

Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 7 July 2020



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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

The Deputy Leader: Councillor Barry Dobson, The Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairman)

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Annie Mason, Cabinet Member for Communities

Councillor Dr Peter Moseley, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations

Councillor Robert Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Councillor Adam Stokes, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy

Non-Cabinet Members present

Councillor Ashley Baxter

Councillor Phil Dilks

Councillor Ray Wootten

Officers

Chief Executive (Karen Bradford)

Strategic Director, Growth (Paul Thomas)

Strategic Director, Commercial & Operational (Gary Smith)

Strategic Director, Transformation & Change (Lee Sirdifield)

Interim Director of Finance (Richard Wyles)

Chief Executive, InvestSK (Steve Bowyer)

Head of Leisure (Karen Whitfield)

Performance Lead (Claire Milner)

Performance Lead (Ben Russell)

Democratic Officer (Lucy Bonshor)

Democratic Officer/Technical Support (Naomi Page)

104. Register of attendance and apologies for absence

All Cabinet Members were present.

105. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the decisions taken.

106. Disclosure of Interests (if any)

No interests were disclosed.

107. 2020/21 Amended Budget Framework

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented his report on the Amended Budget Framework for 2020/21. It was necessary to review the budget framework as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, to reflect changes in the income and expenditure budgets that had been approved at the Council meeting on 2 March 2020. A joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been arranged for 26 August 2020 at which Members would debate the budget implications and make recommendations for Cabinet to consider at their meeting on 8 September 2020. An amended budget framework would then be presented to Council on 17 September 2020 to ensure that a balance budget was maintained.

The report detailed the amount of support that had been given to residents and businesses during the pandemic. Since the report had been published further funding of £500million had been confirmed by the Government for unforeseen cost pressures for all UK Local Authorities. Where income losses were more than 5% of the Council's planned income from sales, fees and charges, the Government would cover 75 pence in every £1.00 lost. Details relating to this were still to be confirmed. Until these details were known it was unclear what the total predicted shortfall would be. Based on the Budget set in March 2020 and the actual spend to date, income losses, cost pressures and recovery rate, the predicted shortfall was in the region of £3.5/3.4 million. This included the Government's previously announced support of £1.4 million. This would be kept under review as restrictions were eased. No new cost pressures had been identified since those outlined in the report to Cabinet on 16 June 2020, other than the potential support to an external contractor. Once the details of the latest funding position was known, the shortfall would be revised, about which the Cabinet would be kept informed. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources looked forward to working with the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the coming months.

On being put to the vote, it was **AGREED** that the Cabinet:

1. Requests that a review of all elements of the approved 2020/21 budget framework in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including options to respond to unforeseen income reductions and expenditure increases is carried out.
2. Requests that options and proposals are presented and considered by the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 August 2020.
3. Receive draft budgetary amendment proposals at the Cabinet meeting on 8 September 2020 incorporating recommendations from the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee and make formal recommendations for Council to consider on 17 September 2020.

Thanks were given to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources together with the Interim Director of Finance and his team for the comprehensive report on the

impact of Covid-19 and having a budget framework plan in place to review going forward.

108. Financial Outturn Position Report 2019/20

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented his report on the Financial outturn position for 2019/20. The report had been presented to the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 June 2020. The report and the draft Statement of Accounts would be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 13 August 2020 for approval.

The General Fund revenue account had achieved a balanced position as outlined within the report. The Council was in a good place going into 2020/21 despite the financial challenges that had been highlighted in the previous report. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources thanked the Members of the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their support to enable a balanced position to be achieved. Lessons had been learnt from the previous year and these would be incorporated in the future so that all budgetary savings and efficiencies were underpinned by robust, project management and delivery plans. Budgets would be monitored closely by budget holders and regular, clear and concise financial reporting undertaken.

The large underspend in the capital programme had been noted with variances in both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The reasons for the capital programme underspend were highlighted within the report. Despite challenges in relation to rent collection and the roll out of Universal Credit, the HRA had performed strongly. The HRA was in a good position for the Cabinet's ambitions to see more affordable housing going forward.

Cabinet reviewed and noted the provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn report and associated appendices for 2019/20 and feedback from the Finance, Economic and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the meeting on 30 June 2020.

On being put to the vote, it was **AGREED:**

1. To recommend the proposed budget carry forwards, shown at appendix E and I and reserve movement shown at section 4 and 7 in the report, to be considered for approval by Governance and Audit Committee.

109. Covid-19 and 2019/20 Outturn Performance

The Leader of the Council presented his report which detailed South Kesteven's performance during the Covid-19 pandemic and the outturn performance reporting for the financial year 2019/20. The Leader thanked those who had helped to write the report and he referred to the work that the Council had undertaken in the last few months in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The role of the Council was to serve the residents, businesses and communities of the district to ensure that they received a high quality, value for money service.

The report looked at the performance of the Council during the pandemic and through the year 2019/20 across a range of measures. The Leader highlighted areas which included the continued collection of waste, the redeployment of 90 staff to ensure critical services were maintained, and the provision of a vital lifeline to 300 vulnerable residents through the befriending service, in which both Members and staff had actively engaged. More than £27million of support grant had been allocated to local businesses, with 900 businesses getting support within 24 hours of the funds being received.

Customer engagement had improved with increased performance in the Customer Service Team. The reach of the Council through social media had increased with Facebook views up by 89% and Tweets averaging 12,000 views per day during the pandemic.

The South Kesteven Community Hub had been a huge success allowing the Council to support and enable communities. Reference was made to the work that the Cabinet Member for Communities was undertaking to ensure that the networks gained through the Hub were continued.

The Leader then referred to the new dashboards appended to the report which showed performance against targets in an open, transparent and accountable format. The performance data would be published on the website to enable residents to view the performance of the Council. Attention was drawn to the number of new homes that had been built where the target had been exceeded by 79. 22% of the new homes built were deemed affordable housing. Recycling rates had also improved and work was on going with County partners.

The Leader felt that the Council should be confident about its performance with the challenging times ahead and the threat of a possible second wave of Covid-19.

Thanks were given to all the staff and officers for their response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the report authors.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning indicated that work would be continued with partners to increase the number of affordable homes going forward.

It was **AGREED**:

To note the report and that Cabinet supported the ongoing transformation of performance management.

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

The Leader of the Council presented his report which highlighted matters referred to the Cabinet from the Council and the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It was noted that there were no matters referred to the Cabinet from Council and no matters referred to Cabinet from the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 June 2020. A recommendation to the Cabinet Member for

Communities had been made at the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 June 2020. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 June 2020 had made a recommendation to Cabinet. The Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 June 2020 had also made a recommendation.

On being put to the vote, the Cabinet had **AGREED**:

1. To note that no matters had been referred to Cabinet from Council.
2. To note that no specific recommendations had been made by the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 June 2020.
3. To adopt the recommendation referred from the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 June 2020 to recommend that the Cabinet Member for Communities approves the transition of the inbound call handling element of the SK Community Hub to the Customer Service Centre.
4. To adopt the recommendation referred from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 June 2020 to recommend that the Draft Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy go out for consultation.
5. To note that the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 June 2020 supported the submission of a Future High Street Business Case for Grantham Town Centre and recommended to Cabinet that the submission proceeded.

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

No Key or Non Key Decisions had been taken under delegated powers since the last meeting of the Cabinet.

112. Representations and questions from Non Cabinet Members

A Non-Cabinet Member began by thanking the Leader for his help in reinstating planning site visits, which had been mentioned at the last meeting of the Cabinet.

The Non-Cabinet Member's first question was in connection with the leisure provision at the Deepings. The Member referred to the Leader's comments at the last Cabinet meeting when he had said that, "*Engagement on Deepings Leisure Centre would take place with local Members*". He then referred to the e-mail sent by the Deputy Leader, to Deeping Members in May in which the Deputy Leader had stated, "*You will be informed every step of the process, I promise. The next step is to show and discuss the plans with relevant Members for each of the centres including facilities and finance before the end of June 2020*". At the meeting with the Parish Council, it had also been confirmed that an update would be given in June 2020. The Non-Cabinet Member wanted to know what had happened to the update, was it that there had been no progress or that local Members were no longer being kept informed.

The Leader reiterated that proper engagement would be carried out with the local Members.

The Deputy Leader referred to the Parish Council meeting that he had attended and also the meeting held on 30 January 2020 with Councillor Dilks and Councillors Baxter and Moran. He had hoped that they would have been further on than they were currently. Members had been clear what they wanted at the January meeting and a copy of the MACE report had been given to them. The Deputy Leader indicated that the timeframe he had given had been ambitious and that nothing was being kept from Members. A report had been received which the Deputy Leader was not satisfied with. The leisure centre in the Deepings was to be the major leisure centre in South Kesteven. Discussions had been carried out with Lincolnshire County Council but there was nothing formally agreed in writing at this stage. A meeting with Deeping St James Parish Council was due to take place shortly to discuss the lease of the land required for the artificial pitch. Work was still on-going and the Deputy Leader wanted to come back to Members with both a scheme and everything priced, to ensure that they had the best facility for the cost.

The Leader stated that a meeting would be arranged to update Members once the piece of work had been completed.

The second question from the Non-Cabinet Member was in relation to the letter that the Leader had circulated to Members in May 2020 from the Leader of Lincolnshire County Council to the Communities Minister Robert Jenrick.

The letter referred to a meeting that had taken place and the Non-Cabinet Member quoted from the letter "*Our collective ambitions for devolution to Greater Lincolnshire with options for local government reorganisation*". The Non-Cabinet Member asked whether a response had been received.

The Non-Cabinet Member stated that in 2016 a decisive rejection to devolution had been given by the people of South Kesteven. The decision to reject devolution was by the largest amount in the Greater Lincolnshire area and a second referendum on devolution had been ruled out at Brexit. The Non-Cabinet Member asked, why the Council would contemplate considering a second devolution bid.

The Leader confirmed that a response to the Lincolnshire County Council letter had yet to be received. The process could be started by only one authority sending a letter to Ministers to look at local government reorganisation or devolution. Nothing had been signed to date and the Leader was waiting for the response to the letter before the issue was debated and the options considered. If South Kesteven did proceed, a full consultation would have to take place with residents. The White Paper on local government reorganisation and devolution was still awaited and this was not due until September 2020.

The next question was in relation to a motion that had been submitted to the next Council meeting on the Recovery Plan and the lessons learnt following Covid-19. The Non-Cabinet Member stated that he hoped the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee could be tasked with looking at the lessons learnt from Covid-19. He asked if the Cabinet had any feedback about the motion submitted to enable it to be put forward as a cross party collaboration.

The Leader confirmed that he had seen the motion. Some issues contained in the motion were already being actioned. He stated that the budget was already going through the Committees. The Cabinet was looking at the work done in relation to Covid-19 and the Council's response. The Leader was happy to have a meeting with the Non-Cabinet Member before the Council meeting to agree suitable wording.

The next question related to Non-Cabinet Members accessing the restricted documents appended to the agenda. The Leader stated that the Non-Cabinet Member needed to contact the Democratic Officer in liaison with the Chief Executive to get the papers. Reference was made to the Modern.gov App where Members could access restricted documents and the Leader stated that he would get IT to check that all Members could access the restricted documents.

The Non-Cabinet Member then referred to the recent virtual meeting held with Deeping St James Parish Council. He stated that the Parish Council did not want to stand in the way, of the future leisure provision, but that they would require more detail of the intended use of the land before signing. He felt that the Cabinet timescale of 8 September 2020 was perhaps not realistic for a detailed costed proposal.

The Deputy Leader stated that it was unlikely that anything would be ready for the Cabinet meeting on 8 September 2020. Designs were still to be completed and more detailed prices had been requested. The land acquisitions also had to be confirmed and the pandemic had slowed the process down.

113. Cabinet Forward Plan 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021

Cabinet Members noted the Forward Plan for 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021 which was appended to the agenda. The Forward Plan gave an indication of items to be presented to the Cabinet in the next 12 months. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning gave a brief update in relation to the Rectory Farm item which was on the Forward Plan for 8 September 2020.

114. Planning and Business Bill - Pavement Licences

This item was dealt with under Special Urgency because new legislation was rapidly passing through Parliament and the Council needed to make preparations in advance to ensure the legislation could be implemented.

The Strategic Director, Commercial and Operational presented the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations report on the Planning and Business Bill 2019-2021. The item had been placed on the agenda as an urgent item as new legislation was rapidly being progressed through Parliament. The Bill was expected to come into effect within the next two weeks. The Bill introduced new provisions which streamlined the route for businesses to secure a licence to place furniture on the highway and bypassed the existing regulatory scheme. The intention was to support businesses to operate safely while Covid-19 social distancing measures remained in place.

Pavement licences were currently determined by Lincolnshire County Council under the Highways Act 1980. The new Bill placed the responsibility for issuing the licences on district councils, in consultation with the Highways Authority and other relevant persons until 30 September 2021.

The Bill was expected to become law very quickly and would be a new function for the Council to undertake. The Council would have to put processes in place in a very short period of time to undertake the function. Lincolnshire County Council had offered the option to district councils to take on the processing of the licences and were currently altering and amending their processes. Detailed guidance in relation to the licensing process was still awaited.

Cabinet Members supported the proposed delegation.

A Non-Cabinet Member stated that once full details were known, recognition of disabled users and those who were blind needed to be taken into consideration. Reference was also made to Public Space Protection Orders and drinking alcohol and it was noted that changes had been made to automatically allow existing takeaway alcohol licences but that this was being closely monitored by the Police.

On being put to the vote, it was **AGREED** that:

Cabinet delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations, to consider the final proposal from Lincolnshire County Council and agree any delegations/similar which may be necessary to ensure that pavement licences may be determined within South Kesteven.

Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was voted on and agreed that in accordance with Section 100 (a) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the next two items of business because of the likelihood that otherwise exempt information, as described in paragraph 3 of the Act would be disclosed to them.

115. Financial Impact of Covid-19 on the Leisure Service

This decision was taken under the General Exception Procedure set out in Section 10 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Since the last Forward Plan had been published the need had arisen for urgent consideration of the financial impact of Covid-19 on the leisure service.

The minutes to this item contain exempt information under section 100 (a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

On being put to the vote, it was **AGREED**:

To approve the recommendations as set out in the urgent exempt report of the Deputy Leader of the Council.

116. Strategic Acquisition

The minutes to this item contain exempt information under section 100 (a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

On being put to the vote, it was **AGREED**:

To approve the recommendations as set out in the exempt report of the Leader of the Council.

117. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 3.26pm.