

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2010

2.00 PM



PRESENT

Councillor Mrs Margery Radley Chairman

Councillor Bob Adams
Councillor Ray Auger
Councillor Christine Brough
Councillor Robert Broughton
Councillor Paul Carpenter
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright
Councillor Elizabeth Channell
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor Michael Cook
Councillor John Dawson
Councillor Mike Exton
Councillor Mrs Joyce Gaffigan
Councillor John Harvey
Councillor Robert Hearmon
Councillor Bryan Helyar
Councillor David Higgs
Councillor Reginald Howard
Councillor Kenneth Joynson
Councillor Albert Victor Kerr
Councillor Jock Kerr
Councillor Peter Martin-Mayhew
Councillor Stuart McBride
Councillor Andrew Moore

Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal
Councillor John Nicholson
Councillor Alan Parkin
Councillor Bob Russell
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Bob Sandall
Councillor Trevor Scott
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Councillor John Smith
Councillor Mrs Maureen Spencer-Gregson O.B.E.
Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Mike Taylor
Councillor Jeff Thompson
Councillor Frank Turner
Councillor Tom Webster
Councillor Graham Wheat
Councillor Avril Williams
Councillor Mike Williams
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Raymond Wootten

OFFICERS

Chief Executive (Beverly Agass)
Strategic Director (Ian Yates)
Strategic Director (s151 officer) (Daren Turner)
Interim Strategic Director (Tracey Blackwell)
Head of Finance (Richard Wyles)
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) (Lucy Youles)
Head of Assets (Paul Stokes)

OFFICERS

Waste & Recycling Service Manager (Pat Swinton)
Community Safety & Licensing Service Manager (Mark Jones)
Licensing Officer (Peter Harrison)
Enforcement Officer – Taxi & Local Licenses (Richard Etherton)
Enforcement Co-ordinator – Waste & Recycling (Gwen Came)
Committee Support Officer (David Lambley)

58. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Prior to the Public Open Forum, the Councillors were entertained by carol singers from Sir Isaac Newton Primary School. The Chairman thanked the children on behalf of the Council.

Question from Mrs Oates:

Leaseholders who reside in New Street Grantham were advised by representatives of leaseholder/Tenant Services at a communal meeting held at Manners Street about November 2007, that SKDC would be getting together a group forum for SKDC leaseholders.

Can you please tell me, noting this is now 3 years hence, when will this group meeting take place? And what are SKDC future proposals for leaseholders input regarding concerns they may have?

Reply from the Corporate Governance and Housing Portfolio Holder:

This Council is always committed to ensuring there are opportunities for all residents to actively engage and discuss issues and matters that are relevant to them. As part of the resident involvement strategy all tenants and leaseholders are invited to attend local neighbourhood group meetings. In fact, I note from our records that I think you regularly attend these meetings. I think that they are held on a monthly basis at either Manners Street or Greyfriars. At the moment, whilst these cover both tenants and leaseholders, and I think its an excellent forum with which you can raise issues and questions, and you are an active contributor. At present there is no specific forum solely for leaseholders, but I will look into this. Such a forum would need to be carefully considered to ensure it could be accessed by all our leaseholders across the district, bearing in mind we are 365 square miles, and not just specific to any one area of Grantham.

Question from Mrs Jacklin:

There has been a dispute between SKDC and leaseholders in New Street regarding service charges. This dispute was first discussed with SKDC in February 2010 with no satisfactory outcome. It was deemed necessary to consult a solicitor, who in turn had great difficulty corresponding with SKDC. Can you advise me why SKDC did not try to resolve the matter sooner and even now in December 2010, 10 months later, the whole matter is still not fully resolved.

Reply from the Corporate Governance and Housing Portfolio Holder:

Well first of all I am sorry you feel the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily and I've done a little bit of work and reviewed this and we have actually responded to any queries that you have raised. I have been made

aware of at least seven letters that have been sent by officers since February and we provided detailed information to both yourself and your solicitor in response to each of those requests. Obviously you feel the matter is not yet resolved and we're going to continue to try and resolve your issues and where we can hopefully we'll find some mutually acceptable solution.

59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bisnauthsing, Mrs Bosworth, Craft, Davidson, Holmes, Maureen Jalili, Sam Jalili, Mrs Kaberry-Brown, Lovelock and Andrea Webster.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

61. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 28TH OCTOBER 2010

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 28 October 2010 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.

62. COMMUNICATIONS (INCLUDING CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS)

A list of engagements undertaken by the Chairman since the last Council meeting was noted.

Councillor Exton informed Members that a questionnaire had been circulated and asked that they complete it and return it to the IT Helpdesk.

63. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

DECISION:

That the Monitoring Officer be appointed as the Proper Officer to administer and manage the Petition scheme and that the Constitution be amended accordingly to reflect this delegation.

The Chairman of the Constitution Committee introduced report number LEG010 and moved the recommendation. This was then seconded. It was noted that the amendment proposed was a minor amendment to delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer as the proper officer to administer petitions in accordance with the Petitions Scheme.

On being put to the vote, the motion was duly carried.

64. REVIEW OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

DECISION:

- 1) **That Council approves the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period of 2011/12 to 2014/15, as appended to report number HOF143.**
- 2) **That Council supports the development of a programme that is implemented within the timescale of the MTFP in order to provide and maintain a sustainable financial position.**

Report number HOF143 was introduced by the Resources and Assets Portfolio Holder, who moved the recommendations. It was noted that top of page 7 of the report should have stated “that the Council may be facing borrowing” rather than “that the Council will be facing borrowing”. The recommendations were then seconded.

The Strategic Director Corporate Focus then briefed Members on the contents of the report. It was noted that the Council regularly reviewed the Medium Term Financial Plan. Since the change of government it had become clear that there were intentions to reduce spending and the Council was looking at a reduction in the formula grant it receives of 28% over the next four years. It was also noted that there was some uncertainty as to how the future loss of the Concessionary Fares Scheme would impact on the Council’s grant funding. The detail of the grant settlement for 2011/12 was still unknown, but was expected to be announced shortly. The Strategic Director stated that the Council was in a strong financial position and that the report outlined how the Council would continue to respond to financial challenges.

It was noted that the government funded 62% of the Council’s budget and that this was a much higher percentage than it used to be. It was moved that the Council write to the government to express concern about this and to suggest that local authorities be put in a position to raise and spend their own funding. It was noted that once cuts to central funding were introduced, the proportion of funding raised locally would increase. It was also noted that there may well be a future shift in how local government was funded. The motion was then withdrawn.

It was confirmed that the Council may be able to “buy out” of the current HRA housing subsidy system in the future. This would have the result of the Council keeping all its rental income instead of making a £6.5m negative housing subsidy contribution to central government. It was noted that the cost of this would be that the Council would be expected to take on a proportion of the national housing debt, which was expected to be in the region of £100m. The Council was likely to know about this in April 2012, but it was felt it would eventually be beneficial to the Council. It was estimated that the Council’s housing stock was valued in the region of £300m.

The issue of a Council Tax freeze was raised and it was confirmed to Members that the Council had no control over the level at which Parish and Town Councils set their precepts, however it was reported that the government had said that any increases made by Parish or Town Councils would be disregarded by the government when it came to establishing if an increase in Council Tax was above a level where capping would be introduced.

It was noted by Members that although the Council had not made any headline announcements of redundancies, the Council had been working to reduce costs and to work as efficiently as possible and that it had started this process before any announcements regarding cuts were made. The Next Steps programme had saved over £300k and it was noted that this was a similar proportion of the Council's total budget when compared to the savings recently announced by the County Council in their staffing budget review. The Council would continue to look at ways to reduce staffing costs by looking at vacancies when they arose and a further phase of the Next Steps programme was planned. The Council was looking to maintain frontline services and work towards its priorities whilst working as efficiently as possible. It was also noted that the Council was budgeting to spend £50k less on audit fees as a result of the abolition of the Audit Commission and a new regime being put in place, in addition to no longer having to report on a vast number of performance indicators.

On being put to the vote, the motion was duly carried.

65. APPROVAL OF DOG CONTROL ORDERS

DECISION:

- 1. That Council adopts the proposed Dog Control Orders made under the provisions of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 attached at Appendix 1 to report number SS010.**
- 2. That Council revokes The South Kesteven District Council Dogs (Fouling of Land) Order 1997 attached at Appendix 4 to report number SS010.**

The Healthy Environment Portfolio Holder introduced report number SS010 and moved the recommendations, which were duly seconded. The Healthy Environment Portfolio Holder pointed out that the changes would bring the Council in line with the most recent legislation and would help to make the district cleaner and safer, particularly with regard to play areas.

It was noted that page 12 of the report should have referred to the recreation Ground in Stamford as being owned by Stamford Town Council, not South

Kesteven District Council.

On being put to the vote, the motion was duly carried.

66. RECLASSIFICATION OF CAR PARKS

DECISION:

That Council approves the Off –Street Car Parking Order 2010 as appended to report number AFM0177 to incorporate the reclassification from long stay to short stay at levels 1 and 2 at Welham Street Car Park, Grantham, subject to the Order being amended to remove proposed alterations to the car park in Wharf Road, Stamford.

Report number AFM0177 was introduced by the Resources and Assets Portfolio Holder. The recommendation in the report was amended to remove the reclassification from long stay to short stay for the whole of Wharf Road Car Park, Stamford. This amendment had been made as a result of a typographical error in the advertising in the Stamford Mercury and the Council had taken the prudent option to re-advertise in order for there to be a proper consultation period. This was then moved and the motion was duly seconded.

It was confirmed that permit holders would not be affected by the changes.

An amendment was proposed that the Council should postpone the reclassification of the car park in Grantham so that it may be done at the same time as Stamford. The amendment was not seconded and the original motion remained the substantive motion.

On being put to the vote, the motion was duly carried.

67. ADOPTION OF REVISED GAMBLING POLICY (STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES)

DECISION:

To adopt the revised Statement of Principles (Gambling Policy) as at Appendix A of report number ENV510, for implementation from 14 January 2011.

Report number ENV510 was introduced by the Access and Engagement Portfolio Holder, who moved the recommendation, which was then seconded. On being put to the vote, the motion was duly carried.

68. ADOPTION OF REVISED LICENSING POLICY

DECISION:

To adopt the revised Licensing Policy as at Appendix A of report number ENV507, for implementation from 6 January 2011.

The Chairman of the Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committee introduced report number ENV507 by the Access and Engagement Portfolio Holder, and moved the recommendation. It was noted that page 6 of the policy, bullet point 2.1 was to be amended to state:

South Kesteven District Council's vision is "Customer Service, Quality Living, Quality Administration and Good for Business".

It was noted that the Council's licensing policy was required to be reviewed at least every three years, and that the current policy had been adopted in 2007. It was also confirmed that the revised policy would come into effect on 6 January 2011 if approved.

The motion was duly seconded and on being put to the vote, the motion was carried.

69. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2009/10

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee introduced report number LDS011. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee thanked Members for their work on a wide ranging number of topics and thanked them for their non-partisan participation on the Committee. The Chairman noted that his Committee had spent a considerable time looking into the performance reports and hoped that some of the Committees suggestions had been useful.

The report was noted by Council.

70. QUESTIONS WITHOUT DISCUSSION

None were received.

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

None were received.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 4:15 pm.