

# MINUTES

**CABINET  
THURSDAY, 17 JANUARY 2019**



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

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**THE DEPUTY LEADER:** Councillor Kelham Cooke (Chairman)

## **CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councillor Helen Goral  
Councillor Dr Peter Moseley  
Councillor Nick Neilson  
Councillor Nick Robins  
Councillor Jacky Smith  
Councillor Adam Stokes

## **NON-CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councillor Bob Adams  
Councillor Phil Dilks  
Councillor Bob Sampson  
Councillor David Taylor  
Councillor Linda Wootten  
Councillor Ray Wootten

## **OFFICERS**

Strategic Director, Growth (Paul Thomas)  
Strategic Director, Resources (Debbie Muddimer)  
Assistant Chief Executive, Transformation & Change (Lee Sirdifield)  
Assistant Director, Commercial & Operational (Ian Yates)  
Assistant Director, Housing (Harry Rai)  
Assistant Director Resources (Richard Wyles)  
Head of Governance (Ben Bix)  
InvestSK (Steve Bowyer)  
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

## **CO68. APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lee, the Leader of the Council.

## **CO69. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 DECEMBER 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

## **CO70. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)**

No interests were disclosed.

## **CO71. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2019/20**

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented report number CFM485, which provided draft Budget estimates for 2019/20, revenue and capital, for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account together with details of Budget proposals. Specific reference was made to the Council Tax proposals, on which consultation would be undertaken, and the cessation of the Business Rates pilot, which meant that the Council would fall back to the pooling arrangement of which it was previously part. The Cabinet Member highlighted that the projected balance position for 2019/20 was a small surplus.

Cabinet Members' attention was drawn to the savings that had been found by directorates to offset growth. Members also noted the proposal to continue with the Community Fund and the Ward Member Grant Scheme. Proposed fees and charges were set out within the report, together with a comment against each that indicated whether they were statutory or discretionary.

The Cabinet Member for Finance also referred to the Housing Revenue Account and proposals for rent levels; dwelling rents would reduce by 1% as required by Government while it was proposed garage rents should increase in line with inflation.

Finally, the Cabinet Member for Finance drew Members' attention to proposals relating to the Capital Programme, reserves and balances and capacity bids. He also made reference to a meeting of the Council's Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had met on 10 January 2019, and the comments and recommendations that had been made at that meeting.

One of the Cabinet members spoke about the business summits that had been held in the district and the Council's growth ambitions, together with transformation work to make South Kesteven a more agile and modern organisation that could deliver the highest quality of services to residents across the district. This was put within the context of a financial backdrop that was considered increasingly challenging and a corporate strategy that focussed on the authority becoming financially self-sufficient.

The Council had set up a working group to consider the Council's governance arrangements. The working group had identified the need for a Scrutiny Officer to provide dedicated support to the Overview and Scrutiny function, and officers were asked to include this within the Budget proposals. This suggestion received support from other Cabinet and non-Cabinet members who had been involved in the working group and who had attended the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Several Cabinet Members expressed their support for the Budget proposals and how they recognised the Council's growth priorities and investment in those, and the use of the commercial element of the organisation to replace government funding. Reference was made to the companies in which the Council was involved, specifically DeliverSK, which was focussed on development and Environment SK,

which was the vehicle that had been created to deliver the Council's grounds maintenance service. Members stated that they believed that the proposals conformed with the core commitments that were made at the beginning of the administration. They felt that it was a Budget that benefitted the whole of the district, rather than focussed on one town.

Expressions of thanks were made to the Communications Team, which had been preparing consultation on the Budget and Council Tax proposals.

The Deputy Leader invited non-Cabinet Members to speak and ask questions.

One Member who spoke made reference to the Budget setting process. They stated that it would have been helpful to have contextual information about which of the savings identified in the 2018/19 Budget had been achieved. Some concern was expressed by non-Cabinet members in respect of the use of reserves and a request made for more information to help Members consider the prudence of using reserves, its appropriateness and sustainability. At the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, Members had been advised that the intention was to regenerate reserve levels over three to five years with income from investments. The Deputy Leader stated that a report would be presented to the Growth Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 February 2019, which incorporated this information. It was noted that the reserves held by South Kesteven District Councils were at higher levels than the majority of other councils in the area and that the use of reserves meant that the Council was building its asset base without borrowing to fund its investments.

Clarification was sought about the references to negative Revenue Support Grant. Members were advised that the Government had agreed to stand the cost of negative Revenue Support Grant in 2019/20. There was no indication of whether this commitment would continue beyond the 2019/20 financial year and therefore provision for making this payment was included in indicative figures. It was hoped that there would be more certainty about this following completion of the fairer funding review.

A question was asked about whether the drainage board levies could be listed separately in the Council Tax bill. Members were advised that drainage levies were directly precepted to the authority and there was no discretion for the Council to show these separately.

In response to a question on the Council Tax consultation, the Cabinet Member for Finance stated that each of the three options in the report would be subject to consultation (an increase of £5 on a Band D property, an increase of 3% on a Band D property and no increase). The results of the consultation would feed into the report which would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 7 February 2019, when it considered its final Budget proposals for recommendation to Council.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that Cabinet:

**1. Had considered the budget proposals for 2019/20 in respect of:**

- **General Fund – Revenue and Capital**

- **Housing Revenue Account – Revenue and Capital**
- 2. Agreed to the inclusion of provision within the 2019/20 General Fund Revenue Budget for a Scrutiny Officer**
- 3. Approved consultation in respect of proposed Council Tax levels for 2019/20 for the period 21 January to 3 February 2019 (inclusive)**

#### **CO72. MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET BY THE COUNCIL OR OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

Report number LDS337 of the Leader of the Council informed Cabinet Members that no recommendations had been made to Cabinet by the Council or Overview and Scrutiny Committees since it last met on 20 December 2018, except those made by the Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2019.

The Chairman of the Rural Overview and Scrutiny Committee stated that it would next meet on Wednesday 23 January 2019 and that a loneliness workshop had been scheduled for Wednesday 30 January 2019, which he encouraged Members to attend.

The Chairman of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee referred to a motion that had previously been passed by Council regarding modern day slavery. He stated that it would be considered at the next meeting of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at which Chief Superintendent Davidson, who had experience of Lincolnshire Police's work on the matter. He added that he was also due to attend a conference on the subject at Lincolnshire Police Headquarters on Monday 21 January 2019.

The Chairman of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee stated that it was next due to meet on Thursday 24 January 2019 when it had a full agenda. A visitor guide for the district had been produced by InvestSK and Members expressed their gratitude for the work that had been involved.

#### **CO73. REPRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM NON CABINET MEMBERS**

Report number LDS339 of the Leader of the Council informed the Cabinet that no non-Cabinet Members had submitted requests to make representations or ask questions prior to the publication of the agenda for this meeting. No Members had indicated that they wished to ask questions or make representations following the publication of the agenda.

#### **CO74. CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

Report number LDS340 of the Leader of the Council and the Forward Plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report gave an indication of the items that would be presented to Cabinet over the following twelve-month period. The report also included items that were scheduled to be considered at Council meetings during that period.

**CO75. ITEMS RAISED BY CABINET MEMBERS INCLUDING REPORTS ON KEY AND NON KEY DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS.**

Report number LDS338 of the Leader of the Council informed the Cabinet of decisions that had been taken by individual Members since the last meeting of the Cabinet was held on 20 December 2018.

- **Appendix 1:** Establishment of InvestSK, Memorandum of Understanding and Articles of Association
- **Appendix 2:** Confirmation and selection of the private sector partner for DeliverSK and commencement of legal processes to form new partnership
- **Appendix 3:** To enter into a 1-year lease of the second floor of The Maltings, Wharf Road, Grantham, NG31 6BH

**CO76. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting was closed at 14:31.