

# Decision Notice

CABINET

TUESDAY, 21 JANUARY 2020



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

**This decision notice does not replace the minutes of meetings of the Cabinet.**

## **62 Customer Experience Strategy (Key Decision)**

### **Decision:**

- 1. That Cabinet approves the Customer Experience Strategy.**
- 2. That Cabinet commissions the consultation for proposed changes to the Stamford and Market Deeping area offices.**

### **Reasons for decision:**

1. The report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and HR on the Council's Customer Experience Strategy.
2. The strategy is a vital part of the transformation of the Council and sets out how the Council will deliver services in the future.
3. There is a need to create a modern, flexible customer experience, offering choice and delivering convenience to all customers, businesses and visitors. Services must maximise the use of all channels available and improve hours of accessibility by promoting self-service for all transactions. This will make it easy to do business with SKDC whilst actively supporting those most vulnerable.
4. Cabinet recognises that approximately 15 percent of the community need non-digital support including face to face and telephone contact.
5. Comments of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### **Other options considered and rejected:**

The consequence of the Cabinet not approving the strategy impacts on the Council's ability to effectively improve the customer experience.

## **63 Budget Proposals for 2020/21 and Indicative Budgets for 2021/22 and 2022/23**

### **Decision:**

- 1. Considered the budget proposals for 2020/21 in respect of :**
  - **General Fund – Revenue and Capital**
  - **Housing Revenue Account – Revenue and Capital**
- 2. Approved consultation in respect of proposed Council Tax levels for 2020/21 for the period 22 January – 14 February 2020**

### **Reasons for decision:**

1. The report of the Cabinet Member for Finance on budget proposals for 2020/21 and indicative budgets for 2021/22 and 2022/23 giving details of the draft budget estimates for 2020/21, revenue and capital for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.
2. The budget proposals detailed in the report were formulated by the Cabinet working closely with Members, senior officers and the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the objective to realign resources and spending plans to ensure that the key priorities and aspirations of the Council could be delivered.
3. Recommendations made by the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 January 2020.
- 4. General Fund – Revenue**
  - The provisional Finance Settlement for 2020/21 outlined that funding would continue at 2019/20 levels for the rural services delivery grant. The Council was expected to receive £295k for 2020/2021 only
  - The anticipated changes to local government funding that could adversely affect some Councils as a result of the finance distribution, had been deferred a year thereby giving a relatively stable financial year (2020/21) before the April 2021 implementation. This had given the Council a further year to realign its resources in the context of reduced funding
  - Due to the change in funding arrangements, the Council was planning to be self-sustainable by 2025
- 5. Council Tax**
  - Indicative income from Council Tax based on proposals which would be subject to public consultation from 22 January to 14 February: a £5 increase on a Band D property, a 3% increase on a Band D property or no increase
  - The budget proposals were compiled on the assumption that the Cabinet

would wish to recommend a £5 increase on a Band D property in 2020/21

## **6. Fees and charges**

- Draft fees and charges proposals for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix E to the report.
- The report highlighted which charges were statutory and which were discretionary

## **7. Housing Revenue Account**

- Draft proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Proposals drafted in line with refreshed Housing Strategy to ensure current needs and priorities are reflected
- The overall position as set out at Appendix A(ii) of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance
- The rent increase is proposed at 2.7% and garage rents are proposed to increase in line with inflation at 3%

## **8. Capital programme (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account)**

- The detailed Capital Programme attached to the report at Appendix C (General Fund) and (HRA)
- The Council's ambitions of growth and investment, including the provision of quality leisure services
- The Council is committed to growing the local economy for the benefit of all residents in the district by supporting private sector activity and has various routes to do this, including Gravitas, the Council's housing-focussed company and via direct investment
- The Capital Strategy over the medium-term, which would focus on the delivery of the growth ambition as set out in the Corporate Strategy and to support the delivery of the enhanced leisure offer across the district
- The Capital Programme includes investment in infrastructure that is vital to maintaining the delivery of quality services such as replacement of vehicles, maintenance of assets and ICT investment
- Ambitions through the HRA Capital Programme to deliver a social housing building programme of £52.6m over a 3 year period, focussed on the continuation of the new build and stock acquisition programme and the objectives of the HRA Business Plan
- The Housing Investment Programme would continue to deliver investment into the housing stock through a range of programmes including kitchen and bathroom replacement, re-roofing and external wall insulation

## **9. Reserves and balances**

- Details of the reserves, used to meet known or predicted liabilities
- The forecast balances and the proposed movements over the next three-year period shown in Appendix D to the report and the main forecast movements for 2020/21 set out within the body of the report (both General Fund and HRA)

- Proposed movement of reserves as set out in Tables 14 (General Fund) and 15 (HRA) of the report

**Other options considered and rejected:**

None

**64 Housing Strategy Refresh (Key Decision)**

**Decision:**

1. **Cabinet approves the Housing Strategy refresh.**
2. **Delegation be given to the Cabinet Member for Housing to make minor changes to the final document.**

**Reasons for decision:**

1. The report of the Deputy Leader of the Council on the Council's Housing Strategy refresh.
2. The draft Housing Strategy refresh allows the Council to make best use of Council stock; improve tenant involvement and enhance existing housing services.
3. A midterm review of the strategy was undertaken which identified some areas which need to be enhanced and as a result this document was produced.
4. Comments of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Other options considered and rejected:**

The consequence of the Cabinet not approving the strategy impacts on the Council's ability to effectively support its tenants.

**65 Collaboration Agreement relating to Saint Martin's Park, Stamford (Key Decision)**

**Decision:**

1. **Cabinet agreed to enter into a contractual Collaboration Agreement with Burghley Land Limited as set out in the Heads of Terms relating to land at Barnack Road, Stamford to bring forward the redevelopment of circa 35 acres of land for commercial, residential and retirement uses on a 50/50 shared development cost and profit basis.**
2. **Cabinet delegates to the Cabinet Member for Growth in consultation with the Director for Growth, the Chair of Companies Committee and the Monitoring Officer to sign and complete the contractual agreement required to implement the recommendation above, based on the approved Heads of Terms.**

### **Reasons for decision:**

1. The report of the Leader of the Council on the entering into a contractual Collaboration Agreement with Burghley Land Limited as set out in the Heads of Terms relating to land at Barnack Road, Stamford
2. The Council purchased land at Barnack Road, Stamford in March 2019 which adjoins approx. 20 acres of farm land owned by Burghley Land Limited (Burghley), a wholly owned subsidiary of Burghley House Preservation Trust. The land was purchased by the Council as being strategically important to the Council's growth ambitions in Stamford and the Cabinet Minute PD0095 refers.
3. The Council would be instrumental in bringing forward large-scale commercial, residential and retirement regeneration for the benefit of the Town and District with a reduced budget risk, whilst sharing control, planning and development risk and reward.
4. The Companies Committee will be asked to consider the proposal in detail on 4 February 2020.

### **Other options considered and rejected:**

- Option 1 : Bring forward development or dispose of the Council site in isolation. Capital would be required to upgrade and partition both the offices and industrial units which is not economically viable over the short to medium term. The viability of a fully commercial scheme was also considered to be very difficult with rents and land rates being challenging, plus the cost of holding the scheme over a protracted period.
- Option 3 : An interest in the project is granted to DeliverSK (dSK). This is not currently possible as dSK is not yet incorporated as a company.

(Option 2 of the report is the preferred option)

## **66 Position Statement on the Intentional Release of Sky (Chinese) Lanterns and Balloons (Key Decision)**

### **Decision:**

1. **That the position statement on the intentional release of sky (Chinese) lanterns and balloons is adopted by Cabinet, subject to public consultation.**
2. **That the minority groups potentially affected by the adoption of the position statement be consulted.**
3. **Authority is delegated to the Strategic Director of Commercial & Operations, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Commercial & Operations, to make any consequential changes as a result of the consultation.**

**Reasons for decision:**

1. The report of the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations on the Position Statement on the intentional release of sky (chinese) lanterns and balloons.
2. There is currently no UK legislation available to control this issue, therefore it is for the local authority to consider whether a position statement is necessary.
3. It is impossible to control where the lanterns and balloons land, and they can travel large distances before falling to the ground or into streams and rivers which may lead to the sea. Being a predominantly rural district, there may be greater risks to livestock, wildlife and crops than in more densely populated areas.
4. The Council has demonstrated its commitment to improving the attractiveness of the district through the Big Clean and the debris from these lanterns and balloons will have a detrimental impact on the local environment.
5. Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee were consulted on 26 November 2019 and was in agreement in issuing a position statement.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

1. The Council is not obliged to publish a position statement and can remain silent on the issue.
2. While a breach of a position statement would not be legally enforceable, if approved, it can be included in Council policies and agreements relating to the use of Council land eg. parks and open spaces for public events etc.

**Date decisions effective :**

Decisions 62, 64, 65 and 66 as made on Tuesday 21 January 2020 can be implemented on Thursday 30 January 2020 unless subject to call-in by the Chairman of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any five Members of the Council from any political group.

Decision 63 refers to the Budget and Policy Framework and the stakeholder consultation feedback will be considered at the next Cabinet meeting on 18 February 2020 and Cabinet's recommendations will be referred to Council on 27 February 2020.