

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 3 MAY 2012

2.00 PM



PRESENT

Councillor Michael Cook in the Chair
then Councillor Mrs Kaberry-Brown

Councillor Bob Adams
Councillor Mark Ashberry
Councillor Ray Auger
Councillor Jean Bevan
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Robert Broughton
Councillor Teri Bryant
Councillor Paul Carpenter
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright
Councillor Ibis Channell
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor Kelham Cooke
Councillor Paul Cosham
Councillor Nick Craft
Councillor Alan Davidson
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Breda Griffin
Councillor David Higgs
Councillor Reginald Howard
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown
Councillor Vic Kerr
Councillor Michael King
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor David Nalson
Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal
Councillor John Nicholson

Councillor Alan Parkin
Councillor Helen Powell
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Bob Russell
Councillor Bob Sampson
Councillor Bob Sandall
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Trevor Scott
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Rob Shorrock
Councillor Jacky Smith
Councillor John Smith
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Judy Stevens
Councillor Adam Stokes
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Brenda A Sumner
Councillor Mrs Jean Taylor
Councillor Mike Taylor
Councillor Jeff Thompson
Councillor Frank Turner
Councillor Bruce Wells
Councillor Martin Wilkins
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Rosemary H Woolley
Councillor Raymond Wootten

OFFICERS

Chief Executive (Beverly Agass)
Strategic Director (Daren Turner, Ian Yates, Tracey Blackwell)
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Lucy Youles)
Head of Finance (Richard Wyles)

OFFICERS

Elections and Democratic Services Team Leader (Julie Edwards)
Community Engagement and Policy Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)
Development Officer (Carol Drury)

1. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Decision:

That Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown be elected Chairman of South Kesteven District Council until the next annual meeting of the Council.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year. In proposing Councillor Mrs Kaberry-Brown, reference was made to her commitment for the area and her experience working in a political environment. The proposer also felt her family and community experience made her suited to the office. No other nominations were put forward and a vote was taken. Councillor Mrs Kaberry-Brown was duly elected Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

The Chairman was invested with the chains of office. She made a declaration of acceptance and took the chair.

The outgoing Chairman presented a gift to the new Chairman.

COUNCILLOR MRS KABERRY-BROWN IN THE CHAIR

2. VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING CHAIRMAN

A vote of thanks was made to the retiring Chairman. Councillor Cook was commended for the dignity, integrity and sobriety with which he conducted himself as Chairman and the fairness and honesty with which he conducted meetings. Both the Chairman and his lady were praised as excellent ambassadors for South Kesteven District Council.

The Chairman presented Councillor Cook with gifts to commemorate his year in office.

Councillor Cook thanked Members for their support during his term of office, throughout which he was proud and honoured to serve as Chairman. He felt he had achieved one of his objectives, taking the chain on 87 visits around the district. Councillor Cook had decided to donate monies to several smaller charities. Applications had been received and were being processed; the outgoing Chairman advised Councillors that he would write to them giving details of charity donations when this was completed.

Gifts were presented to the Chairman's lady and the civic officer.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Decision:

That Councillor David Nalson be elected Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council until the next annual meeting of the Council.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor David Nalson be elected Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council. In proposing Councillor Nalson, reference was made to his many years service as a local councillor, his legal background and his voluntary work. The proposer suggested Councillor Nalson would make a good ambassador and advocate for the whole district.

A further nomination was made that Councillor Reg Howard be elected as Vice Chairman of the Council. This was seconded. In proposing Councillor Howard notice was drawn to his status as a long-serving district and parish councillor, and his loyalty, dignity and independence commended. This nomination was seconded.

On being put to the vote, Councillor Nalson was appointed Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council. Councillor Nalson signed the declaration of acceptance. Thanking Members for their support, he stated he would endeavour to serve the Council and the district to the best of his ability.

A Councillor proposed moving a motion without notice under article 13(xviii) of the Council's constitution:

"To ensure the process of Council meetings can be seen to be conducted in an open and transparent way, the chair and vice-chair nominations should only come from non-administrative groups.

Chairman and Vice-Chairmen should not attend political group meetings as this is not conducive to the impartiality of the role."

The motion was not accepted because it did not comply with the Council's Constitution. A motion without notice could only be proposed on an item which was included on the agenda for a meeting and on which a vote had not been taken.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jock Kerr, Rowlands and Wren. An apology for late arrival was received from Councillor Woolley.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wootten declared a personal interest in agenda item 16 (Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel) because he was a member of the National Association of retired police officers, Chairman of the Grantham Town East Neighbourhood Policing Panel and a member of the Grantham Joint Agency Group.

6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2012 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

7. COMMUNICATIONS (INCLUDING CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS)

The Council noted the Chairman’s engagements.

The Chairman advised Councillors that her charities for the year would be the Grantham and Sleaford branch of Macmillan Nurses and the Air Ambulance.

8. APPOINTMENT OF THE CABINET

The Leader announced that the Cabinet would continue with six members and announced the appointment of Cabinet members and their portfolios:

Portfolio	Member
Policy, Strategy and Strategic Partnerships	Councillor Mrs Linda Neal
Governance and Communication	Councillor Paul Carpenter
Strategic Resources – Well Run Council	Councillor Mike Taylor
Grow The Economy and Economic Development	Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright
Green, Healthy and Arts	Councillor John Smith
Good Housing	Councillor Terl Bryant

Councillor Carpenter would remain the Deputy Leader.

9. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

Decision:

- 1) To approve the following appointments to Committees and Policy Development Groups based on rules of proportional balance and the nominations of group leaders:**

Committee/Group	Member
Resources Policy Development Group	Councillor Nick Craft Councillor Trevor Scott Councillor Jean Bevan Councillor Mike Cook Councillor Jacky Smith Councillor Bob Sandall Councillor Phil Dilks
Engagement Policy Development Group	Councillor Bob Adams Councillor Nick Robins Councillor Ray Auger Councillor Rosemary Woolley Councillor Jock Kerr Councillor Miss Ibis Channell Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Communities Policy Development Group	Councillor John Nicholson Councillor Kelham Cooke Councillor Breda Griffin

	<p>Councillor Mrs Jean Taylor Councillor Ray Wootten Councillor Jeff Thompson Councillor Phil Dilks</p>
Scrutiny Committee	<p>Councillor Mrs Judy Smith Councillor Paul Cosham Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown Councillor Michael King Councillor David Nalson Councillor Bob Russell Councillor Frank Turner Councillor Helen Powell Councillor Reg Howard Councillor Bob Sampson Councillor Alan Davidson</p>
Development Control Committee	<p>Councillor Alan Parkin Councillor Mike Cook Councillor David Higgs Councillor Mrs Rosemary-Kaberry Brown Councillor Michael King Councillor Jacky Smith Councillor Mrs Judy Smith Councillor Adam Stokes Councillor Mrs Brenda Sumner Councillor Martin Wilkins Councillor Debbie Wren Councillor Reg Howard Councillor Vic Kerr Councillor Helen Powell Councillor Judy Stevens Councillor Mark Ashberry Councillor Charmaine Morgan</p>
Licensing Committee & Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee	<p>Councillor Mrs Pam Bosworth Councillor George Chivers Councillor Breda Griffin Councillor Graddon Rowlands Councillor Bob Russell Councillor Mrs Jean Taylor Councillor Frank Turner Councillor Reg Howard Councillor Vic Kerr Councillor Bob Broughton Councillor Mark Ashberry</p>
Governance and Audit Committee	<p>Councillor Ian Stokes Councillor Jean Bevan Councillor Trevor Scott Councillor Martin Wilkins Councillor Rosemary Woolley Councillor Jeff Thompson Councillor Rob Shorrock</p>

Constitution Committee	Councillor Ray Wootten Councillor Adam Stokes Councillor Ray Auger Councillor Susan Sandall Councillor Rob Shorrocks
Standards Committee	Councillor David Nalson Councillor Vic Kerr Councillor Alan Davidson Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing Independent members: Chris Holtom, Fred Mann
Chief Executive's Remuneration Panel	Councillor Terl Bryant Councillor Trevor Scott Councillor Bob Sampson
Chief Executive's Performance Panel	Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal Councillor Mike Taylor Councillor Helen Powell
Chief Executive's Appeal Panel	Councillor Paul Carpenter Councillor Ian Stokes Councillor Vic Kerr

2) To approve the appointments of chairmen and vice-chairman

Committee/Group	Chairman	Vice-Chairman
Resources Policy Development Group	Councillor Craft	Councillor Scott
Engagement Policy Development Group	Councillor Adams	Councillor Woolley
Communities Policy Development Group	Councillor Nicholson	Councillor Thompson
Scrutiny Committee	Councillor Howard	Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Development Control Committee	Councillor Wilkins	Councillor Parkin
Licensing Committee	Councillor Mrs Bosworth	Councillor Russell
Corporate Governance and Audit	Councillor I Stokes	Councillor Bevan
Constitution Committee	Councillor Wootten	Councillor A Stokes
Standards Committee	Mr Chris Holtom	Mr Fred Mann

The Council had before them report number LDS063, which informed Council of the proposed apportionment of places on the Council's committees and policy development groups when the rules of political balance were applied.

Nominations for seats to Committees were invited from group Leaders. The Leader of the Council also provided her nominations for chairman and vice-chairman.

Resources Policy Development Group

Conservative: Councillors Craft (Chairman), Scott (Vice-Chairman),
Bevan, Cook, Jacky Smith
Independent: Councillor Bob Sandall
Labour: Councillor Dilks

On being put to the vote, the membership and chairmanship was confirmed.

The process for approving the chairman and vice-chairman of a committee/PDG in combination with membership was queried. It was suggested the two components should be voted on separately. The chairman used her discretion and agreed to consider appointments to committees and their chairmanships in separate votes.

Engagement Policy Development Group

Conservative: Councillors Adams, Robins, Auger, Woolley
Independent: Councillors J Kerr, Miss Channell, Councillor Bisnauthsing
Labour: No seat

On being put to the vote, the membership was confirmed.

Councillor Bob Adams was proposed as the Chairman and Councillor Rosemary Woolley was proposed as the Vice-Chairman of the Engagement Policy Development Group. The nominations were seconded. On being put to the vote, this was carried.

Communities Policy Development Group

Conservative: Councillors Nicholson, Cooke, Griffin, Mrs Taylor, Wootten
Independent: Councillor Thompson
Labour: Councillor Dilks

On being put to the vote, the membership was confirmed.

Councillor John Nicholson was proposed as the Chairman and Councillor Jeff Thompson was proposed as the Vice-Chairman. On being put to the vote, this was carried.

Scrutiny Committee

Conservative: Councillors Mrs Judy Smith, Cosham, Mrs Kaberry-Brown,
King, Nalson, Russell, Turner
Independent: Councillors Powell, Howard, Sampson
Labour: Councillor Davidson

On being put to the vote, the membership was confirmed.

Councillor Reg Howard was proposed as the Chairman and Councillor Mrs Judy Smith was proposed as the Vice-Chairman. On being put to the vote, this was carried.

Prior to the meeting, a paper was circulated detailing nominations for each committee from each group leader. It was proposed that the Council vote for the appointments to committees/PDGs *en bloc*. This was seconded and on being put to the vote, the proposition was carried.

The Leader updated information on her nominations for the Chief Executive's Remuneration Panel and made her recommendations for the chairmanships and vice-chairmanships of each Committee PDG (details of the nominations are listed below).

Development Control Committee

Conservative: Councillors Parkin (Vice-Chairman), Cook, Higgs, Mrs Kaberry-Brown, King, Jacky Smith, Mrs Judy Smith, A Stokes, Mrs Sumner, Wilkins (Chairman), Wren
Independent: Councillors Howard, V Kerr, Powell, Stevens
Labour: Councillors Ashberry, Morgan

Licensing Committee and Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Committee

Conservative: Councillors Mrs Bosworth (Chairman), Tuner, Chivers, Griffin, Rowlands, Russell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Taylor
Independent: Councillors Howard, Broughton, Vic Kerr
Labour: Councillor Ashberry

Governance and Audit Committee

Conservative: Councillors I Stokes (Chairman), Bevan (Vice-Chairman), Scott, Wilkins, Woolley
Independent: Councillor Thompson
Labour: Councillor Shorrocks

Constitution Committee

Conservative: Councillors Wootten (Chairman), A Stokes (Vice-Chairman), Auger
Independent: Councillor S Sandall
Labour: Councillor Shorrocks

Standards Committee

Conservative: Councillor Nalson
Independent: Councillors V Kerr, Bisnauthsing
Labour: Councillor Davidson

Legislation required that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had to be independent members. Mr Chris Holtom and Mr Fred Mann were proposed as the Committee's Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively.

Chief Executive's Remuneration Panel

Conservative: Councillors Bryant, Scott
Independent: Councillor Sampson

Chief Executive's Performance Panel

Conservative: Councillors Mrs Neal, Mike Taylor
Independent: Councillor Powell

Chief Executive's Appeal Panel

Conservative: Councillors Carpenter, I Stokes
Independent: Councillor V Kerr

On being put to the vote, the nominations to committees and their chairmen and vice-chairmen were approved.

The Chairman of the Development Control Committee proposed a vote of thanks to Councillor Alan Parkin (the former Committee Chairman). Councillor Parkin had been Chairman of the Committee for eleven years, chairing 168 meetings. The work Councillor Parkin undertook outside the Committee was also noted. Councillors showed their thanks with a round of applause.

10. TIMETABLE OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2012/13

Decision:

In accordance with Council procedure rule 1.1 (x), that the meetings of the Council and Committees be held in accordance with the draft programme attached as appendix 1 to report number LDS065.

The adoption of the draft timetable of Council meetings as appended to report number LDS065 and circulated with the agenda for the meeting was proposed and seconded. Councillors were advised that the only change from the initial draft that was circulated to Councillors was a change in date for the Governance and Audit Committee. It had been moved from 28 June 2012 to 29 June 2012 because the Olympic torch relay was visiting Grantham on 28 June 2012.

An amendment to the draft programme of meetings was moved and seconded:

"That an additional meeting of full Council be added on 24 January 2013 otherwise full Council does not meet between 13 December and 1 March."

In proposing the amendment, attention was drawn to the length of gap between the December and March meetings of the Councillors. Speaking on the amendment, some Members suggested the gap had been left for practical reasons – there were a large number of other meetings as part of budget preparation, and inclement weather. Reference was also made to the cost of

full Council meetings. Members speaking in favour of the motion highlighted transparent decision-making processes and accessibility and accountability to members of the public. A vote on the amendment was taken and lost.

The original motion was put to the vote and was duly approved.

11. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Decision:

To approve the following list of nominations for representatives on outside bodies:

Organisation	Representative	Expiry
Dame Margaret Thorold's Educational Foundation	Councillor Vic Kerr	January 2016
East Midlands Councils	The Leader (Deputy Leader in his/her absence)	May 2013
Local Government Association	The Leader (Deputy Leader in his/her absence)	May 2013
Local Government Association (Rural Commission)	Green, Healthy and Arts Portfolio Holder (voting rights) Councillor Michael King	May 2013
Local Government Association (Urban Commission)	Grow the Economy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder (Voting Rights) Councillor Michael King	May 2013

Members had before them report number LDS064, by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services setting out those outside bodies and organisations which were seeking district council representation. It was proposed and seconded that the appointments should continue (as shown in appendix A to the report), with one exception: replacing Councillor Wren with Councillor King on the Local Government Association Rural Commission. No further nominations were made.

An amendment was proposed that:

“All Councillors representing South Kesteven District Council must supply a copy of the minutes or a written report to all councillors for review. These should be published on the website as well.”

This was seconded. Several Members who served on outside bodies stated that they put a copy of the minutes of those bodies in the Members' Lounge for the information of all Councillors. Those Councillors speaking in favour of the amendment highlighted the importance of consistency in reporting to ensure

accountability. It was also suggested that the agreeing of such a motion would provide a clear structure for any new Members of the Council. It was noted that district councillors sat on the body to represent the Council; the outside body on which they sat would be responsible for publishing minutes or reports as appropriate, having particular regard to confidential information. On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

The proposer summed up and the original proposition was put to the vote and carried.

12. LOCAL AUTHORITY MORTGAGE SCHEME - REVIEW OF SCHEME

Decision:

- 1) The Council notes the progress to date with the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme**
- 2) The Council, having considered the review of the Local Policy for Scheme Eligibility attached to report number SD032 as Appendix A in accordance with Lloyds Bank plc (Local Lend a Hand) requirements, approves the amendments to that policy as follows:**
 - a. Clause 5 of the policy approved at the Council meeting of the 1 March 2012 is amended at bullet point 2 to read:**

“Only applicants wishing to purchase a property which is situated in the district of South Kesteven in accordance with qualifying postcodes will be eligible. Applicants may currently reside outside the district boundaries”
 - b. Clause 5, and 8 – the maximum loan size per application is up to and including £118,750.**

The Strategic Resources – Well Run Council Portfolio Holder moved the recommendations as written in report number SD032. This was seconded. The proposer explained that the changes were necessary so the policy accurately reflected the requirements of the Lloyds scheme. The changes included the identification of postcodes that qualified for the scheme; these were limited because Lloyds could not process postcodes that straddled district boundaries. The second change to the policy provided loan to value details. The scheme was commended and officers were thanked for the work they had done on the scheme.

In response to a question, the Strategic Director, Corporate Focus explained that when the policy was considered previously, the Council set a limit on property value, which the scheme operated by Lloyds did not allow. The report provided illustrations of the possible impacts of providing a loan to value amount.

The proposal was put to the vote and carried.

13. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES

Decision:

- 1) The Council approves the proposed revised schedule of polling districts and polling places as detailed at Appendix 1 to report number LDS061.**
- 2) That the Chief Executive, as Returning Officer for South Kesteven, be granted delegated authority in consultation with Ward Councillors, to determine polling places in the event that a polling place becomes unavailable during an election period**

The Governance and Communication Portfolio Holder moved the recommendations in report number LDS061. In proposing the motion, he advised Councillors that the Council was required to periodically review its polling stations and polling places. Comments had been invited and site visits made. The proposals were also considered by members of the Engagement Policy Development Group. The proposition was seconded.

During debate, attention was drawn to the use of schools. Approximately 20 schools would continue to be used as polling stations. It was requested this be kept under review. A further comment was made about a polling station in Stamford All Saints Ward and its location within the Ward.

The Chief Executive advised that there was a recommendation to use public buildings as polling stations where possible. When schools were used as polling stations, there was no requirement that they had to close; it was the decision of the headteacher and governors.

Councillors were advised that from January 2013, the Council would be subject to a boundary review. As part of this it would prove necessary to reconsider the polling stations. The Chairman of the Engagement PDG advised Councillors that it would keep polling station locations under review.

On being put to the vote, this was carried.

15:30-15:48 The meeting was adjourned

14. GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND WORK PLAN

The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee presented report number GAC004, which was a factual report on the work that the Governance and Audit committee had undertaken during 2011/12 and an indicative work programme for 2012/13. The council noted the report.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

Decision:

That recommendations 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 as detailed in report number

LDS062 be referred back to the Constitution Committee for further consideration.

The Chairman of the Constitution Committee, in moving the recommendations in report number LDS062 explained why the Committee had looked to make recommendations on the number of notices of motion that could be submitted at Council meetings. He also provided a summary of the number of notices of motion that had been received. The proposition was seconded.

Debate on the motion ensued, which incorporated the following points:

- Restricting the number of motions would restrict the ability of Members to bring issues before the Council, restricting opposition groups
- Limiting the number of notices of motion to two a meeting could lead to a backlog and prevent timely discussion of arising issues
- The average number of notices of motion had been 5.2 a year. The number of notices of motion in March 2012 (6) was not usual
- The proportionality of making a decision on the basis of one meeting; it was suggested as an alternative that the Committee could have proposed preventing or limiting notices of motion at the Budget Council meeting only. A ruling on the proportionality of the decision was requested as a point of order in respect of Article 16.2(i). The point of order could not be accepted because it did relate to an alleged breach of rule relating to the council meeting.
- Preventing the submission of notices of motion would restrict Councillors' ability to represent their Wards
- Some issues brought as notices of motion could be resolved by asking questions of Portfolio Holders

An amendment was proposed and seconded that *"the matter be referred back to the Constitution Committee for further consideration."* It was suggested that the Committee could undertake wider consultation with Councillors.

The amendment was put to the vote, where an equality of votes was achieved. The Chairman used her casting vote to vote for the amendment, which was consequently carried. The amendment became the substantive motion, and on being put to the vote, was carried.

16. LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Decision:

- 1. The Council notes the development of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel.**
- 2. The Council approves the proposed arrangements (set out in Appendix A of report LDS066) for the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel to be established in accordance with Schedule 6 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the Act) as a joint committee of Boston Borough Council, City of Lincoln Council,**

East Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Council, North Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council, South Kesteven District Council and West Lindsey District Council.

- 3. That Councillor Ray Wootten be appointed to the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel with authority to take all decisions necessary to participate in undertaking the functions of the panel.**
- 4. The Council approves that East Lindsey District Council be designated as the lead authority for the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel.**

The Governance and Communications Portfolio Holder proposed the recommendations in report number LDS066 on the formation of a Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel, and proposed that Councillor Ray Wootten be appointed as the Council's representative on the Panel. The proposition was seconded. Councillor Wootten's experience and suitability for the role were summarised. On being put to the vote, the proposition was carried.

17. QUESTIONS WITHOUT DISCUSSION

One question without discussion had been received and referred to the relevant Policy Development Group for a response.

Question

To: Councillor Linda Neal, Leader of the Council

From: Councillor Rob Shorrocks

Can the leader provide a report on her activities as leader since the last full council meeting and publish this report to members on the SKDC website?

Referred to the Engagement Policy Development Group.

18. NOTICES OF MOTION GIVEN UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12:

Decision:

That the Council rejects the motion:

The Localism Act 2011 permits Councils to change from one form of governance to another.

This Council currently operates the leader/cabinet arrangement but this could be changed back to a committee system.

A committee system operated at SKDC for many years prior to the leader/cabinet arrangements and was very successful. Committees are the most democratic form of decision-making and enable all

Councillors to be involved and gain experience in many areas.

I am aware of other Councils reverting back to a Committee system and in particular Nottinghamshire County Council which is Conservative-led have agreed to return to Committees following a Nottinghamshire Conservatives manifesto pledge. They have successfully organised this change in the period from November 2011 to 17 May 2012 when the new system will commence. Nottinghamshire have also contained all costs within their existing budgets.

I propose that South Kesteven District Council agree to return to the Committee system and set a timescale to achieve this.

Councillor Wood proposed the motion:

“The Localism Act 2011 permits Councils to change from one form of governance to another.

This Council currently operates the leader/cabinet arrangement but this could be changed back to a committee system.

A committee system operated at SKDC for many years prior to the leader/cabinet arrangements and was very successful. Committees are the most democratic form of decision-making and enable all Councillors to be involved and gain experience in many areas.

I am aware of other Councils reverting back to a Committee system and in particular Nottinghamshire County Council which is Conservative-led have agreed to return to Committees following a Nottinghamshire Conservatives manifesto pledge. They have successfully organised this change in the period from November 2011 to 17 May 2012 when the new system will commence. Nottinghamshire have also contained all costs within their existing budgets.

I propose that South Kesteven District Council agree to return to the Committee system and set a timescale to achieve this.”

The motion was seconded.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Wood explained that several councils, including Nottinghamshire County Council had taken decisions to return to a committee system. He suggested that, on its introduction, the Leader/Cabinet model had been unpopular because the committee system gave all Councillors the opportunity to be involved in decision-making.

The following points were raised during debate:

- The committee system had previously received criticism because of the amount of time taken for decision-making
- All councillors were elected and should have an opportunity to represent

- the people who elected them
- Prospective election candidates may be encouraged if they could actively take part in decision-making
- The committee system provided greater opportunities for the involvement of opposition and backbench councillors
- Regulations which provided details of items that could be delegated to committees were not yet available. Making decisions before their content was known could lead to the Council having to make changes to incorporate the Regulations' stipulations
- Committee minutes were presented at Council meetings, so all Councillors knew what was happening on all Committees

An amendment was proposed:

“That this item be referred back to a special working party with the remit of reporting on the advantages and disadvantages of the committee structure and report back to the next full council meeting.”

This was seconded. Several Councillors spoke on the amendment and welcomed further consideration and a report to a future council meeting.

It was proposed and seconded that the question be now put. The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

Further debate on the proposition continued, during which Councillors queried whether the Regulations needed to be available before a decision was taken given that several councils were already going through the process to return to a committee system. The Monitoring Officer clarified that the provisions within the Localism Act that allowed councils to consider different governance systems had been enacted, however the Secretary of State had yet to make Regulations about the functions that could be delegated from the council to various committees. If the Council decided to return to a committee system before Regulations were released, there was a risk that any new arrangements would not comply with regulations and the Council would then have to make changes.

It was proposed and seconded that the question be now put. On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

Following recent comments made by a Councillor on a social networking site, the Councillor was asked to make a publicly recorded apology to the former Chairman and the office of Chairman. The Councillor made a statement defending and explaining his actions but no apology was forthcoming and a number of Councillors left the chamber.

19. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 16:58.