

# AGENDA



For a meeting of the
<b>GROWTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
to be held on
<b>FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2017</b>
at
<b>2.00 PM</b>
in
<b>WITHAM ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES, ST. PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM. NG31 6PZ</b>
Aidan Rave, Chief Executive

<b>Chairman</b>	
Councillor Robert Reid	
Councillor Michael Cook	Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Barry Dobson (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor Mrs Brenda Sumner
Councillor Graham Jeal	Councillor Paul Wood

<b>Invited Cabinet Members</b>
Councillor Adam Stokes, Cabinet Member for Finance

Support Officer:	Tel: 01476 406 517
Anita Eckersley	E-mail: <a href="mailto:a.eckersley@southkesteven.gov.uk">a.eckersley@southkesteven.gov.uk</a>

**Members of the Committee 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 Committee to be notified of any substitute members.

**3 APOLOGIES**

**4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.

## EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It is anticipated that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public may be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because of the likelihood that otherwise exempt information, as described in paragraph 3 of the Act (as amended) would be disclosed to the public.

### **6 CABINET MEMBER DECISION 6 NOVEMBER 2017 - COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT PROPOSAL (Pages 4 - 43)**

The following decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Finance on Monday 6 November 2017 has been the subject of a call-in request by Councillors Ashley Baxter, Phil Dilks, Charmaine Morgan, Bob Sampson, and Ian Selby, in accordance with 6.19 of Article 6 of the Constitution on the following grounds:

#### **REASONS FOR EXERCISING CALL-IN:**

In April this year Cllr Adam Stokes led a 'Call-In' against a decision by the then Cabinet Member for Finance to spend £2 million of this Council's resource to purchase an office building outside South Kesteven, in a neighbouring authority's area.

Those calling in the decision were – and remain – all members of the administration and included four current Cabinet members including Cllr Stokes. They argued strongly that SKDC should invest in South Kesteven rather than outside the District to support our local economy.

They also pointed out that the April decision was taken with inadequate/sufficient consultation and insufficient consideration of all options/relative weighting of options and that the decision was

*“a big risk and could be spread far better than the present proposal.”*

However, seven months later, Cllr Stokes, has himself made a decision to spend £3 million of this Council's resource to purchase an office building outside South Kesteven.

His decision has been taken behind closed doors, without any reference to any of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and even any discussion by Cabinet, all of which goes against the stated aims and ethos of this Council to be 'open and accountable' in its decision-making.

Spending £3 million outside South Kesteven appears to be contrary to the principles of 'InvestSK'. Indeed, the idea that the Council was even considering making such a substantial investment outside South Kesteven was not mentioned in the recent launch of "InvestSK", nor was it mentioned in the Council Leader's recent public statements at Stoke Rochford and elsewhere relating to plans to grow the *local* economy.

Although not listed as a 'key decision' - and despite commercial sensitivities - we believe that an unprecedented and potentially controversial decision to spend £3 million of SKDC taxpayer's money to purchase a building outside of South Kesteven should only be considered following proper pre-scrutiny and the opportunity for public awareness and informed debate.

**Non Key Decision:**

That approval is granted in accordance with the Investment Strategy.

A copy of report PD060 (contains exempt information under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) and associated plan together with a copy of the decision notice is enclosed.