that in the event of a major emergency, areas would consider their response and any specialist support required and then request that through a national co-ordination centre. Using the example of Operation Watermark (an east coast flooding exercise), which ran in 2011, Mr Borrill illustrated the national and local structures in place to respond to major emergencies. Further support could be accessed as required through the military; Mr Borrill gave assurances that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue were aware of recent changes.

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue were aware of changes that were underway within local military provision. If required, military support could be requested and assurances were given that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue were aware of changes.

The Chairman thanked Mr Borrill for attending the meeting and answering group members' questions.

#### **48. CAR PARKING**

The Property Development Manager introduced himself to PDG members and gave a brief presentation on the key areas for consideration as part of the district council's strategic review on car parking, including locations of the car park and their usage.

As part of their considerations the PDG would need to take account of the Council's visions and priorities, planning policy documents and economic development aspirations. The Resources PDG would complement the work of the Communities PDG by considering the financial aspects of car parking. The review could provide the council with the opportunity to consider other opportunities including park and ride schemes or promoting access to town centres in other ways, for example using bicycles.

Discussion ensued on car parking need and opportunities to control on-street parking. Greater opportunities would be available following the introduction of civilian parking enforcement.

It was agreed that the PDG should hold workshop sessions to consider the strategic car park review and produce recommendations for the consideration of Cabinet.

*16:03 to 16:09 the meeting adjourned.*

#### **49. COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT**

The Benefits Manager gave a presentation on updates to welfare reform and council tax benefit. The Government had asked councils to introduce local schemes, which would replace a single, national scheme. Localised schemes would be introduced from April 2013. A 10% reduction in expenditure was required; this would be realised through a reduced level of grant. Based on 2010/11 SKDC spent £7.25m a year on council tax benefit.

Initial consultation documents indicated that pensioners (defined as those in receipt of a state pension) were a protected group, however confirmation was awaited on whether protection would apply to all pensioners or whether those who could afford to pay would pay. Other protected groups would need defining locally.

Based on research undertaken locally and nationally, (taking account of the 10% cut to expenditure and protecting certain vulnerable groups), projections indicated that non-protected groups could be required to contribute an additional 25% (approximately £340 based on current council tax levels) a year.

The service had seen an increase in the number of cases it administered. This trend was expected to continue and lead to increases in expenditure. When it set its policy, the Council would need to consider whether it would top up the grant or whether it would work within the grant allocated

The PDG was shown a projection of the numbers of people from specific vulnerable groups in receipt of council tax benefit. The groups typically classed as vulnerable in relation to council tax benefit were: passported (those in receipt of certain benefits who automatically had their council tax paid), lone parents, those in receipt of war pensions, carers and people with a disability. Projecting the caseload was complicated because there were overlaps between each group, which were not highlighted in the data however modelling tools had recently been made available.

Challenges were identified: defining vulnerable/protected groups (guidance was awaited regarding pensioners), the budget position was unknown, modelling different expenditure scenarios, deciding whether to 'top-up' the scheme, sourcing and procuring software to administer council tax and council tax benefit and promoting changes to those affected.

Members of the PDG discussed the presentation. Councillors were advised that if the Council did not adopt a local scheme, it would automatically enter a national scheme (based on the same principles as the current scheme). This would mean the Council could not achieve the required saving and would have no choice but to top-up the scheme.

One risk associated with changes was an increase in non-payment leading to an increase in council tax and rent arrears. The council would need to work with Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Policy Authority to develop a policy that took account of any losses should the council tax collection rate decreased. They would also need involving in discussions about whether the scheme should be topped-up. There was an expectation that schemes within the county should mirror each other as closely as possible.

**50. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT**

Recently, the local media covered a story about Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Police, which stated that parades like the St. George's Day parade and the marches of remembrance and witness could be cancelled because of costs associated with road closures. The issue was experienced across the district. Reports indicated that policing arrangements in neighbouring districts differed, which meant events could proceed.

Councillor Wootten explained that a meeting with interested parties was scheduled to take place in Grantham on 9 March 2012 to discuss the issue.

**51. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting was closed at 16:59.



**COMMUNITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP  
THURSDAY, 17 MAY 2012  
THE WITHAM ROOM, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETER'S HILL,  
GRANTHAM**

## **Car Park Review**

### **CAR PARKING STRATEGY WORKING GROUP: UPDATE FOLLOWING WORKSHOP HELD ON 20 APRIL 2012.**

Group discussion to establish overall objectives of car park review covering all car parks owned by SKDC. The Group wish the following items to be reviewed:

- Effective management of car parks for the benefit of users and businesses to include initiatives such as pay on exit, pay by mobile.
- Effective cash collection, counting and banking if existing pay stations retained.
- Alternative uses for underutilised car parks or those considered to be in the wrong place. Consider asset value for alternative use.
- Possible effects from introduction of CPE inc enforcement and collection of fine income.
- Review of long and short stay and recommendations for tariff structure.
- Review of on street signage to car parks to promote appropriate usage.
- Consider provision of electrical charging points within SKDC car parks particularly Grantham and Stamford.

The group received a presentation on the traffic movement study for Grantham to inform the workshop sessions.

#### **Feedback from workshop Session one:**

Review data from Movement Study and determine which existing SKDC owned car parks are best placed to be retained as car parks to support the

development of the town centre and which if any could be released to promote redevelopment.

Councillors felt that:

Conduit Lane and Greenwoods Row car park whilst convenient, had a detrimental effect on town centre traffic due to the poor access to both.

St Catherine's Road car park was surplus to requirement given the proximity of Welham Street car park. Watergate Car Park was important as it served the North of the Town.

Wharf Road and Welham Street played an important role in providing car parking for the South and East of the town.

Charging rates and designation of long stay vs. short stay was equally as important as location. Whilst, Councillors acknowledge that people would always utilise car parks regardless of charges, they felt that how long a person stays in a town centre and what additional services they utilise is directly related to a person's propensity to pay for car parking. Sleaford was given as an example where the first hour is free in order to encourage people to spend longer in the centre.

**Feedback from workshop session Two:**

What opportunities exist to replace and expand car parking to improve traffic movement around the town to promote a quality town centre environment?

Councillors felt that:

There was an opportunity to improve car parking availability and access on the west of the town by considering the inclusion of a multi-storey/under-croft car park on the Greyfriars development site, providing site is accessible from Sankt Augustin Way. (This could require land currently occupied by Council Houses and flats).

There is potential to introduce additional car parking at Wharf Road by rationalising the existing bus station and introducing more 'stop and drop' points through out the town, this could benefit both Wharf Place and Station Approach developments.

There may also be an opportunity to explore enhanced car parking provision on Station Approach site 2. At present the proposed multi-storey car park will cater for the Station Approach development and railway station only. Additional capacity at this site could relieve some pressure on the town centre and encourage driver to avoid driving into the centre to park, particularly in the context of 4000 new homes on the Southern Quadrant.

Potential of a new 'Park and Ride' facility on the proposed urban extensions, particularly the Southern Quadrant. This could be tied into existing 'hopper' bus services to avoid the requirement of a new service.

There is potential to better utilise Greenwoods Row car park for additional retail/leisure uses and enhanced public realm.

**Other issues captured as part of the discussion.**

High Street busy with traffic which disrupted permeability of pedestrian movement across the town. Could look at to pedestrianise a section if traffic movement could be facilitated away from High Street to create a better environment.

A pedestrian link from the retail park off Sankt Augustin Way to Westgate was suggested to promote footfall in to town centre.

Need to consider public transport cycling and walking routes particularly from new neighbourhoods to lessen cars needing to come into town centre and requiring to park.

At the conclusion of the workshop it was agreed that the feedback from the two sessions would be captured on a plan of the town centre. The Group would then review the findings by walking around the town centre as the first activity of the next workshop session so that firm recommendations could be made.