

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 28 JANUARY 2021

1.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Meeting held virtually by Skype

PRESENT

Councillor Breda Griffin (Chairman)
Councillor Ian Stokes (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Bob Adams
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Mrs Pam Bosworth
Councillor Robert Broughton
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor Louise Clack
Councillor Kelham Cooke
Councillor John Cottier
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor John Dawson
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Mike Exton
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Annie Mason
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Dr Peter Moseley
Councillor Robert Reid
Councillor Nick Robins

Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Jacky Smith
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Judy Stevens
Councillor Adam Stokes
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Jill Thomas
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Dean Ward
Councillor Hannah Westropp
Councillor Hilary Westropp
Councillor Amanda Wheeler
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley
Councillor Linda Wootten
Councillor Ray Wootten

OFFICERS

Chief Executive (Karen Bradford)
Interim Director of Finance (Richard Wyles)
Director of Law and Governance (Shahin Ismail)
Interim Assistant Director Housing (Chris Stratford)

OFFICERS

Strategic Director Commercial and Operations (Gary Smith)
Assistant Chief Executive Housing Delivery (Ken Lyon)
Interim Head of Governance (Dan Snowdon)
Acting Principal Democratic Officer (Shelley Thirkell)
Democratic Officers (Lucy Bonshor, Naomi Page)

58. Public Open Forum

No questions or statements were received.

59. Register of attendance and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors' Manterfield and Morgan.

60. Disclosure of Interests

It was clarified that the motions at 11a) and 11b) on the agenda would be deferred in accordance with the Constitution. The Member was not present therefore, any interests relating to the motions, were not required to be noted at the meeting.

61. Minutes of the meetings held on 26 November 2020 and 17 December 2020

(a) 26 November 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2020 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct, record subject to the following amendments:

- Top of page 10 should read;

Assurance was given by a Member of the Companies Committee that scrutiny of the company would be undertaken in a robust manor.

Not;

Assurance was given by the Vice-Chairman of the Companies Committee that scrutiny of the company would be undertaken in a robust manor.

- Bottom on page 10 should read:

It was noted that Councillor Whittington was currently a Member of the Companies Committee and that a conflict may arise.

Not;

It was noted that currently Councillor Whittington was the Vice-Chairman of the Companies Committee and that a conflict may arise.

- Page 11 the column "For" had Councillor Lee Steptoe and Councillor Amanda Wheeler voting twice, this was incorrect, although the figure of 11 was correct.

(b) 17 December 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct, record subject to the following amendment:

- That Councillor Hannah Westropp was included within the apologies for the meeting.

62. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted that the Chairman's engagements had been restricted due to the current lockdown. The Chairman had attended various Committee meetings which she found interesting and informative, she noted that too many acronyms were used during the meetings and a glossary of terms would be helpful.

The Chairman also made reference to the sad loss of Neil Smith, Neighbourhood Officer and asked all present to join her in a minute's silence.

(13:27 – 13:28 a minute's silence was held in memory of Neil Smith who had worked for the Council as a Neighbourhood Officer.)

63. Local Council Tax Support Scheme

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented the report on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. He stated the second recommendation contained within the report would now include a Council Tax discount for Special Constables that resided in South Kesteven. This would form part of the approved Local Council Tax Support Scheme, and was in line with the Police and Crime Commissioner's recommended discount to Special Constables.

The scheme was to be reviewed annually, however, it was intended that the Special Constables discount should remain in place until at least the end of this Council's term, in May 2023.

The current Local Council Tax Support scheme had been in place since April 2013 and the key criteria remained unchanged. The current cost of the scheme was £7.2m, an increase on the previous year for working age claimants. Although the current number of claimants had stabilised, it was noted that an increase was expected due to the pandemic and the current economic climate. The Council's share of the total cost for 2020/21 as at 11 January 2021, was based on a 9% share of the total cost of the scheme. Working age claimants were capped at a maximum entitlement of 80%, although pensioners continued to be protected at 100%. The scheme was supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner and Lincolnshire County Council.

The recommendations of the report, including the amendment were seconded.

Members welcomed the proposal to include a discount for Special Constables and were informed of the numbers of Special Constables there had been over the years and, the number of hours of un-paid voluntary work they had undertaken.

A point of order was raised in relation to the change of recommendation before Members. The Monitoring Officer clarified that the Cabinet Member was able to change the recommendations detailed in the report, prior to them being considered.

Debate followed on what Members agreed was a welcome change to the recommendation. Members queried how the change in recommendation had been reached. Information on other Lincolnshire Local Authorities arrangements for Special Constables were not known at the time Cabinet had made their original recommendation. The overwhelming support from Members and what other Local Authorities had agreed, had helped the Cabinet, together with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to re-consider and amend the original recommendation.

A request for a recorded vote was asked for in accordance with Article 4.13.4 of the Constitution. It did not receive the required number of signatories, therefore a vote by exception was taken.

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

1. To approve the Local Council Tax Support scheme 2021/22 based on the same overarching criteria as the current year's scheme.
2. To include a Council Tax discount for Special Constables that reside in the South Kesteven area, as part of the approved scheme. This was in line with the Police and Crime Commissioner's recommended discount.

The scheme was to be reviewed annually, however, it was intended that the Special Constables discount should remain in place until at least the end of this Council's term, in May 2023.

64. Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-2026

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations presented the report on the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-2026. The Council, as the Licensing Authority, had a statutory duty to review and re-publish its Statement of Licensing Policy at least every five years, this was currently due. It was highlighted to Members that the changes followed statutory requirements and changes in legislation.

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Policy on 6 October 2020. This was followed by Public Consultation 9 - 26 October 2020. Any feedback received as part of that process informed a further draft, which was reviewed by the Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committee meeting on 13 November 2020. Cabinet subsequently reviewed the draft at its meeting on 1 December 2020 and recommended approval and adoption to full Council.

Members thanked the Head of Public Protection and their Team for the work undertaken to review the Policy. The proposal was seconded.

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

That the South Kesteven District Council Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-2026 was adopted.

65. Appointment of Temporary Councillor to Pointon and Sempringham Parish Council

Members noted the appointment of Councillor Dr Peter Moseley as a temporary Member to Pointon and Sempringham Parish Council. This appointment was until such time, that a new Parish Councillor was elected. The process for making temporary appointments to Parish Council was agreed at full Council on 26 July 2018, which delegated this function to the Chief Executive.

66. Updates from the Leader of the Council

(a) Decisions made under urgency provisions

The Leader of the Council stated that since the last full Council meeting one urgent Non-Key Decision had been made by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources on 18 December 2020, in relation to the approval for the payment of costs, detailed within the exempt report. Members noted the report.

67. Members' Open Questions

Question 1

Councillor Selby apologised for his lateness as he had been to the funeral of Terry Shelbourne, a local artist based in Grantham.

Councillor Selby asked the Leader if there was any assistance the Council could give in promoting the EU settlement scheme, which gave EU citizens the right to remain in the UK after Brexit. The scheme was free to apply for and the deadline was 30 June 2021. Failure to apply before this deadline may mean a loss of rights for those EU citizens within the UK. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) South Lincolnshire had a Team which was funded by the Home Office that offered free support and advice to clients applying for the scheme. However, due to the pandemic and the closure of their offices the CAB were struggling to attract clients, including those most vulnerable within the community. Councillor Selby asked if a small article could be included within the Council's media publications.

The Leader of the Council added his condolences to the family of Terry Shelbourne.

The Leader agreed to raise the promotion of the EU settlement scheme with the Communications Team, to increase its profile. He would also request that the Cabinet Member for Communities, investigate how the issue could be further promoted.

Question 2

Councillor Paul Wood asked the Leader of the Council how the Scrutiny review was progressing, following the decision agreed at the last meeting of full Council.

The Leader stated that the Chief Executive had been in contact with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS), via the Local Government Association (LGA). A scoping exercise was being undertaken to consider the effectiveness of the current

process and opportunities for improvement, potential structure changes, engagement of Members in the process, role of Chairman in the Scrutiny Committee and the training requirements. The Chief Executive had met with the CfGS that week to look at timings, taking into consideration the pandemic and the current lockdown, it was felt that a review should be undertaken when the demands from the pandemic had subsided. He stated that the review was moving forward, and that Members would be involved.

Members were also advised that after a successful recruitment exercise, a Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Democratic Services had been appointed. It was hoped that they would be in post within the next few months.

Question 3

Councillor Sandall expressed concern to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy that the static market traders at Stamford market were not wearing face masks, especially as the new variant of Covid-19 was more contagious. She enquired if there was a policy in place regarding this matter.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy stated that it wasn't mandatory to wear face coverings outside. The Market Supervisor had spoken to traders about wearing face coverings and had asked that those who could, wear them whilst engaging with customers. The Cabinet Member reiterated the need to adhere to social distancing, hand washing and wearing face coverings where required.

Question 4

Councillor Whittington asked the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations what level of support was being given to the vaccination centres. He appreciated that they were being run by the NHS and volunteers, within South Kesteven. There were concerns about the access to the centres, which had proved difficult for some residents during the bad weather.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations stated that both the Street Scene Teams and EnvironmentSK Ltd were working hard to keep car parks salted and clear. Keeping people safe who were visiting the vaccination centre at the Meres Leisure Centre, Grantham, was paramount and efforts would continue to achieve this. He took the opportunity to thank the teams for their hard work during very difficult circumstances.

Question 5

Councillor Woolley asked the Leader of the Council if he agreed that the NHS colleagues and the volunteers were doing a fantastic job in relation to the vaccination programme, with over 17,000 being vaccinated within the South Kesteven area, which included all care homes.

The Leader of the Council agreed with the comments that had been made. The contribution of the NHS staff and volunteers who had been involved in the vaccination process had been superb. Over 50,000 doses of the vaccination had been given in Lincolnshire. England having just over 6.6million doses administered,

with over 1.2 million being in the Midlands. This was a very positive message. Tragically the number deaths relating to Covid-19 had increased, thoughts and prayers went out to those residents who had suffered during the crisis.

The Leader advised Members that he was a member of the Lincolnshire Outbreak Engagement Board, along with other Lincolnshire District Council Leaders and representatives from the Police and Health Services. He stated that the integration and communication with the various bodies, had made the vaccination programme a continued success within South Kesteven.

Question 6

Councillor Dilks asked the Leader of the Council if the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) report on the Notice of findings had been received, following the Riverside report and compliance with the Stop Notice issued by the HSE on the Council's work to remove asbestos at the properties at Riverside in Grantham.

The Leader of the Council replied that the Health and Safety report was expected in April 2021. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning confirmed the date and stated that any asbestos issues had been dealt with.

Question 7

Councillor Crawford asked the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations where people should go for advice in relation to storms and flooding within the area.

The Cabinet Member of Commercial and Operations stated that Lincolnshire County Council was the flood co-ordinator for the area. They had a response team in place and concerns/advice should be directed to them. They were working with Parishes, in relation to flood warning and emergency planning protocols.

Question 8

Councillor Steptoe asked for confirmation that the heating system at the Riverside flats in Grantham was now complete and if any compensation had been considered.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning stated that the heating upgrade had been completed before Christmas, although there had been a breakdown over Christmas, but this had been addressed promptly.

Upgrades to the hot water system had been undertaken, seven units were still to be completed.

Payments in the form of rent credits would be made to residents, which would not affect any benefits that they may receive.

Question 9

Councillor Baxter asked the Chairman of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) why issues in the Housing Department, Riverside Report,

lack of Voids Policy and only building 14 houses within the last three years had not been addressed by the Committee, holding the Cabinet to account.

The Chairman of the Rural and Communities OSC stated that they did hold the current Cabinet Member responsible. There had been various meetings over the year to scrutinise those matters, which Members were able to attend.

Question 10

Councillor Fellows asked a question in relation to the new public consultation in relation to the removal of statues, was this something that would be considered in relation to the Baroness Thatcher statue.

The Leader stated that the process for the erection of the statue was already underway. As part of the planning application process, consultation had taken place.

Question 11

Councillor Exton asked if there were any plans to increase the residents parking in Stamford, to include Exeter Street and Exeter Road.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations stated that currently there was a residents parking scheme in Stamford with a set number of places available. To increase the scope of the scheme, Lincolnshire County Council would need to be contacted, there was a policy process in place which included surveys and consultations. Currently 400 permits had been issued and there was a waiting list for 88. He was happy to meet Stamford Members to discuss the issue in more detail.

Question 12

Councillor Knowles asked the Deputy Leader about LeisureSK Ltd's Business Plan and the proposed budget, which did not take account of the current lockdown and the closure of all leisure centres.

The Chief Executive replied that the business plan for LeisureSK Ltd is being renewed and would be discussed by the LeisureSK Ltd's Board, which would then report back to the Council's Companies Committee.

Question 13

Councillor Wheeler stated that she had started the process in relation to the residents parking in Stamford and would be happy to attend a meeting with other Stamford Members.

Councillor Wheeler asked about Covid-19 testing; if Members could be notified when the testing was taking place. It was suggested that Stamford Arts Centre be used as a vaccination centre, rather than St Mary's Health Centre, due to the limited space available.

The Leader stated that he would look into the use of alternative sites and would report back to the Member.

Question 14

Councillor Kelly raised concerns about St Mary's Surgery, Stamford and the lack of organisation for those waiting to be vaccinated. The lack of social distancing and waiting times were of great concern, especially to those who were vulnerable, waiting outside in poor weather conditions. The medical team were fantastic, but it was felt that the car park organisation was inadequate.

The Leader of the Council indicated that he would raise the matter at the Lincolnshire Outbreak Engagement Board and with the Director of Public Health. Lincolnshire County Council, Executive Councillor for NHS liaison and Community Engagement stated that she would raise the issue with the CCG, and that new sites were becoming available.

Question 15

Councillor Bisnauthsing noted that following the recent flooding in Stamford Meadows and Bath Row, in Stamford, the gate seals on the barrier in the vicinity appeared to have perished. Councillor Bisnauthsing wanted to know who to contact to assist.

He also echoed the comments made in relation to the St Mary's Surgery in Stamford.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations stated that the gates would be the responsibility of the Environment Agency. A note was made of the concerns and would be passed on appropriately.

The Leader further confirmed that he would take the concerns regarding the St Mary's Surgery in Stamford to the Lincolnshire Outbreak Engagement Board and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Question 16

Councillor Stevens asked if the Best Kept Village competition would be reinstated for 2021 and if there would be any assistance to the Villages, with litter pickers.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations stated that due to its size Deeping St James fell outside the village criteria. Options would be looked at to encompass larger areas, including towns. If parishes required litter removal, they should contact the Head of Street Scene who would make the necessary arrangements.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations confirmed that the Best Kept Village competition would take place in 2021.

68. Notices of Motion given under Article 4.9 of the Council's Constitution:

(a) Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Motion deferred in accordance with Article 4.9.3 of the Council's Constitution.

69. Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Motion deferred in accordance with Article 4.9.3 of the Council's Constitution.

(a) Councillor Phil Dilks

That the Council resolves to urgently refresh its practices and protocols and that all such future external reports are considered by either the full Council or Committee of the Council as appropriate and at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Member provided a background to the reasons for his motion, which started when he attended the Governance and Audit Committee in November 2020.

The Riverside Report was discussed, eight months after the report had been received by the Council. He referred to the Housing Non-Compliance report which stated that the Council was failing to meet its basic legal requirements to the 6,000 housing tenants, the MACE report, which had been received prior to Covid-19 and looked at leisure provision, but had not yet been received by any committee.

The Good Governance Report was referred to, which had also been considered by the Governance and Audit Committee, in November 2020. It was noted the report was a year old before it reached Members. He had asked why the report had been delayed and was given reasons which included Covid-19. One of the recommendations stated that a Corporate Plan was needed and he raised concern that when the Corporate Plan had been agreed by Council at the September 2020 meeting, there had been no mention that this was a recommendation contained within the Good Governance report.

Councillor Dilks urged Members to support his motion to assist with the openness and transparency, which was required by the Council.

Debate followed, with support for the motion being given by both the Leader of the Council and the Opposition Group Leader. Reference was made to other reports that had been received and how they had been dealt with, it was felt that a more open and transparent process was needed.

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

That the Council resolves to urgently refresh its practices and protocols and that all such future external reports are considered by either the full Council or Committee of the Council as appropriate, at the earliest possible opportunity.

(b) Councillor Phil Dilks

The Member who had submitted the motion stated that he did not wish to speak on the motion, as it had been agreed upon within the new recommendations from Cabinet, that were agreed earlier in the meeting. The motion was seconded, it was moved that the decision was taken without a debate taking place.

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

That the Council:

- Valued the vital role that unpaid Special Constables played in protecting residents of South Kesteven as part of the 999 emergency services.
- Recognised that across Lincolnshire including South Kesteven, Special Constables were on police duty without any pay for an average of 29 hours a month.
- Welcomed the request made by Lincolnshire's Police and Crime Commissioner to this Council to allow a concession to Special Constables of up to 25 per cent of Council Tax liability.
- Noted that should all 22 Special Constables who currently lived in South Kesteven claim as outlined, the forecast cost of this Council's share of the concession would be a total maximum of £825 in the coming financial year (2021/22).
- Resolved to adopt the concession as requested by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) at the earliest possible opportunity.

70. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 14:56.