

Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 10 September 2019



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

The Deputy Leader: Councillor Kelham Cooke, The Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairman)

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Barry Dobson, Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Helen Goral, Cabinet Member for Growth
Councillor Dr Peter Moseley, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations
Councillor Robert Reid, Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Nick Robins, Cabinet Member for Planning
Councillor Adam Stokes, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor Hannah Westropp, Cabinet Member for Communications and Engagement

Non-Cabinet Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Mark Whittington

Officers

Interim Chief Executive (Paul Thomas)
Interim Strategic Director, Growth (Ken Lyon)
Strategic Director, Transformation & Change (Lee Sirdifield)
Strategic Director, Commercial & Operational (Gary Smith)
Director of Finance (Richard Wyles)
Assistant Director, Commercial & Operational (Ian Yates)
Assistant Director, Housing (Harry Rai)
InvestSK (Steve Bowyer)
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

24. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lee. An apology was also received from Councillor Ray Wootten in his capacity as the Chairman of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Linda Wootten in her capacity as the Chairman of the Constitution Committee.

25. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 July 2019 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

26. Disclosure of Interests (if any)

No interests were disclosed.

27. Local Plan (Key Decision)

The Cabinet Member for Planning introduced his report on the proposed main modifications to the South Kesteven Local Plan. He set out the process that the plan had undergone to date and the anticipated timeline for adoption. He also drew Cabinet members' attention to the deliberations of the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5 September 2019, a note of which had been circulated, and an addendum to the schedule of main modifications set out in Appendix 1 to the circulated report. The Cabinet was provided with an overview of the methodology through which housing need was calculated and how it had been accommodated within the Local Plan. Reference was made to a number of specific development sites, including Manning Road, Bourne, Linchfield Road in Deeping St. James and the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks site in Grantham. It was noted that windfall sites had not been included within the housing allocations 5-year housing land supply.

In presenting the report, the Cabinet Member for Planning referred to amended proposals in respect of affordable housing; rather than a blanket 30% housing requirement for developments of 10 dwellings and above, one of the modifications proposed reducing the requirement in Grantham to 20%. This was to ensure developments in Grantham, where the housing market was less buoyant than the south of the district, were viable. This was one area about which the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had raised concerns. He concluded by reassuring members that the requirement for modifications to be made was normal, and expressed his appreciation of the officers who had been involved in the development of the Local Plan document.

Several other Cabinet members expressed their thanks, both to the officers who had been instrumental in the development of the plan, but also to those Cabinet members who had been involved in its development. Members saw the Plan, with the modifications, as a good, sound plan that would help the Council in managing development across the district.

One Cabinet member asked for clarification about whether Langtoft would still be identified as a larger village following the closure of its post office; he was advised that its designation would not change. Members were supportive of the document as they considered that it not only focussed on the development of urban areas, it also took account of the wishes of some of the smaller villages which had expressed a

desire for limited, appropriate development. Members identified one typographical error in Appendix 3 on page 68 of the report pack; the document referred to FFTP rather than FTTP.

The recommendations in the report were proposed, seconded and **AGREED**:

1. Cabinet approved the schedule of main modifications to the Local Plan following its public examination, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and the addendum circulated at the Cabinet meeting, for public consultation in order that the plan is found sound
2. Cabinet approved the draft Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix 4 to the report of the Cabinet Member for Planning setting out the timetable for the Local Plan and associated development plan documents

28. University Centre, South Kesteven (Key Decision)

The Cabinet Member for Growth presented her report which related to the continuation of an ongoing project to deliver a university centre in Grantham. She stated that the Council had received a grant of £2m from the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership to construct a building on St. Peter's Hill to serve as a University Centre delivered in partnership with the University of Lincoln. The building had been delivered as part of the development of the Savoy Cinema in Grantham. The Cabinet member stated that the University Centre would act as a key component to drive the local economy.

Members were advised that Lindum Construction had been appointed through a framework to undertake feasibility and pre-construction work; the report was asking members to approve their appointment to progress the capital fit-out of the facility. The Cabinet Member for Growth added that in order to comply with the outputs within the Greater Lincolnshire LEP contract, the fit-out would need to be completed by January 2020.

Members of the Cabinet recognised the advantages that having a University Centre in Grantham could bring, both to the town and the wider area. The target number of learners had been based on liaison work between InvestSK, the University of Lincoln and local businesses, and the strong sign-up for the initial courses, meant that the Cabinet Member for Growth considered the target of 340 learners to be reasonable. It was noted that the final contract sum had yet to be presented but Cabinet members were reassured that Lindum Construction was aware of the Council's budget for the project.

The recommendations in the report were proposed and seconded, and it was **AGREED**:

1. To enter into a contract with Lindum Construction Services Ltd to deliver the capital fit out works for the University Centre, Grantham to a total value not exceeding £680,000

2. To delegate in-project decisions to the Interim Chief Executive and Strategic Director, Growth, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member

29. Witham Slea Blue/Green Corridor (Key Decision)

In presenting her report on entering into a funding agreement with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to access European Regional Development Fund grant funding, the Cabinet Member for Growth gave an overview of the Witham Slea blue / green corridor project. She explained that the project had been underway for a number of years and reminded members that Council had agreed budget for South Kesteven District Council's contribution to the project. The recommendations in the report related to the signing of a formal agreement that would allow the project to be taken to the next phase. She made reference to a budget amendment that would be brought before Council but explained that the Council's agreed commitment of £60,000 per annum for three-years would not change. The amendment was necessary because the Council was acting as the lead partner and financial body.

The Cabinet Member for Growth highlighted the benefits of the programme, which included conservation of wildlife areas, new habitat creation, improving residential amenity and the quality of the environment for residents and visitors. These benefits would be delivered through 14 projects.

During discussion, members of the Cabinet recognised the benefits that the project could provide in respect of the visitor economy and how well the collaborative approach had worked. Cabinet members acknowledged the work that had been done on the project by the current and previous Cabinet members. In response to a question raised by a non-Cabinet member, the Cabinet Member for Planning stated that the officers that were to deliver the project would be employed by SKDC.

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

1. That the authority enters into a Funding Agreement with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government
2. To delegate the signing of the contract to the Cabinet Member for Growth and the Strategic Director, Growth
3. That the authority appoints a suitable Cabinet Member to the board for this programme of works and delegates in-project decisions to the project board
4. The Cabinet recommends to Council an amendment of £1,056,615 to the Budget Framework to include expenditure in relation to the Witham Slea Blue / Green programme as per the financing arrangements set out in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Growth

30. Climate change emergency

The Cabinet Member, Commercial and Operations presented his report on declaring a climate emergency and the recommendations within the report. He referred to work that was already being undertaken by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other aspects of the council's operations, stating that he believed that the time was right to make a statement with some meaning behind it. In presenting the recommendations, reference was made to the council's responsibility to reduce its own carbon impact as well as its community leadership role. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations stated that there was no precise definition of a climate emergency, however it was recognised as a situation where immediate action was required to mitigate carbon impact beyond government targets. He concluded by saying that the report was about the whole of the Council and how everything it did should be influenced by this ambition.

Other Cabinet members reiterated the importance of the Council's community leadership role and referred to the actions being taken by other bodies, with specific reference being made to the Local Government Association and Lincolnshire County Council. When the matter had been considered by Lincolnshire County Council, it had been suggested that it should aim to achieve a net-zero carbon position by 2030 however the infrastructure was not in place to support this target. It was noted that some of the easiest savings would be achieved early in the programme and that to get to the ultimate target departments would need to ensure a co-ordinated approach was taken.

A suggested amendment was made to the wording of recommendation 2(d), which would see a funding commitment of up to £50,000 to enable external advice and the recruitment of a Climate Change Officer, with the agreement of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to drive forward the Council's ambition to be net-zero carbon. The Cabinet Member, Commercial and Operations agreed to incorporate the revised wording within his proposal.

A non-Cabinet member stated that he did not feel that the targets within the report were sufficiently ambitious, favouring a target to achieve a net-zero carbon position by 2030. Reference was made to the proportion of councils that had already agreed to declare a climate emergency and to take action to reduce their carbon footprint. Cabinet members felt a measured approach was more beneficial; the formation of the working group would identify the Council's current position and help understand how the agenda could be driven forward. Cabinet members distinguished the actions being taken by South Kesteven District Council because of the budgetary provision it was making to resource achieving a net-zero carbon position. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee was considered a key body for driving forward the climate agenda on behalf of the Council.

A question was raised about the membership of the proposed working group. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations stated that the Chief Executive would form the task and finish group and it was the ambition of Cabinet members that it would seek to engage any member who wanted to be involved in the process. It was also hoped that the task and finish group and the Environment Overview and

Scrutiny Committee would look to see what actions had been taken by other Councils.

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

1. Cabinet recommends to Council that South Kesteven District Council declares a 'climate emergency'
2. In response to this, Cabinet recommends that Council:
 - a. Confirms the political ambition to reduce the organisation's carbon footprint by 2030 and to become net-zero carbon by 2050. This encompasses the Council's wholly owned companies
 - b. Recognises the importance of the much more far-reaching impact of the Council's community leadership role to reduce South Kesteven's carbon footprint (e.g. residents, businesses, other public sector organisations, visitors/commuters, etc.)
 - c. Requests the Interim Chief Executive to establish a 'Climate Change Action' task and finish group to
 - i. Identify how the Council's activities can work towards being net-zero carbon
 - ii. Consider the latest climate science and expert advice on solutions
 - iii. Consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council's activities
 - iv. Establish any budgetary implications
 - v. Liaise with the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and report initial findings to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in spring 2020
 - d. Allocate up to £50,000 to enable external advice and the recruitment of a Climate Change Officer with the agreement of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to drive forward the Council's ambition to be net-zero carbon

31. Matters Referred to Cabinet by the Council or Overview & Scrutiny Committees

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report circulated with the agenda, which stated that no matters had been referred to Cabinet by the Council and summarised those matters that had been considered by overview and scrutiny committees since the Cabinet's last meeting on 9 July 2019.

32. Representations and questions from Non Cabinet Members

The first question put to members of the Cabinet asked whether an update was available in respect of plans regarding leisure provision within the Deepings. The Cabinet Member for Growth stated that the Councillor had been advised of the current position by the Interim Chief Executive and stated that the information that had been provided in that update could not be shared more widely as it was still commercially sensitive. She referred to the commitment that she had made at the last meeting of the Council and stated that she would be able to provide an update at the Council meeting on 26 September 2019. The commitment to delivering new leisure facilities for the Deepings was reaffirmed and consultation was promised for later in 2019. Reassurance was also provided that as soon as a site had been secured, it would be announced.

Reference was made to a freedom of information request that a member had submitted; part of that request asked for information on the Council's energy use. He identified that a discrepancy between the information provided in response to that request and information that had been provided in 2009 and 2012. These figures would be discussed at a forthcoming meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and he asked that the correct information be made available for that meeting. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations stated that the information was being verified, but the person who was working on the request was currently on leave. The Deputy Leader assured the Councillor that the Chief Executive would look into the matter and come back to him.

33. Cabinet Forward Plan

Cabinet members noted the report presented by the Deputy Leader of the Council, appended to which was the Cabinet's Forward Plan. The Forward Plan gave an indication of the items that would be presented to the Cabinet during the following 12-month period. The plan also included items that were scheduled to be considered at meetings of the Council during that period.

34. Items raised by Cabinet Members including reports on Key and Non Key Decisions taken under Delegated Powers.

The Cabinet noted the report presented by the Deputy Leader of the Council, which informed Cabinet member of decisions that had been taken by individual members since the last meeting of the Cabinet was held on 9 July 2019.

35. Close of meeting

The meeting was closed at 17:06.