

# Minutes

## Cabinet

Tuesday, 14 September 2021 – 14:00

Council Chamber - South Kesteven House,  
St. Peter's Hill, Grantham. NG31 6PZ



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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

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

### Cabinet Members present

Councillor Dr Peter Moseley, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations

Councillor Nick Robins, Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy

Councillor Adam Stokes, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

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

Councillor Linda Wootten, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance

### Non-Cabinet Members present

Councillor Helen Crawford

Councillor Jacky Smith

### Officers in attendance

Karen Bradford (Chief Executive)

Andrew Cotton (Director of Housing and Property)

Nicola McCoy-Brown (Director of Growth and Culture)

Gary Smith (Strategic Director of Commercial and Operations)

Ken Lyon (Assistant Chief Executive)

Richard Wyles (Assistant Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer)

Emma Whittaker (Assistant Director of Planning)

Graham Watts (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Claire Moses (Head of Revenues and Benefits)

Debbie Roberts (Interim Organisational Development and Change Manager)

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## 23. Register of attendance and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Annie Mason and Robert Reid.

## 24. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 July 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record of the decisions taken.

## **25. Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 17 August 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2021 were agreed as a correct record of the decisions taken.

## **26. Disclosure of Interests (if any)**

No interests were disclosed.

## **27. Statement of Community Involvement**

### Purpose of report

To approve the Council's updated version of the Statement of Community Involvement which had been amended to take into account recent legislative changes and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Decision

That the revised Statement of Community Involvement, incorporating changes in legislation, the recent Covid-19 pandemic and findings from a six week public consultation on the proposed changes to the document, be approved.

### Other options considered and rejected

None.

### Reason for the decision

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy presented the report which set out the requirement of the Council to produce a Statement of Community Involvement in accordance with Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It was noted that the purpose of the Statement was to set out how the Council would engage with communities who had an interest in matters relating to development in their areas. Specifically it set out information on when, who with and how the Council would consult in respect of planning, listed buildings and other types of applications together with the drafting of planning documents. The Statement also outlined the techniques available and likely to be used during consultation, ensuring that a degree of flexibility was maintained so that methods could be appropriately tailored.

A six week public consultation on the draft revised Statement of Community Involvement, reflecting changes in legislation and the recent Covid-19 pandemic, was undertaken between 5 February 2021 and 16 March 2021. There was no statutory obligation to undertake this consultation, but it was good practice to do so. 24 comments had been received from various consultees, including both statutory and non-statutory consultees. As a result of comments received, the document had been refined and the key findings from the consultation were set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy placed on record his thanks to the team in compiling the revised Statement.

## **28. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23**

### Purpose of report

To provide Cabinet with an opportunity to review the Council's Localised Council Tax Support Scheme in advance of the 2022/23 financial year.

### Decision

That Cabinet approves the commencement of the consultation for the 2022/23 Localised Council Tax Support Scheme on a 'no-change' basis and to consider the outcome of the consultation findings prior to making a recommendation for the final scheme to Council.

### Other options considered and rejected

Alternative options considered and rejected were set out in the reports presented to the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 June 2021 and 20 July 2021.

### Reason for the decision

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented a report which set out the background associated with Localised Council Tax Support Schemes and the scheme that was currently in place at South Kesteven District Council.

The Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 29 June 2021 which set out a comprehensive overview of the current scheme, the ongoing challenges that the pandemic had placed upon caseload volumes and the general direction of demand. The report also set out a range of changes that could be made to the scheme having regard to the relevant financial impact on both the Council and claimant. At that meeting the Committee requested specific modelling be undertaken, the findings of which were presented to the Committee's meeting held on 20 July 2021.

The Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee carefully considered all of the options and it recommended that the 2022/23 scheme remained unchanged due to the ongoing volatility to caseloads and the wider consideration of the economic recovery and the impact once the furlough scheme had ceased.

During discussion it was noted that South Kesteven District Council's Localised Council Tax Support Scheme remained one of the most generous schemes in the county. It was noted that extensive consultation would be undertaken on the Council's proposals in relation to its scheme for 2022/23 with residents, Parish and Town Councils, Citizens Advice and other key stakeholders.

## **29. Finance Update Report: April - July 2021**

### Purpose of report

To inform Cabinet of the Council's forecast 2021/22 financial position as at the end of July 2021, covering the general fund revenue budget, housing revenue account budget and capital programmes associated with the general fund and housing revenue account.

### Decision

That Cabinet:

- (1) Notes the forecast 2021/22 outturn position for the general fund and housing revenue account revenue and capital budgets as at the end of July 2021.
- (2) Agrees to receive further finance monitoring reports during the year in order to provide ongoing updates with respect to the projected outturn position.
- (3) Notes the allocation criteria of the Covid recovery reserve, the use of which had been delegated to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.

### Other options considered and rejected

None.

### Reason for decision

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented a report which confirmed the following information relating to the Council's revenue and capital budgets:

- the general fund, taking into account approval of budget carry forwards, was noted as a net cost of service budget equating to £19.378 million as set out in table 1 of the report;
- a deficit as at 31 July 2021 was forecast as £1.022 million and was mainly as a result of reduced levels of income from specific service areas, the reduced forecast of procurement and process automation efficiencies and removal of the salary vacancy forecasts;
- the general fund capital programme equated to £4.085 million. The outturn position as at 31 July 2021 was set out in table 6 of the report;
- the housing revenue account revenue budget was £5.435 million and the budgeted surplus was fully utilised to fund future investment in stock growth and property maintenance. The summary of movements associated with this were highlighted in table 7 of the report, with the outturn position set out at table 8;
- the housing revenue account capital programme was £22.716 million, with table 7 of the report showing the summary of movements. The forecast outturn position was set out at table 10.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged the forecast £1 million deficit and highlighted that there would be difficult decisions for the Council to take, but that this was reflective in local government nationally. In terms of key areas of income for the authority, these would continue to be monitored and reviewed.

During discussion a comment was made that despite the challenges faced by the authority in the previous 18 months, the Council's teams had worked very well in continuing to deliver services. It could be that positive variances occurred throughout the year given that there was a lot of the year to go yet. It was therefore anticipated that the Council may be in a better position by the end of the year, noting, however, the projected deficit position set out in the report.

### **30. Key and Non-Key Decisions taken under Delegated Powers**

Cabinet noted the Key and Non-Key Decisions taken under delegated powers since the previous meeting.

### **31. Cabinet Forward Plan**

Cabinet noted the contents of its Forward Plan for the period 1 September 2021 – 30 June 2022.

It was agreed that the item entitled 'proposed development brief for land at Stamford North' be deferred as a result of Rutland County Council's withdrawal of its Local Plan.

Cabinet noted that the following items would be added to the Forward Plan:

- Bourne Special Expense Area – 12 October 2021
- Stamford Special Expense Area – 9 November 2021

### **32. Matters Referred to Cabinet by the Council or Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

The following item of business was referred by the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **33. Exempt Items**

### **34. Arts, Culture and Events Service - Service Review and Staffing Restructure**

#### Purpose of report

To provide Cabinet with an opportunity to review the proposed staffing restructure of the Arts, Culture and Events Service to realise immediate savings.

## Decision

That Cabinet:

- (1) Agrees to implement option 2, as set out in the report, as a proposed staffing restructure for the Arts, Culture and Events Service.
- (2) Agrees that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources be asked to authorise the use of the Council's invest to save reserve in order to financially support the implementation of the revised staffing structure, with the amount required being determined by the final costings and agreed with the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.

## Other options considered and rejected

Other options considered and rejected in relation to proposed staffing structures were set out in the report and exempt appendices.

## Reason for decision

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy presented a report which outlined the outcome of an independent review of the Arts, Culture and Events Service. It had been highlighted that the service currently required a subsidy of 11% of the Council's budget, with approximately £1 million spent on staffing. She made it clear, however, that there continued to be a great desire to continue to develop the Council's programmes in relation to art, culture and events.

Feedback from the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and other elected Members, as well as that from other key stakeholders, had been considered to help understand what a reasonable staffing solution may consist of.

A special meeting of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 August 2021 considered the final copy of the independent review report into the Arts, Culture and Events Service. Further information in relation to the financial implications of those staff affected by proposed new operating structures was considered at a meeting of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 September 2021 where it agreed to:

- Recommended option 2 as a specific staffing restructure for the Arts, Culture and Events Service to Cabinet for approval.
- Review the three centres (Bourne, Grantham and Stamford), with a view to determining a future operating model to enable the Council to decide on the direction of the Arts, Culture and Events Service in terms of objectives, who to target and the development of key performance indicators.
- For officers to return to the Committee during the next year with more detail regarding the different ways the Arts, Culture and Events Services could be delivered in the future.

- At the appropriate time, support the preparation of an amended Arts and Culture Strategy to clarify exactly what it was the Council wished to achieve.

The Leader of the Council reiterated that arts and culture were a vital part of what South Kesteven District Council delivered as an authority and was recognised as a priority. He made it clear that none of the arts centres in South Kesteven were at risk of closure as they were so important to the communities where they were located. Some of the buildings in particular were extremely historic and there was a commitment to continue preserving them alongside delivering these services.

At this stage of the meeting it was proposed, seconded and AGREED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that if they were to be present exempt information could be disclosed to them as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Cabinet considered Appendix 2 of the report, which set out proposed options for staffing restructures.