

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 15 JUNE 2017

2.00 PM



PRESENT

Councillor Bob Sampson Chairman

Councillor Bob Adams
Councillor Duncan Ashwell
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Stephen Benn
Councillor Robert Broughton
Councillor Katherine Brown
Councillor Teri Bryant
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor Michael Cook
Councillor Kelham Cooke
Councillor Lynda Coutts
Councillor Nick Craft
Councillor Felicity Cunningham
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Damian Evans
Councillor Mike Exton
Councillor Tracey Forman
Councillor Helen Goral
Councillor Breda Griffin
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Michael King
Councillor Ms Jane Kingman
Councillor Matthew Lee

Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor David Mapp
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Dr Peter Moseley
Councillor Nick Neilson
Councillor Robert Reid
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Bob Russell
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Jacky Smith
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Judy Stevens
Councillor Adam Stokes
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Mrs Sarah Stokes
Councillor Frank Turner
Councillor Dean Ward
Councillor Hannah Westropp
Councillor Martin Wilkins
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Rosemary H Woolley
Councillor Mrs Linda Wootten
Councillor Ray Wootten

OFFICERS

Chief Executive (Beverly Agass)
Strategic Director (Tracey Blackwell,
Daren Turner)
Executive Manager, Corporate (Lucy
Youles)

OFFICERS

Executive Manager, Commercial (Judith
Davids)
Corporate Finance Manager (Richard
Wyles)
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

21. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

One question had been submitted for the public open forum.

Question 1

A question was put by Mrs Caroline Dugmore from Market Deeping to the Cabinet Member for Environment.

We have recently had travellers staying on our beautiful open green on the Tattershall Drive estate in Market Deeping, which was left in a disgusting state when they left with a huge amount of fly tipped rubbish and human excrement left behind. The local residents and town council have worked together to clear most of the mess left behind, but we would like to request some of the Big Clean money to be used proactively to protect against more fly tipping and damage to hedgerows and trees by supplying funding for a small fence to go around the edge of the greens to prevent vehicles from gaining access to them again.

We have collected hundreds of signatures from local residents to support this request, and would also like the opportunity to submit this petition to the executive members, so that they may see how much the local residents want to prevent more fly tipping and green waste being dumped on our fields.

The Cabinet Member thanked Mrs Dugmore for her question and said that he would be happy to enter discussions with the Town Council and local residents to see what could be done to protect green spaces in Market Deeping. He did not, however, feel that it was appropriate for inclusion within the Big Clean project. Given the potential for other areas to be affected by the same issues, he expressed concerns that similar requests could come from across the district. He added that diverting funding from the Big Clean project for this purpose would affect its success.

Mrs Dugmore informed Members that she had brought in a paper petition signed by local residents and added that there was also an electronic petition running in parallel, with a combined total of more than 400 signatures. She said that she believed the Big Clean project would be an appropriate source of funding because Market Deeping was an important town to keep clean as it was the first town visitors to the district would come through when approaching from the south.

The Cabinet Member for Environment said that he understood the desire to keep green spaces secure and tidy but the Big Clean was not an appropriate funding source – it was a specific project that had been costed and budgeted for. He reiterated that he was happy to speak with the Town Council and work together to get the best solution. He added that he appreciated the effort that had been put in by local residents in raising their petition.

The Chairman invited Mrs Dugmore to bring her petition forward, which he

accepted on behalf of the Council.

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Bosworth, Dilks, Mrs Kaberry-Brown, Powell, Brenda Sumner, Brian Sumner and Webster

23. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No interests were disclosed.

24. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2017 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record subject to the clarification that minute item 3 related to Councillor Mrs. Judy Smith.

One member raised a question about the format that would be used to record the Members' Open Question session in the minutes of Council meetings. The Leader confirmed that he had agreed with the Chief Executive that going forward all questions and answers would be expressed in the minutes. The Executive Manager, Corporate clarified that the wording included in the minutes was that agreed by Council meeting however the reference to the recording of answers could include their recording as part of the minutes.

25. COMMUNICATIONS (INCLUDING CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS)

The Council noted the Chairman's engagements.

26. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Since the last meeting of full Council, the Constitution Committee had met on two occasions: 22 May 2017 and 12 June 2017. Copies of the minutes of both of those meetings, together with the reports that were presented to the Committee were included in the Council agenda pack. In the absence of the Chairman of the Constitution Committee, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee was invited to present the recommendations made at both meetings.

- (1) Recommendations made at the Constitution Committee meeting on 12 June 2017

Decision:

Council approves the following changes to the Constitution:

1. Voting System

That the Constitution is amended at Article 4.13.3 to change the voting system in full Council meetings from the use of the electronic voting system to a show of hands by deleting

Article 4.13.3 (i) and (ii) and inserting as a new Article 4.13.3:

Unless otherwise provided by law or in these procedure rules, the vote on any motion or amendment proposed at any meeting of the full Council shall be taken by means of a show of hands for, against and abstentions. Where a physical restriction prevents any Member from making a show of hands, on notifying the Chairman of that restriction that Member may vote by voice. An electronic voting system will remain available for all other committees of Council to use in the Council Chamber if required. It will be for each committee of the Council to determine the voting system to be used.

2. Cabinet Meetings

- **After Article 8.5.6 add new Article:**

8.5.7 Attendance at Open Meetings of the Cabinet

Any Member of the Council may attend any open meeting of the Cabinet, its Committees and Sub Committees. That Member may speak and ask the relevant Cabinet Member questions (but not vote) on any item on the agenda of the meeting. The Council Procedure Rule 4.11.4 relating to the length of speeches whereby no speech may exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Leader or other chairman of the Cabinet meeting will apply.

Consequential renumbering of subsequent clauses will be required.

- **Delete existing Article 8.6.2 and include the details of attendance at private meetings of the Cabinet by re-inserting the following wording at the new numbered Article 8.5.8 a)(iv):**

In addition to (iii) above, non-Cabinet Councillors will be permitted to attend private meetings of the Cabinet only by invitation of the Leader, and to speak in relation to specific items on the agenda only if the Leader's prior consent has been obtained. Requests for such consent to speak shall be made in writing and delivered to the Leader or Chief Executive or other proper officer no later than noon on the preceding working day.

The Vice-Chairman of the Constitution Committee presented its recommendations. In proposing the recommendations, the proposal to replace the use of the electronic voting system with a show of hands in full Council meetings was outlined. Any other Committees that met in the Council Chamber and had historically used the electronic voting system would be able to determine whether they wished to continue using the

electronic system or whether they too wanted to vote by a show of hands. The Committee had also recommended a change to the Constitution about the attendance of Members at Cabinet meetings giving them a right to speak on agenda items without having to seek consent from the Leader or Chief Executive.

The recommendations were seconded, at which point comments were made about voting by show of hands being normal practice for a majority of Councils. It was considered that the change would help improve the transparency of Council decision-making by allowing members of the public to see how their local Councillors voted. Providing opportunities for all Members to speak at Cabinet meetings was intended to provide a more inclusive way of working and an additional mechanism through which Members could put their questions directly to the Cabinet.

During debate a mix of views were raised about changes to the voting system. Several Members agreed that it would provide increased transparency for those members of the public who attended meetings. Some challenge was made about whether this would constitute full transparency as only those people who were present at the time of a vote would be able to see how their Councillors had voted and there would be no historical record.

While some Members supported increased transparency they felt that people would feel able to vote more freely using the electronic voting system, with the system and suggested that it could be set-up to record how each Member voted. There was concern that using a show of hands would mean that some Members felt pressured to vote in a particular way. The Leader challenged this view and stated that if any Member felt that they had been coerced to vote in a particular way, that complaint should be reported to the Chief Executive for investigation. It was suggested that using the electronic voting system and associating each voting button to a different Councillor would provide a compromise solution that would increase transparency with the freedom that had been associated with a blind vote. The meeting for which Members felt a show of hand would be most appropriate was Development Control Committee (name changed to Development Management Committee during this meeting), where there were often members of the public in the room during the vote. Some Members spoke to reassure the wider membership that they had never felt obliged to vote in a particular way, while further comments stated that the use of the electronic system to record the names of Councillors and their vote was effectively a recorded vote, for which separate provision was made in the Constitution.

An amendment was proposed and seconded that: to extend transparency further, rather than a show of hands only witnessed by the people in the room, a dual system of button pushing and hand raising should be used with a hyperlink in a meeting's minutes to a list showing how each Member voted in the for the benefit of anyone unable to attend the meeting.

Some concern was expressed that the proposed amendment would be complicated for Members to put into practice however it was acknowledged that the debate and votes in the Council Chamber could have a wider audience. One member stated that they had canvassed residents in their Ward who felt knowing how their Councillors had voted was important; he added that while, at present only people able to attend the meeting would be able to see how their Councillor(s) had voted, the opportunity was there for them if they wished to attend. Further comments were made about the importance of transparency, with a comparison being drawn with Lincolnshire County Council, where votes were also taken by a show of hands however, its meetings were made available via webcast. These webcasts provided a historic record of how Members voted; no similar record would be available for residents in South Kesteven based on the existing facilities in the Council Chamber.

Notice was given of a new amendment: that the electronic voting system should continue to be used, a record kept through the system of how each Member voted and then moving to voting by show of hands when a solution to broadcast the meeting had been put in place. A member of the Cabinet gave a commitment to providing a solution to broadcast meetings on the internet; he stated that this would be in place by the time the Council next met in September 2017. As a consequence the Member who gave notice of the further amendment withdrew it.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost. The substantive proposition on changing the voting system was put to the vote and carried.

Following this decision of Council, all further decisions made during the meeting were taken by a show of hands.

The proposal to allow any member of the Council to attend Cabinet meetings, ask questions and speak on agenda items was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

- (2) Recommendations made at the Constitution Committee meeting on 22 May 2017

Decision:

Council approves the recommendations from the Constitution Committee as follows:

- 1. That the name of the Development Control Committee is changed to the Development Management Committee and that the Constitution is amended to reflect the change.**
- 2. That the Constitution is amended:**
 - To include a new Article 13 – Employment Committee as set out in Appendix A to report LDS216 and;**

- That subsequent consequential changes relating to the numbering of the Articles in the Constitution are made and;
- That the deletion of the Chief Executive's Performance and Remuneration Panels are agreed and;
- That the number of members of the Employment Committee to be appointed are seven and that the appointments would provide cross party representation. On current group membership this would be provided with four Conservative group representatives and one representative from each of the other three groups represented on the Council
- That subsequent consequential changes relating to the title of the Chief Executive's Appeal Panel and to the reference to the Performance Panel are made.

The Vice-Chairman of the Constitution Committee proceeded to propose the recommendations in report number LDS219 which were made at the Committee's meeting on 22 May 2017. The recommendations made by the Committee related to changing the name of the Development Control Committee to the Development Management Committee and the creation of a new Employment Committee. The proposition to approve the recommendations was seconded.

Items raised during debate on this item related to the function of the new Employment Committee, which would be responsible for the employment of the Chief Executive, senior officers and approving the Council's management structure. It would also consider corporate issues affecting all staff, including local pay arrangements. It was proposed that the membership of the Committee would deviate from the political balance requirements so that all of the Council's existing groups could have a seat on the Committee. Appointments to that Committee would be made under agenda item 9.

The proposition was put to the vote and carried.

27. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Decision:

- 1. That the Council approves the appointment of Aidan Rave as the interim Chief Executive including the duties of Head of Paid Service, the Electoral Registration Officer (in fulfilment of the requirement of s.8 of the Representation of People Act 1983), the Returning Officer (under the requirements of S41 of the Local Government Act 1972) and the full range of duties set down in the Chief Executive's Job Description set out in Appendix A of report number CAB024, together with the specific objectives set out for the first 12 months of tenure.**
- 2. That, due to the incumbent Chief Executive's planned leave, the statutory duties described above are transferred to Aidan Rave with**

effect from 16th June 2017.

- 3. That the proposed Employment Committee undertakes to review the performance of the Interim Chief Executive in terms of progress made against the specific objectives as set out in Appendix B of report number CAB024, and based on this, authorises any extension of the initial 12 month contract as appropriate, in consultation with the Leader.**

The Leader of the Council proposed the appointment of Mr Aidan Rave as the new Chief Executive of the Council. In making his proposition he paid tribute to the previous Chief Executive's 11 years of service to the Council, both in that role and as a Strategic Director. He thanked the panel that had assisted in putting together the recommendation and its shared desire to see the Council succeed, and the Executive Manager, Commercial who had supported the Panel throughout the appointment process. He felt that as the Council embarked on a new era, it was essential to have a Chief Executive that could initiate and deliver change to put the customer first with an appropriate track record of delivery and personal skills. Following short-listing and interviews, the panel recommended Mr Rave as the new Chief Executive; he had experience across the private, charitable and public sectors, including as an elected Member in local government. The proposition was seconded.

One Member spoke about the appointment process that was undertaken, noting specifically its speed and that in most instances Councils had to wait several months to make appointments at that level. He also added his disappointment that an in-house appointment was not being recommended – he felt that would provide greater continuity as a result of their knowledge of the organisation. He added that promoting from within would give other officers an opportunity to step up and increase their experience. He stated that the Council was being asked to endorse a candidate without being given any information. He suggested that the process should include a hustings-type event in the Council Chamber where Members had the opportunity to meet and question candidates, and vote for their preferred choice. As a result of his concerns he proposed that the Council defer making a decision to enable a review of the selection process.

A number of Members spoke in favour of the process that had been followed and how Leaders from each of the opposition groups had been included. It was reported that after a day of short-listing and a further day of interviews and presentations, all of those that sat as part of the panel came to the same conclusion about which of the candidates to appoint. The suggestion was made that Members who were not part of a political group may not have had that information fed back to them but they could have approached one of the Group Leaders, who would have been able to share information as they had done with members of their own group.

Some concerns were also raised about the length of the interim period. The Leader confirmed this stating that a contract of a year with an option to extend would give the Council the opportunity to decide what sort of Chief Executive it

wanted, undergo a thorough recruitment process and provide sufficient time for any successful candidate to give notice to their current employer.

Further tribute was also paid to the service of the outgoing Chief Executive.

A vote was taken on the proposition, which was carried.

28. BIG CLEAN OPERATION - PROPOSALS TO AMEND BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2017/18

Decision:

Council approves:

- 1. The amendment of the General Fund budget framework for 2017/18 in order to include a supplementary estimate of £661,000 revenue and £226,500 capital to facilitate the delivery of the “Big Clean” project.**
- 2. The financing of the supplementary estimate in 2017/18 to be met from the Council’s local priorities reserve.**

The Cabinet Member for Environment presented the recommendations in report number CFM421, which related to proposals to amend the Budget Framework for 2017/18 to fund the Big Clean project. In making his proposition, the Cabinet Member referred to residents’ priorities, where litter and cleanliness commonly recurred within the top 5. He talked about the first impression created by the current environment and its impact on the reputation of the Council and the area. Consequently, he was proposing a new approach that would start with the Big Clean, a three month operation that would kick-start a longer-term change in the way the Council dealt with street cleaning, weeds that blighted pathways, detritus, graffiti and broken street furniture. The work already undertaken by a number of residents in keeping their area clean and tidy was acknowledged and it was hoped that the Big Clean would provide an opportunity to build on this as a key aspect would involve engaging with the volunteer network. He stated that the current budgetary provision did not have capacity to enable the Council to do better, so it was proposed that the Budget be adjusted to provide greater flexibility for the Council to respond. The project would be delivered by five teams of cleaners (4 temporary and 1 permanent) and working in partnership with local volunteers and colleagues in different agencies. Members were advised that the project would not prioritise towns over villages and anything not done in the initial 3-month phase would be picked up by the permanent team going forward.

The proposal was seconded and Members’ attention was drawn to the work that had been done by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Finance gave a brief overview of the proposed changes to the Budget Framework; costs for the first year would be funded

from reserves, then going forward they would be incorporated within the base budget. It was hoped that working with community groups and volunteers would help offset some of the costs associated with the project.

During debate Members expressed support for the project; it was considered a positive step to address concerns that had been raised by local residents. There was also a lot of support for the hybrid approach of using professionals employed by the Council and community volunteers. A number of comments were made, however, about the prioritisation of funding and the split between towns and parishes. One Member that spoke highlighted the comment that neither towns nor villages would be given priority, but the issues associated with each were not equal. The Members also discussed where intelligence would come from to identify those areas that needed cleaning with specific reference made to Mrs Dugmore who had attended the meeting to talk about an issue in her local area.

An amendment was proposed to allocate or devolve one third of the one-off budget directly to parish and town councils shared on a per capita basis and to allocate or devolve one third of the ongoing budget to parish and town councils shared on a per capita basis. This was seconded.

Those Members who spoke in support of the amendment felt that parish and town councils would have the best idea about those areas within their locality that needed particular attention and they could recruit staff from within the local community. Reference was also made to the proactive approach that many town and parish councils were already taking; Members suggested that this work would be enhanced if a proportion of the project's funding was provided directly to them. Supporters of the amendment also suggested that devolving funding to town and parish councils would serve as a form of acknowledgement of the work that they already did and encourage them to do more.

Those Members who spoke against the amendment felt that the project already took full account of working with villages and parish councils, including increased funding for the community cleaners scheme. Concerns were also raised that as Grantham did not have a town council, it would lose access to a proportion of the funding. Further comments indicated that the option to saturate the district had been considered and rejected and that the current proposal had been based on an assessment of demand and consultation with parishes and villages. Some Members stated that voting in favour of the amendment would mean that economies of scale could not be met and it would prevent the purchase of larger pieces of equipment. Examples were also given of areas that had formed part of a trial for the project and the feedback that had been received from members of the public in that area.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, as the mover of the original proposition, was given the opportunity to sum up the debate on the amendment. He urged people to vote against it; he wanted the project to be available to everyone but reiterated the commitment to engage with town and parish councils. He added that the £15k budget for community cleaners was in addition to the £60k already approved as part of the Budget and said that he hoped the Big Clean

project would encourage more people to take advantage of the fund.

A vote was taken on the amendment and lost.

Debate returned to the original proposition and included discussion about whether aspects of the project would cover statutory services provided by partners – specific reference was made to the spraying of weeds on pavements by Lincolnshire County Council. Some Members were concerned that including this kind of activity within the project would mean that Council Tax payers in South Kesteven were paying twice for the service. The County Council would continue to provide this service whilst funding provided through the Big Clean project would see the removal of those weeds.

Some members felt that it would be better to use local staff for the project as they did not feel agency staff would have sufficient pride in an area. They also suggested that employing local people would provide longer-term benefits using their pride to ensure that the standard is maintained beyond the life of the project. Further comments were made about the issues raised by Mrs Dugmore during the public speaking session, the pride of local residents in the Tattershall Drive area of Market Deeping and providing support to them in securing the green space.

Comments were also made about the condition of grass verges and along the side of the A1; there were reports that they were overgrown and there were large amounts of litter. Members agreed that keeping these areas in a good condition would create a better impression for tourists and visitors to the area.

A statement made in favour of the proposals advocated the project as the beginning of a new approach and an ongoing commitment to maintain the standard of the environment within the district.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, in summing up, reiterated the positive points that had been made during debate and asked Members for their support.

On being put to the vote, the proposition was carried.

The Chairman commended the service of Mrs Beverly Agass, the outgoing Chief Executive and thanked her for everything she had contributed to the authority. Members of the Council rose and applauded as a mark of their appreciation for Mrs Agass' contribution.

16:31 to 17:02 – the meeting adjourned

29. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

Decision:

- 1. That the Council approves the following changes to the membership of its Committees to achieve political balance**

- **Councillor Dilks to replace Councillor Morgan on Development Management Committee**
- **Councillor Woolley to replace Councillor Neilson as the Vice-Chairman of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Cunningham to replace Councillor Morgan on the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Woolley to replace Councillor Neilson on the Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Morgan to replace Councillor Dilks on the Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Stephens to replace Councillor Neilson on the Governance and Audit Committee**
- **Councillor Craft to replace Councillor Morgan on the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Cook to replace Councillor Dilks on the Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- **Councillor Stevens to replace Councillor Goral on the Appeals Panel**

2. To approve the appointment of the following Members to the Employment Committee:

- **Councillor Kelham Cooke (Vice-Chairman)**
- **Councillor Nick Craft**
- **Councillor Phil Dilks**
- **Councillor Helen Goral**
- **Councillor Graham Jeal (Chairman)**
- **Councillor Matthew Lee**
- **Councillor Paul Wood**

Following the establishment of the SK Independents Group of Members since the Annual Council meeting, a schedule of the nominations of the SK Independents (including nominations for the seats that they had gifted to the Labour group) had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Leader announced a change to the membership of the Cabinet: Councillor Nick Neilson would replace Councillor Rosemary Woolley as the Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing. As a result of the change to the membership of the Cabinet, he stated that Councillor Nick Neilson would be replaced on the Governance and Audit Committee by Councillor Stephens and on the Rural and Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committees by Councillor Woolley (becoming the Vice-Chairman of the latter).

The membership of the Employment Committee was also proposed: Councillors Graham Jeal (Chairman), Kelham Cooke (Vice-Chairman), Helen Goral, Matthew Lee, Paul Wood, Nick Craft and Phil Dilks.

Additionally, Councillor Wood confirmed that the Independent Group's appointment to the Appeals Panel would be Councillor Judy Stevens.

The nominations were proposed, seconded and, on being put to the vote, carried.

Council turned its attention to the Employment Committee. As the proposed membership of the Committee would not follow political balance requirements it would be necessary for any vote on its membership to be unanimous (whilst the proposition would fall if any Member voted against it, abstentions would not affect the outcome). If the vote was not unanimous, further nominations would need to be made that reflected the Council's political balance.

The Leader urged Members to support the proposed composition of the Committee, citing the appointment of the Interim Chief Executive as an example about the importance and value of collaboration across the different groups. On being put to the vote, the membership of the Employment Committee was unanimously approved as proposed.

17:11 – as the meeting had been in progress for almost three hours, article 4.6.4 of the Council's Constitution required that a vote be taken to extend the meeting. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the meeting be extended by an additional 30 minutes.

30. LEADER'S REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS

The Leader introduced report number CAB022 on an urgent non-key decision that had been made by the Cabinet Member for Finance, which was for Members to note.

Members were reminded that if they wished to discuss the content of the non-key decision, the Council would need to exclude the press and public because reference would be made to commercially sensitive information.

Comments were made about the process for reviewing the policy under which the decision was taken. The document would be revised through the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees at which Group Leaders and their named deputies would have a right to speak. Other members of the Council could also request permission to speak from the Chairman.

One Member also asked for further training on the different types of decisions that could be made and how he could learn more about the issues to which they related and be involved through scrutiny.

Council noted the report.

31. CABINET MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON 1 JUNE 2017

The Cabinet minutes from the meeting held on 1 June 2017 were circulated in the agenda pack for Members to note. Ordinarily it was hoped that by including the minutes in full Council papers would provide an opportunity for all Councillors to ask questions of Cabinet Members about their discussions,

however, it was acknowledged that the one item on the June Cabinet agenda had been a substantive item on the Council agenda.

A question arose about the maintenance of waterways as part of the Big Clean project; it was possible that part of this might fall within the Big Clean project while other aspects might be picked up from working with partners or during the second phase of the project that would continue after the initial 3-month launch period.

One Member identified a high risk in the project risk assessment and requested that the matter be brought back to Council. The Leader advised that Council was not the appropriate forum for managing the project risk; this would be reviewed by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Cabinet would also play an active role in reviewing risks on an ongoing basis.

The minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 1 June 2017 were noted.

32. MEMBERS' OPEN QUESTIONS

Question 1

Councillor Terl Bryant clarified that any Member who did not receive an answer to a question that they raised at a meeting of Council would be supplied with a written response after the meeting. He stated that he had not received a response to the question he asked at the previous meeting. The Leader stated that he felt he had sufficiently answered the question at the meeting, taking into account the wider political context and changes to the way in which the Council operated. He suggested that if Councillor Bryant did not feel that he had received an answer he could re-state the question.

Councillor Bryant re-asked his previous question about how it was proposed that lost monies caused by falling Revenue Support Grant, rising costs and additional calls on services to backfill those withdrawn by other agencies would be replaced in light of the plans outlined during the Leader's speech at the Council meeting on 20 April 2017.

The question was referred to the Cabinet Member for Finance who stated that the Council was looking at a number of solutions to fill the gap so that the Council would remain fully functioning and provide a balanced budget. He promised that more information would be provided in a written answer to the question.

Question 2

Councillor Selby asked the Leader about the excavation work that was being carried out as part of the new cinema project. He asked whether a thorough archaeological survey had been carried out, whether anything of value was found and what had happened to any artefacts that had been found. The Cabinet Member for Major Development Projects stated that the car park would be closed from Friday 16 June 2017 for the archaeological survey to be carried

out.

Question 3

Councillor Morgan referred to a recent fire at Grenfell Tower in London and raised concerns about fire safety in residential premises in the district. She stated that as a member of the Development Control Committee she had raised the fact that Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue had not been consulted on applications for new developments or where significant changes to a property were proposed. As a member of Lincolnshire County Council she had worked with fire officers and continued to work with officers at Grantham Fire Station. She raised two concerns – that there was no statutory requirement to consult with Fire and Rescue Services on planning applications and that while some fire safety issues were incorporated in building regulations they did not cover all potential issues and the inspections occurred later in the development process.

She asked whether the Council could make a local, best practice decision to consult with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service on all applications and for support to get the change put into practice.

The Leader stated that another Member had raised the issue of fire safety with him. He stated that he would ask the Chief Executive to undertake a review looking at the current position and where the Council needed to be. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing would be heavily involved in the review process.

He stated that the Council did not have buildings of the scale of those in London but fire safety was of paramount importance. All necessary resources would be made available in respect of the review.

Question 4

Councillor Mike Cooke asked whether, since 2018 was an auspicious year for the RAF, any contact had been made with other organisations about attracting visitors to the area, given the number of air force bases across Lincolnshire.

The Leader stated that the Council had recently won an award in relation to its work on tourism, including aviation heritage. The Chairman of the Culture and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Committee added her comments that the Committee was preparing its remit and was very aware of the work that the culture team were doing in the background. The Cabinet Member for Retail and Visitor Economy stated that he had attended a meeting in Lincoln the day before this meeting at which the RAF was present. The RAF was in the process of unveiling a national strategy with a range of initiatives and work was underway to try and route visits through Lincolnshire. He added that the Dean of Lincoln Cathedral intended to recreate the fire beacon that was used to mark the homecoming of bomber crews returning from operations. Any activities that the Council intended to promote would need to fit around the RAF's programme. He stated that Councillor Cook would be welcome to join the group looking at this.

Question 5

Councillor Hannah Westropp asked a question about the telephone system that was used for customers calling into the customer service centre. She said that there were a large number of options from which the customer had to choose and asked what was being done to improve the offer so that customers were not waiting so long.

The Cabinet Member for Business Transformation and Commissioning answered the question by saying that the 40 60 80 number was a good first point of contact. He added that the customer services team had been affected by long-term illness. Those positions were in the process of being backfilled. He gave a commitment that by the end of the month a new, simpler system would be in place with less options from which the customer could choose. It would also include a new voicemail facility.

Question 6

Councillor Exton stated that in the previous structure when the Council had Policy Development Groups, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of those groups would meet on a regular basis with the Cabinet. He asked whether those meetings would continue with the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the members of the Cabinet.

The Leader stated that he was happy to meet with any Councillors and asked Councillor Reid as the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen to liaise with his fellow Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to agree the best way forward.

Councillor Reid stated that within the new scrutiny structure it was down to each Chairman. Each Committee had a Cabinet Member who was responsible for that area and that the Scrutiny Chairman was there to hold them to account. He stated that he had met with officers and the relevant Cabinet Member to determine the way forward for his committee.

While the thirty-minute extension of time had elapsed, Members agreed that as only one more Councillor had indicated that they would like to ask a question, the meeting should continue to allow the conclusion of business.

Question 7

Councillor Wootten referred to a meeting of the United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust Board that had taken place a week before the meeting of Council. At the meeting Mark Brassington, the Trust's Chief Operating Officer was asked about the plans for the old part of Grantham Hospital. He had replied that the Trust was interested in engaging with the community. Councillor Wootten asked whether the Leader would support members of the community looking to purchase the building.

The Leader stated that he would be happy to consider what was put before him. He said he suspected that to progress the idea, further consultation would need to be carried out. The Leader stated that the response was neither a 'yes' nor a 'no', but that the council would look at any proposal and any suggestion to make appropriate investment to support the community.

33. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 17:42.