

Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 2 February 2021



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Meeting held virtually by Skype

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 Mike Exton

Councillor Virginia Moran

Councillor Ian Selby

Councillor Amanda Wheeler

Officers

Chief Executive (Karen Bradford)

Assistant Chief Executive, Housing Delivery (Ken Lyon)

Interim Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer (Richard Wyles)

Strategic Director Commercial and Operations (Gary Smith)

Interim Assistant Director of Housing (Chris Stratford)

Director of Law and Governance (Shahin Ismail)

Interim Head of Governance (Dan Snowdon)

Democratic Officers (Lucy Bonshor, Naomi Page)

54. Register of attendance and apologies for absence

All Cabinet Members were present.

The Leader of the Council gave a short statement in relation to the vaccination programme taking place within Lincolnshire and confirmed that all care home residents had been given the first dose of the vaccine. The Leader thanked key

workers for the work that they were undertaking and referred to the emotional and financial support available whilst the Country was still in lockdown.

55. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

56. Disclosure of Interests (if any)

None disclosed.

57. Budget Proposals 2021/22

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented the report on the Budget Proposals and the Council Tax Band D charge for 2021/22. Work on the budget had started in September 2020 and had ran parallel with the setting of an amended budget. Cabinet had been provided with monthly financial updates following the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources thanked the Cabinet, the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Finance Team and the Section 151 Officer for their work in compiling the budget proposals for 2021/22. A robust scrutiny of the budget had been undertaken at the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 January 2021.

The consultation on the proposed Council Tax setting with local residents had taken place between 16 and 26 January 2021. From the responses received over 34% supported a £5 increase in Council Tax for Band D properties. 66% fell within the A-C Council Tax Bands which had an increase of between six pence to eight pence in Council Tax per week.

The Government had given council's the opportunity to increase their core spending power by 4.5% by allowing an increase in Council Tax of £5 for Band D properties.

Following the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee's scrutiny of the Fees and Charges for 2021/22, it was recommended that the car park fees at all of the Stamford car parks be reduced by 10 pence per tariff.

The Ward Member grant had been increased to £1,000 during 2020/21 to help with the impact of Covid-19, however this had been reduced to £500 for 2021/22 budget.

The budget focused on three strands; the Corporate Plan actions, the Council's response to Covid-19 pressures and maintaining a quality service delivery across the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources referred Members to Table 5 which contained key budgetary proposals for 2021/22. The funding proposals for the Council's companies were also contained within the report. It was noted that the

Business Plan for LeisureSK Ltd would be reviewed by the LeisureSK Ltd Board and updated in light of the current lockdown and the closure of all leisure centres.

Challenges faced by the Housing Revenue Account included the lower rental increase which meant that only a one year balanced budget had been drawn up, subsequent years projected a budget deficit.

The Capital Programme had been formulated to deliver the Council's ambitions of growth and investment in its assets to support the delivery of quality services and were summarised at Appendix B. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources recommended the proposals within the report be recommended to Council with the following amendments:

- The figure in recommendation 1 should read £13.859m.
- To include an additional £440,000 of the Section 106 monies in order to fund temporary housing in the Stamford area at recommendation 11.
- That the Fees and Charges at Appendix D should show the following tariff for Stamford Car Parking Fees:

Up to 30 minutes	90 pence
Up to 1 hour	£1.20
Up to 2 hours	£1.90
Up to 3 hours	£2.50
Up to 4 hours	£4.10
Over 4 hours	£5.30

The Leader supported the budget before the Cabinet and made reference to:

- The current financial climate and the impact of Covid-19.
- Feedback received on the budget from the Council Tax consultation.
- Feedback from the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Council's Corporate Plan and the ambition to support the delivery of quality services.
- The Covid-19 Recovery Plan.
- Taking account of Members' views particularly in respect of the car parking charges at Stamford.

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and the Finance Team for the work that had been done to enable a balanced budget to be reached.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning gave more detail in respect of the use of the Section 106 monies which had been added to the recommendations to Council.

Other Cabinet Members expressed support for the budget and highlighted areas of work within their portfolios during the coming year.

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

That having considered the recommendations and feedback from both the Budget Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the stakeholder consultation it recommends to Council:

1. To set a General Fund budget requirement of £13.859m for 2021/22 detailed at section 3 of this report and shown in detail at Appendix A (inclusive of special expenses).
2. To propose a Council Tax level of £168.62 for 2021/22 (Band D property).
3. To note the indicative base estimates for 2022/23 and 2023/24 as detailed in the summary at Appendix A.
4. To approve Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwelling rent increases of 1.5% (CPI + 1%) in accordance with Government guideline rent providing an average rent of £80.78 (an average rental increase of £1.19 per a week).
5. To approve an increase in HRA garage rents of 3%.
6. To approve an average increase of 3% in HRA service charges for communal facilities and communal rooms.
7. To approve an increase in shared ownership rents by 1.5% (CPI +1%).
8. To approve the HRA Revenue Summary for the year 2021/22 shown at Appendix A.
9. To approve the General Fund Capital programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 detailed at section 5 of this report and shown at Appendix B.
10. To approve the General Fund Capital Financing statement detailed at Appendix B.
11. To approve the Housing Investment programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24 detailed at section 5 of this report and as shown at Appendix B to include an additional £440,000 of the Section 106 monies in order to fund temporary housing in the Stamford area.
12. Approve the HRA Capital Financing statement detailed at Appendix B.
13. To approve the movements in General Fund Revenue and Capital reserves and balances detailed at section 7 of this report and shown at Appendix C.
14. To approve the movements in HRA revenue and Capital reserves and balances detailed at section 7 of this report and shown at Appendix C.
15. To approve the fees and charges detailed at section 9 of this report and shown at Appendix D subject to an amendment at page 45 to show the Stamford car parking proposed charges to read:

Up to 30 minutes	90 pence
Up to 1 hour	£1.20
Up to 2 hours	£1.90
Up to 3 hours	£2.50
Up to 4 hours	£4.10

Over 4 hours

£5.30

58. Cabinet Decision Call-in - Public Realm Improvements, St Peter's Hill, Grantham

The Leader of the Council introduced the item which concerned recommendations from the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) held on 5 January 2021, following the call-in of the decision made by Cabinet on 1 December 2020. The OSC referred back to Cabinet the decision to underwrite the event by up to £100,000, and requested that the Culture and Visitor Economy OSC be kept updated on the organisation of the event and fundraising.

The report gave a breakdown of costs for the budget up to £100,000 at Appendix D. The Leader stated that no details of the unveiling event had been finalised and stressed that the event would not be taking place until the end of the Covid-19 pandemic. He also stated that the expected cost of the event would be below £100,000. Details of the fundraising appeal were still to be finalised and were subject to agreement by the external events management organisation. Commissioning and contracting arrangements had been on hold pending the call-in. The current fundraising criteria was shown at Appendix C. The fundraising would also contribute to the Baroness Thatcher's exhibition at the Grantham Museum as well as ongoing security and maintenance costs of the statue.

The Leader proposed a further recommendation to those within the report; to reaffirm the recommendation made on 1 December 2020, to approve a budget allocation from the local priorities reserve and authorise expenditure of up to £100,000 to underwrite the statue unveiling event and any consequential works and that any fund raising from the public, businesses and others would go towards this budget allocation. The proposal was seconded.

Cabinet Members supported the proposals. It was stated that the event was to celebrate and promote inspirational achievements by women. Baroness Thatcher was the country's first woman Prime Minister, who was born in Grantham and the town and district should promote this achievement, regardless of any political position.

Non-Cabinet Members at the meeting raised the following concerns:

- The appointment of an external management organisation to organise the event and deal with the event communications, especially as the Council had its own communication team.
- The cost of the event and the underwriting by the Council of £100,000 of public money. Particularly due to the current climate and people's uncertainty from the impact of the pandemic on their work and lives.
- The money for the event should be entirely raised by private means.
- Reference to the inclusion of Lady Charlotte Bertie who was born in Uffington.
- The process for awarding the contract for the external management of the event.

The Leader stated that he would be happy to attend a meeting of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee to answer questions from Non-Cabinet Members regarding the event.

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

1. To note the content of the report from the Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer).
2. That consideration be given to the request from the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee: that the Committee be updated on the progress of the organisation of the event and fundraising as per the recommendation at 2.2 of the report from the Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer).
3. To reaffirm the recommendation made on 1 December 2020, to approve a budget allocation from the local priorities reserve and authorises expenditure of up to £100,000 to underwrite the statue unveiling event and any consequential works and that any fund raising from the public, businesses and others would go towards this budget allocation.

59. Matters Referred to Cabinet by the Council or Overview and Scrutiny Committees

None received.

60. Key and Non Key Decisions taken under Delegated Powers

The Leader of the Council presented his report on Key and Non-Key decisions taken since the last meeting of the Cabinet. One Non-Key decision had been taken in relation to the surrender and re-grant of the lease for the Registrars Office at the Community Point, Bourne.

61. Representations and questions from Non Cabinet Members

None received.

62. Cabinet Forward Plan 1 March 2021 to 28 February 2022

Cabinet Members noted the Forward Plan for 1 March 2021 to 28 February 2022.

63. Future High Street Fund

The following item was dealt with under the Urgency Provisions contained within Article 16 of the Constitution due to the need to submit a revised bid before 26 February 2021.

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which looked at the final options for the capital projects supported by the Future High Street Scheme. The Future High Street Fund Business Case had been approved by Cabinet in June 2020 and Council in July 2020. A final bid had been submitted at the end of July 2020. Clarification had been sought from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) in September 2020 following updated guidance.

The scheme had been oversubscribed and only 15 areas had been awarded the full 100%. Fifty-seven schemes, including the Grantham scheme, had been awarded 69% of the original request and had been asked to review their final schemes due to the reduced offer. The principle offer was now up to £5,558,818, which was approximately £2.5m less than the original scheme. The Future High Street Fund consultants were appointed to review the options due to the reduction in funding. The original Option 1 was the preferred option, with the removal of St Peters Hill Gardens project and the scaling back of upper floors as outlined within the appendices to the report. The Deputy Leader thanked all those who had worked on the project including the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy. The proposed scheme would have a natural flow through the town from station approach. The Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee would also be looking at the option at their meeting on 23 February 2021 before the submission to the MHCLG on 26 February 2021. The proposals were seconded.

Support was given to the proposal to put forward Option 1.

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

1. To approve the preferred option identified as Option 1 shown in the report and appendices to the report from the Deputy Leader of the Council as the final proposed scheme for the Future High Street Fund in the principle offer of £5,558,818.
2. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer and the Interim Director of Finance, to sign off the final report.

64. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 15:00.