MINUTES

COUNCIL
THURSDAY, 23 MAY 2024
2.00 PM

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESENT
Councillor Gloria Johnson Chairman
Councillor Paul Fellows Vice-Chairman

Councillor Matthew Bailey
Councillor Emma Baker
Councillor Rhys Baker
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Pam Byrd
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Steven Cunnington
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Patsy Ellis
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Phil Gadd
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Tim Harrison
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Zoe Lane
Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Habibur Rahman
Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Rob Shorrock
Councillor Vanessa Smith
Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Sue Woolley

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance
Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer
Chris Prime, Communications Manager
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Gary Andrew, IT Services Manager
Heather Green, Licensing Team Leader
Alison Hall-Wright, Director of Housing
Emma Whittaker, Assistant Director of Planning

1. Apologies for absence

Prior to the commencement of formal proceedings, the Chairman asked Members to join her in a minute's silence following the recent deaths of former Councillors Dorothy Dawson and Brenda Sumner. Councillors Ian Selby and Graham Jeal gave short speeches in memory of the former Councillors.

The Vice-Chairman then apologised unreservedly to the Council and residents for the way in which he spoke in response to a point of information raised by Councillor Ben Green at the Full Council meeting on 29 February 2024.

It was moved, seconded and following a vote **AGREED** to vary the order of the agenda to allow the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to take place prior to the Public Open Forum.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor James Denniston
Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Ian Stokes

2. Election of Chairman

Members were invited to make nominations for the Chairman of the Council for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Paul Fellows be elected as the Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A vote was taken, and the Council **AGREED**:

To elect Councillor Paul Fellows as the Chairman of the Council for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

The Chairman was invested with the chain of office and Members offered their congratulations.

COUNCILLOR PAUL FELLOWS IN THE CHAIR

Councillor Gloria Johnson addressed the Council, outlining the events she had experienced during her time as Chairman of the Council. She highlighted the support that had been given to her charities (Military vs Cancer, and Place2Bee for men) through fundraising and attendance at events. Thanks were expressed to the Vice-Chairman, as well as those officers that had supported the Chairman over the previous year.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman

Members were invited to make nominations for the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Ian Selby be elected as Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A vote was taken and the Council **AGREED**:

To elect Councillor Ian Selby as the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

The Vice-Chairman was invested with the chain of office and thanked fellow members and officers for granting him the honour of representing the District in a civic capacity.

4. Public Open Forum

There were six questions submitted to Full Council by members of the public. Questions numbered 1-4 were answered during the meeting as below. Questioners 5 and 6 were not present to ask their question, and would receive a written response:

1) John Sayer to the Deputy Leader of the Council:

Why does SKDC think that the marketplace redevelopment will bring in more trade for our businesses when the 2011 redevelopment didn't deliver any of the promises? What difference is levelling of the marketplace going to make this time? I've been in the marketplace for 20 years and this could be the final nail in my business; please help support local businesses today, thank you.

The Deputy Leader of the Council responded:

SKDC was aware of the lessons learnt from the 2011 redevelopment. The works to the market place would create a more flexible space with a greater scope for holding events and activities both in support of increasing footfall in the town in general, and supporting the continued development of the market. But this was only one of a series of actions to promote this retail and hospitality area. SKDC was painfully aware of the need to reinvigorate Grantham Town Centre and we were already seeing a very noticeable growth in the Saturday market; we were refurbishing and reopening the Conduit Lane public toilets, we were planning to redesignate Conduit Lane car park as short stay to attract more footfall, we were planning to introduce 2 hours free parking at Wharf Road car park and an hour's free parking in SKDC car parks elsewhere, and we were planning a series of promotional events for the area across the coming months. We had provided grants to businesses through the government's Heritage Action Zone funding to improve shopfronts and to refurbish Westgate Hall which was now due to reopen as a hospitality business, and we had also provided grants through the government's Future High Street Fund to convert upper floors above shops in the town centre into residential units which would increase local footfall for local businesses.

2) Paul Adams to the Deputy Leader of the Council

What arrangements will be in place after the market place work is completed both for deliveries but also to avoid anti-social behaviour from car drivers, motorcycles and cyclists with no road separation?

The Deputy Leader of the Council responded:

Although the carriageway would be at the same level as the surrounding paving, the extent of the carriageway, and the existing layby/loading/unloading areas would be clearly delineated from the pedestrian areas. The edges of the carriageway would be marked with a contrasting material from the surrounding York stone paving. Road users should not have any confusion over the extent or location of the road.

Also, we would seek to ensure that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) resolved any issues of 'loading-only' bays not being adequately signed in the future, as we are aware that is an issue at the moment.

The market place was covered by SKDC's existing CCTV provision which was currently in the process of being improved with better cameras, and the CCTV was regularly monitored for anti-social behaviour of all kinds – the Control Room was monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. CCTV officers worked closely with the Police and other necessary authorities to ensure that this was dealt with effectively. If necessary, a Public Space Protection Order could be brought in to

give SKDC officers enforcement powers to issue fixed penalty notices, as had already been seen elsewhere in the District.

During the project development phase, as part of the submission of the bid for funding the Council was required to evaluate the public benefit of all projects which were put forward as part of the bid. This included the requirement for projects to reach a certain value of land value uplift, as a marker of the wider economic benefit of the scheme.

There was an expectation of an increase in footfall in the Market Place following the completion of the works, which would be supported by a programme of events and activities. The Council monitored footfall in the market place, and would monitor the footfall throughout the works, and also following their completion. We were able to access this data after the end of the month.

Paul Adams asked a supplementary question; W*ho was monitoring the CCTV footage, given there was often anti-social behaviour and a large amount of littering in that part of Grantham?*

The Deputy Leader advised that the CCTV Control Room was being moved to the Police Station, and it was hoped that this, along with better cameras would contribute to solving problems such as anti-social behaviour.

3) James Meadows to the Deputy Leader of the Council:

What are we going to do with regards to parking for businesses like the bakery and barbers on Westgate in Grantham as a result of the market place works, as it appears we are chasing customers out of Grantham town centre before they have arrived?

The Deputy Leader of the Council responded:

The administration was conscious of increasing footfall in Grantham Town Centre, as something needed to be done. There were plans to introduce an hour's free parking, with 2 hours free at Wharf Lane. Conduit Lane car park would be designated as a short stay car park. This would hopefully lead to a higher degree of footfall and a high turnover of people.

James Meadows asked a supplementary question: *Why were shopkeepers not told about the market place works?*

The Leader of the Council outlined that businesses in Grantham and across the District were being supported. There was a desire from the Council to improve Grantham Market and increase footfall. In order to do that there were some roadworks, carried out in partnership with LCC. He was sorry that the questioner

didn't find out; with hindsight there could have been further consultation. Works were proposed in 2019, with some consultation in 2020.

There was now a position where there was a scheme on the table, and there was a further scheme at Station Approach.

With events taking place in the market place there was a desire to encourage new and existing businesses to succeed and flourish.

4) Rupert Stanton to the Deputy Leader of the Council:

Why are the roadworks being carried out during the busiest time of the year? Almost all of the businesses in the market place are of a seasonal nature and have a lot greater footfall during the Summer than they do in the Winter.

The Deputy Leader of the Council responded:

The timing of the works was largely determined by the time limitations applied to the funding and how this fitted in with the County Council's delivery plan for the project and the availability of the contractors. In order to be completed within the required window for the funding works had to be under contract by September 2024, and completed by March 2025. This unfortunately limited the window in which works could take place.

Rupert Stanton asked a supplementary question; W*hat was being done to ensure that the roadworks were being completed in a speedy and efficient manner?*

The Deputy Leader responded that the roadworkers were under contract to LCC and that he would be happy to raise this issue with them.

5) Colin Lambert to the Leader of the Council for a written response:

I am a disabled amputee in the Council assisted living accommodation of Priory Court.

Sorry I cannot attend as I have a physio appointment, meaning I'm going to have to run the dangerous junction at the Nobody Inn. You are being forced to cross two live lanes to get into lane for the hospital, an accident waiting to happen.

When the development started they blocked half the road off at the Nobody Inn. I tried to call the "emergency" number given due to the chaos being caused at that junction to us, but the phone was switched off. That same day my food delivery couldn't get through due to the lorries delivering portacabins to the car park opposite the entrance to Priory Court. Food deliveries are my lifeline.

Unfortunately last week my neighbour had to call the emergency services due to her husband having a heart attack. Even the emergency services were not sure

how to get to them. I'm not saying that their delay led to the bereavement but if the emergency services are having troubles what chance have we got?

They ruined Westgate with the last lot of so-called improvements in 2011 taking away parking etc. at great cost, only to be told they are going to spend another £4.1 Million of public money to alter it again. I personally think putting it back to the way it was would have been the best idea.

I cannot comment for the rest of the residents of the Grange, Greyfriars, Priory Court, but with restricted access it is nothing but problems, the Council just don't care. When the fair is here we have to suffer for about 5 days, but the so-called improvement forced upon us is going to take 5 months.

A question to the Leader- why were the residents in the assisted living Grange, Greyfriars, Priory Court not consulted or considered around the 3 months of disruption caused by the Market Place redevelopment?

6) Kishor Darbar to the Leader of the Council for a written response:

I write in respect of the Council meeting that's due to take place on Thursday 23 May regarding the work taking place in Grantham marketplace to express my views. As the owner of the Conduit Tea Gardens, I am materially affected by this work and yet was never offered the opportunity for consultation on the matter, which is a disgrace!

When we first considered opening the Conduit Tea Gardens in 1987, Grantham market was the thriving, bustling hub of the community. We were certain, from our market research, that a café such as the Conduit could only thrive within the heart of such a hive of activity. It took us 11 months to put the café together with substantial personal investment and for the first few years we prospered as hoped. With the state of the marketplace as it is now, I would never have chosen to make such an investment.

Fast forward to 1995, and the closing of Grantham Leisure Centre together with the adjoining car park was the first death knell for the marketplace and consequently for our trade. Then came in Asda superstore in 1998 and footfall and trade has never since reached pre-Asda levels. This in itself was difficult, but not content with the introduction of a giant Asda, the council then considered pedestrianisation of the Market Place in 2011 as a legitimate option. This, quite clearly, was also a disaster, and put further pressure on trade. We have not seen the benefit from pedestrianisation that was promised. Instead, it has very much affected independent traders and the Saturday market stall holders as we have seen such a huge loss of footfall. In my opinion, the market now stands at less than 25% of what it was when we first started trading.

Then came 2020, and the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, with lockdowns and terrifying pressure on business that has only just ceased. Finally, we were hoping that this year may start to restore some stability for us - particularly over

the summer season, where our customers do enjoy sitting outside in our peaceful garden.

Imagine then our dismay to find out, very much at the last minute, that this work in the marketplace was to be undertaken throughout the whole of this summer. It really is a horrifying situation for a business that is doing its level best to keep its head above water. The access to the marketplace is all but shot now and Councillor Matt Bailey agreed that when the work does start in earnest next week, the level of dust and noise created cannot be anything but severely detrimental to our trade.

I understand that this Council meeting (which really should have been set before any work was agreed) was due to take place next Thursday. Clearly, I will be unable to join you in person, as my presence is vital in the café during the lunch period, so I wanted to put forward my views in writing. The Council must act fast to give the businesses in the marketplace any hope of weathering this storm created by the Council's own stupidity. It is inconceivable that we weren't consulted on the plans in the first place. We must be compensated for the severe inconvenience caused. Failure to do so, could lead to many small traders and businesses in the marketplace getting further into debt and potentially going under - thereby leaving the marketplace in a much worse position than prior to any work having been considered. We will not rest until we receive this compensation and look forward to seeing what's put in place by the Council as soon as possible.

5. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor Tim Harrison declared a pecuniary interest in item 14, Update of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy as it directly impacted on his business. He would leave the Council Chamber during consideration of this item.

Councillor Harrison also declared that whilst he had premises in Grantham Market Place, it was ‘non-trading’ and therefore he would take part in proceedings related to item 17, ‘Grantham Market Place’. He also declared that he had a family member involved in a business within 100 yards of Grantham Market Place.

6. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The public and private minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 8 February 2024 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2024 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

7. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted the outgoing Chairman’s engagements.

The following members and officers made announcements to Full Council:

Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

The Housing department had previously been subject to national special measures. An urgent priority involved working closely with the Chief Executive and the Housing team to put in place new policies and practices. The Housing Regulator subsequently signed the Council's approach as legally compliant.

The Council had now exchanged contracts to buy 36 new homes close to Swinstead Road in Corby Glen at a cost of £6.5 million over three years. This had been the biggest investment in brand new social housing in more than a generation. Buying brand new homes was a cost-effective way to mitigate right-to-buy housing losses. The housing ranged from one-bedroomed to four-bedroomed properties.

Further progress had been seen on other new build programmes on Swinegate (Grantham), Larch Close (Grantham), Wellington Way (Market Deeping), Gorse Rise (Grantham), Kesteven Road (Stamford) and Bourne End Road (Colsterworth).

The Council had also acquired 21 properties specifically to house Ukrainian and Afghan families.

Leader of the Council

Work towards a new tier of local government in the form of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority was progressing. The mayoral election was due to take place in May 2025; a shadow authority would be in place in the lead up to this election.

Second tier authorities in Lincolnshire would be represented on the Combined Authority by having four seats. Further details on this would be brought to a future meeting of Full Council.

Head of Paid Service

Further information was awaited on the upcoming General Election on 4 July 2024. The Council was also working with government to understand the statutory instrument on making the new Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority.

The Head of Paid Service had used her emergency powers to appoint District Councillor Penny Milnes, and County Councillor Alexander Maughan to Stubton Parish Council.

Grantham Town Council met for the first time on 14 May 2024 – congratulations were offered to their Chairman, Councillor Tim Harrison, and all Grantham Town councillors, some of whom were also district and county councillors.

8. Announcement by the Leader of the Council on the Size and Membership of Cabinet and Cabinet Members' Remits

The Leader of the Council, prior to announcing the members of his Cabinet highlighted the following points:

- There were some challenges ahead on the financial front. There was insufficient funding available to undertake all of the projects that the Council wanted to undertake; there would be some difficult decisions to take.
- Thanks were made to Councillor Richard Cleaver, particularly in regard to the work he contributed to the flooding relief effort. Councillor Cleaver would continue a role within the Cabinet but would no longer be the Deputy Leader.
- Hopefully a direct link would be made between the Youth Council, Cabinet and the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Despite the fact that there had been significant changes in Housing staff throughout the year, it had been a strong year for the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing. In addition to the housing secured over the course of 2023/2024, efforts were ongoing to secure further housing stock on the edge of Grantham.
- A new role of Cabinet Member for Housing was being created. Councillor Virginia Moran had previously been the Chairman of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and had delivered a number of housing related workshops across the year.
- Thanks were offered to Councillor Patsy Ellis for her hard work on the Environment and Waste portfolio throughout 2023/2024 as part of a Cabinet jobshare.
- The purple lidded bin scheme would be a key topic moving into 2024/2025. Contamination in silver lidded bins in South Kesteven had reduced, in part due to the work of the Cabinet Members for Environment and Waste.
- There was a determination to deliver on the East Midlands Councils' Councillor Development Charter.
- A Productivity Plan would be produced and returned to government by July 2024.
- Over £4 million had been secured for Grantham Meres Leisure Centre.
- Bourne Leisure Centre roof would be replaced as part of general maintenance of the building.

The Leader stated during his speech that the Cabinet would consist of eight members:

Councillor Ashley Baxter - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development

Councillor Paul Stokes - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

Councillor Rhys Baker – Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

Councillor Richard Cleaver – Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement

Councillor Phil Dilks – Cabinet Member for Planning

Councillor Philip Knowles – Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing

Councillor Virginia Moran – Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Rhea Rayside – Cabinet Member for People and Communities

9. Programme of Meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Committees for 2024/2025

Full Council was presented with a report of the Chief Executive which set out a draft programme of meetings for Full Council. Cabinet and Committees for 2024/2025.

The draft programme of meetings for 2024/2025 was proposed and seconded.

It was noted that Housing Overview and Scrutiny meetings were likely to start at 2pm. There was also a slight amendment to the printed programme, as the July Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny meeting was likely to move from its date of 25 July 2024 to earlier in July, subject to the agreement of the Chairman of that committee.

Having been proposed and seconded, taking into account the above suggestions, upon being put to the vote the draft programme of meetings for 2024/2025 was **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council approves the programme of meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Committees for 2024/2025, subject to the change to July's Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as attached as Appendix A to the report.

10. Appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council and the Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

The Council was presented with a report of the Chief Executive on appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council and the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees.

Group Leaders were responsible for nominating Members from within their respective political groups to each Committee and Panel, in accordance with the political

balance and allocation of seats as calculated and set out in the Appendix to the report.

Nominations were put forward for Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees; whilst the Leader was able to appoint according to suitability and merit in his opinion, he was content to allow Full Council to vote on each appointment without his intervention.

There were a number of appointments to committees that could not be finalised during the meeting; therefore the membership of committees would be finalised outside of the meeting by Group Leaders.

Note: The meeting adjourned in the middle of this item for a 20 minute period for 3:50pm to 4:10pm.

A delegation in respect of appointments to Committees and the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees were proposed and seconded. Upon being put to the vote it was **AGREED**:

DECISION

That Full Council:

1. **Notes the political proportionality of the Council as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.**

2. **Delegates the appointment of Members to its Committees and Panels to senior officers, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.**

3. **Approves the appointments of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen as follows:**

   Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee
   Chairman - Councillor Murray Turner
   Vice-Chairman - Councillor Barry Dobson

   Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
   Chairman - Councillor Ian Selby
   Vice-Chairman - Councillor Emma Baker

   Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee
   Chairman - Councillor Bridget Ley
   Vice-Chairman - Councillor Gareth Knight

   Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
   Chairman - Councillor Lee Steptoe
   Vice-Chairman - Councillor Zoe Lane

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman	-	Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Vice-Chairman	-	Councilor Steven Cunnington

Licensing Committee

Chairman	-	Councillor Pam Bosworth
Vice-Chairman	-	Councillor Elvis Stooke

Governance and Audit Committee

Chairman	-	Councillor Tim Harrison
Vice-Chairman	-	Councillor Helen Crawford

Standards Committee

Chairman	-	Councillor Pam Byrd
Vice-Chairman	-	Councillor Sarah Trotter

Employment Committee

Chairman	-	Councillor Anna Kelly
Vice-Chairman	-	Councillor Gloria Johnson

Planning Committee

Chairman	-	Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Vice-Chairman	-	Councillor Penny Milnes

Chief Executive's Appeals Panel

Chairman	-	Councillor Richard Cleaver

11. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

The Council was presented with a report of the Chief Executive on the appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies.

The following nominations were proposed and seconded:

- East Midlands Councils – Councillor Ashley Baxter, in his capacity as Leader of the Council.

- The Local Government Association – Councillor Ashley Baxter, in his capacity as Leader of the Council.

- Health Scrutiny Committee (LCC) – Councillor Nikki Manterfield as a reserve, to replace Councillor Virginia Moran who was now a member of the Cabinet.

A second nomination was proposed and seconded for Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing to be appointed as the reserve member for the Health Scrutiny Committee. Upon the taking of a vote, Councillor Nikki Manterfield was successfully appointed.

Having been proposed and seconded and upon being put to the vote, appointments to outside bodies were **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

1. **Appoints Councillor Ashley Baxter, as Leader of the Council to East Midlands Councils and the Local Government Association.**

2. **Appoints Councillor Nikki Manterfield as a reserve member to the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee.**

3. **Notes those appointments previously made at Table 2 of the report which would continue.**

12. Brownfield Land Release Fund Grant

Members considered a report on the bid of £2.8 million for the Brownfield Land Release Fund. The outcome of the bid was expected in summer 2024 and a delegation was sought to approve any grant award.

The report was moved and seconded. Upon being put to the vote, it was **AGREED.**

DECISION

That Full Council delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council (Cabinet Member for Finance, HR and Economic Development) to accept any Grant award received from the Brownfield Land Release Fund.

13. Proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution

Members considered proposed amendments to the Council’s Constitution as recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee.

The following points were raised during debate on the various recommendations:

- Governance and Audit Committee could currently appoint Directors of Council-owned companies, but could not remove them.
- Every attempt would be made by officers to arrange training sessions at times to suit all members.
- Training sessions such as Prevent, and Safeguarding were also undertaken by some members as part of their job, or as part of being a Councillor at another local authority, therefore attendance at those sessions could be transferrable and would save Members having to attend a session twice. However, there were a few key elements of safeguarding training that were specific to South Kesteven.

- Training would be undertaken annually.
- Training sessions would largely take place before the General Election on 4 July 2024.

Having been moved and seconded, and following a vote, it was **AGREED that:**

DECISION

Full Council approves:

1. **An amendment to the Council's Constitution, for clarity, to include provision for the removal of Directors of Council-owned Companies under the terms of reference of the Council's Governance and Audit Committee.**

2. **That the following training and development sessions be mandatory for all Members of the Council:**

   - **Councillor Code of Conduct**
   - **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
   - **PREVENT**
   - **Safeguarding**

3. **That failure to attend training and development sessions within six months of the Council's Annual Meeting, or six months since election to office, means that a Member is unable to act on any committees or bodies to which they have been appointed until they have attended all mandatory training and development sessions. Attendance at the relevant training sessions as part of a Member's employment elsewhere will be accepted, subject to the Monitoring Officer's judgment.**

4. **That the relevant Articles and Procedure Rules in Part 2 (Articles) and Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Constitution in respect of its committees or other bodies be amended to reflect (1), (2) and (3) above.**

5. **That the following be included under the list of notices referred to in paragraph 24(e) (Planning and Planning Policy) in Part 3(c) of the Constitution (Responsibility for Functions – Delegated Powers to Officers) and the Planning Scheme of Delegation at Appendix 1 of the same part of the Constitution:**

   - **Urgent Works Notices (Listed Buildings)**
   - **Repairs Notices (Listed Buildings)**

6. **That the Planning Scheme of Delegation in Appendix 1 of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) be amended to reflect that that Assistant Director of Planning is authorised to issue those notices listed in the document, subject to consultation with the Council's legal advisors.**

14. Update of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

Note: Councillor Tim Harrison left the Council Chamber for consideration of this item

Members considered recommendations from the Council's Licensing Committee regarding proposed amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

The Licensing Committee referred five items within the Policy for public consultation, these were:

- Driver proficiency
- Vehicle condition check
- Vehicle age limits
- Setting fare scales; and;
- Flexible transport services

The results of this consultation was reported back to Licensing Committee on 10 May 2024 and they agreed to recommend a number of amendments to the Policy to Full Council, which were contained in red within the report.

The following points were highlighted during debate on this item:

- Best practice guidance for a fire in an engine bay was to 'get out'. If you were to lift up the bonnet during an engine fire it could cause further damage to the vehicle. Therefore, the recommendation was to remove the penalty point offence for not carrying fire extinguishers, and to not enforce fire extinguisher byelaws.
- A requirement for taxis to be no more that 5 years old was out of sync with other regions. Government guidelines were silent on the maximum age of taxis, but they did recognise the need for the best quality vehicles. They needed to be Euro 6 compliant and be subject to a rigorous testing regime.
- Taxi services were vital to local communities. In particular there was a low number of taxis available in Grantham that could accommodate wheelchairs.
- If a vehicle had been regularly serviced this was far more desirable than requiring an arbitrary maximum age. It also removed the unnecessary burden of purchasing a new vehicle every 5 years.
- It could be argued that a maximum age of 15 years was a sensible requirement given that Euro 7 engines would be available soon. Euro 6 compliance would soon be out of date with the availability of new engines.
- The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy had to be reviewed at least every 5 years but could be reviewed sooner if required.

Having been moved and seconded, and upon being put to the vote it was **AGREED.**

DECISION

That Full Council:

1. **Approves an amendment to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy relating to vehicle age whereby vehicles are required to be Euro 6 compliant at first registration, and delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to alter the policy accordingly.**

2. **Approves those other amendments to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy recommended by the Licensing Committee as set out in the report at Appendix 1.**

3. **Confirms that the review of existing licences includes applying the new application requirements to existing drivers at renewal.**

4. **Approves the amendments at (1), (2) and (3) above are to take place from 1 August 2024.**

15. Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/2024

Note: Councillor Tim Harrison returned to the Council Chamber.

Members considered the Annual Report of the Governance and Audit Committee for 2023/2024, which included the indicative timetable and work plan for 2024/2025.

The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee highlighted the following that had taken place over the course of the year:

- Governance and Audit Committee gained assurance that the Council's governance, risk, and internal control environment remained robust and fit for purpose.
- In January 2024 the Committee approved the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 along with the External Audit Findings report 2022/23 and Value for Money reports 2021/22 & 2022/23 (provided by Grant Thornton, the External Auditors). At that time the Council was among only 10% of Authorities in the country to have received unqualified audit opinions on both the 2022/23 Accounts and Value for Money assessment.
- The issues with the completion of Audited Accounts in the sector was well documented with a September 2024 backstop imposed by Government for the 2022/23 Accounts. This meant that the Council was in an excellent position and had a robust platform for future closedowns and audits.
- KPMG will replace Grant Thornton as external auditors for 2024/25.
- The Committee approved the appointment of interim internal auditors in year to ensure the delivery of the 2023/24 plan. In January 2024 the Committee also approved the appointment of BDO LLP as the Council's new permanent Internal Auditors on a 3-year contract.

- The internal audit plan for 2024/25 was currently being prepared and would be presented to the Committee in June.
- All those Members and Officers who had contributed to the work of the Governance and Audit Committee over the last 12 months were thanked.

Having been moved and seconded, and upon being put to the vote, it was **AGREED.**

DECISION

That Full Council approves the Annual Report of the Governance and Audit Committee for 2023/2024 and approves the indicative workplan and timetable for 2024/2025.

16. Decisions Taken Under Urgency

Members considered a report setting out those decisions that had been made in the 2023/2024 municipal year under urgency provisions set out within the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Council's Constitution.

Full Council **NOTED** the contents of the report.

17. Grantham Market Place - Possible interventions to encourage footfall and support businesses

Note: The meeting was extended to 5:30pm.

Members considered potential support measures for local businesses that may be adversely affected by the redevelopment of the Market Place in Grantham through the Future High Street Fund.

The Leader of the Council introduced the item, highlighting that the issue had been raised by Councillor Matt Bailey. The suggestion had been for a £50,000 hardship fund to support local businesses whilst roadworks were in place within Grantham Market Place. The Leader suggested that a hardship fund would be an unusual step for the Council to take. However, the reduction in footfall seen at the Market was being taken seriously, and measures were being taken to improve the situation in Grantham Town Centre.

The Leader proposed option 4 within the report, which was seconded.

Councillor Matt Bailey raised the following points:

- The Grantham Market Place redevelopment was a project that the people of Grantham felt they were not consulted on.
- The original plan had been to fully pedestrianise Grantham Market Place.

- There was a deadline of March 2025 to spend the monies granted through the Future High Streets Fund. It was not too late for the Council to change its plan regarding the Market Place. A letter could have been drafted to the Government to change plans for the Market Place but wasn't, and it was believed that this was a missed opportunity.
- The footpath on the outside of the Market Place was open to dust; people would not want to use outside café and restaurant facilities whilst the Market Place was a building site.
- Many local businesses did not support the Market Place redevelopment.

Note: Councillor Emma Baker left the Council Chamber and did not return.

In debating the item, Members of Full Council made the following points:

- £50,000 would not be enough to support a business, if this fund were to be successful a higher amount of money would be required. Alternatively, it would be more beneficial to put money into a fund for the completion of the project, to support events and ultimately local businesses.
- By creating a hardship fund for this project it could set a precedent and open the Council up to similar schemes.

Note: The meeting was further extended to 5:45pm. Councillors Nick and Penny Robins, Harrish Bisnauthsing, Rosemary Trollope-Bellew, Vanessa Smith, Rob Shorrock, Peter Stephens and Rhea Rayside had left the Council Chamber and did not return.

- The issue around the total amount of funding available is complex, as it was difficult to calculate how much income each business had lost as a result of the works.
- The details of any hardship fund needed to be thought through quickly. If a business could demonstrate a material loss then they could apply.
- There was sympathy with local businesses, however one issue was that the businesses affected were all of a different ilk. There were also several businesses affected that did not support a compensation scheme. Grantham Market had suffered a lot of criticism, but the new Market Manager had increased business due to putting in place new plans for the Market.
- Lincolnshire County Council were managing the redevelopment scheme on behalf of South Kesteven District Council.

Note: The meeting was further extended to 6pm.

- It was the best approach to not limit funding at this stage and instead focus it on any issues at the Market Place.

A request was made to amend the proposal of option 4 within the report and replace it with option 2. The Chief Executive confirmed that this had the effect of negating the substantive motion, and therefore it could not be accepted.

A request was made that a recorded vote on option 4 be taken, as in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.5 any ten Councilors present at the meeting of Full Council could request this:

For: Councillors Rhys Baker, Ashley Baxter, Pam Byrd, Richard Cleaver, Steven Cunnington, Phil Dilks, Barry Dobson, Patsy Ellis, Paul Fellows, Phil Gadd, Anna Kelly, Philip Knowles, Virginia Moran, Charmaine Morgan, Chris Noon, Habib Rahman, Max Sawyer, Ian Selby, Lee Steptoe, Paul Stokes, Elvis Stooke, Murray Turner. (22)

Against: Councillors Matt Bailey, David Bellamy, Pam Bosworth, Richard Dixon-Warren, Ben Green, Graham Jeal, Gloria Johnson, Jane Kingman, Gareth Knight, Zoe Lane, Robert Leadenham, Nikki Manterfield, Paul Martin, Penny Milnes, Sarah Trotter, Mark Whittington, Jane Wood, Paul Wood, Sue Woolley. (19)

Abstain: Councillor Tim Harrison. (1)

Having previously been moved and seconded, it was **AGREED.**

DECISION

That Full Council not set up a Market Place Hardship Reserve, but increase the budget available to the already identified mitigation measures and the activities to promote footfall to the Market Place in the short and medium term. The level of this increase and the policy on its deployment is to be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

18. Members' Open Questions

Due to time constraints, Members’ Open Questions did not take place.

19. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 6:01pm.

Dear Kishor,

Thank you for submitting a question about the Grantham Market Place improvements to the last full council meeting.

I must apologise for taking so long to respond to you. In answer to your question...

Consultation on the projects was carried out during the development phase for the project when the bid was submitted, which Councillors, businesses, residents and members of the public were invited to participate in. This included workshops, email consultation, and on street surveys. This culminated in the determination of the projects which went forward to the bid which was confirmed by the Council in July 2021. The nature of the funding agreement did not allow the Council to reallocate funding to alternate projects which were not originally included within the bid. In consideration of concerns which have been raised prior to the initiation of the project works, the Council debated whether to go ahead with the works or to cancel the project and return funding to Government, and ultimately decided to continue with the project.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch again if you would like any further information.

With kind regards,

Richard

Richard Cleaver

Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement

Member for Stamford St John's Ward

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