

Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 5 December 2023



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

The Leader: Councillor Richard Cleaver, The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Property and Public Engagement (Chairman)

The Deputy Leader: Councillor Ashley Baxter, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development (Vice-Chairman)

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Councillor Philip Knowles, Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing

Councillor Rhea Rayside, Cabinet Member for People and Communities

Councillor Paul Stokes, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

Non-Cabinet Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison

Councillor Ian Selby

Officers

Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

Nicola McCoy-Brown, Director of Growth and Culture

Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Public Protection

Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits Customer and Community)

Chris Prime, Communications Manager

James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Patrick Astill, Communications Officer

52. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rhys Baker and Councillor Patsy Ellis.

53. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

54. Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interests.

55. Council Tax Base 2024/2025

Purpose of report

To recommend the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2024/2025.

Decision

That Cabinet recommends to Full Council the Council Tax Base for 2024/2025 of 49,710.0 in accordance with the relevant legislation. This would form the basis upon which the Council would estimate Council Tax income for the 2024/2025 budget.

Alternative options considered and rejected

There were none.

Reasons for decision

The resolution would be used in the calculation and budget preparations for 2024/2025.

56. Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25

Purpose of report

To review the responses to the public consultation of the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/2025 and to make recommendations regarding the proposed Scheme for 2024/2025 which would be subject to approval by Council on 25 January 2024.

Decision

Cabinet recommended to Council:

1. The introduction of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/2025 based on the same overarching criteria as the existing scheme and including the following:
 - a. Continuation of the War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support with effect from 1 April 2024 (as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report).
 - b. The alignment of the value of the capital tariff limit and disregard for working age claimants to the pension age claimant values with effect from 1 April 2024 (as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report).

- c. The introduction of a second home premium of 100% with effect from 1 April 2025, following the required 12 months' notice to those ratepayers impacted by this change (as detailed in paragraph 3.7 of the report).

Alternative options considered and rejected

The detailed options given were at Appendix 1 of the report.

Reasons for decision

Continuing with War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support from 1 April 2024 was a continuation of the existing scheme and was at no additional cost.

Capital tariff limit and capital disregard for working age claimants was to be aligned to pension age claimant values, effective from 1 April 2024. Currently, working age customers with capital over £6,000 had £1 of "tariff income" added for every £250.00 of capital they had. This increased the income used within a Council Tax Support scheme assessment by £1 per week. It was proposed for this to be aligned to the same limits as pensioners – these being a capital tariff of £1 for every £500, and a disregard of £10,000. There would be an increased cost to implement this scheme of £2,323.

The introduction of a Second Home premium of 100% – effective from 1 April 2025 was a measure included in the Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill to give Councils the ability to charge a council tax premium of up to 100% for any property left empty for more than 72 days a year. This may encourage second homeowners to make these properties available for rent or residence.

The Bill received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023, and was incorporated within the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023: [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 Stages - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#).

The Council must give residents one year's notice of the intention to charge the 100% premium; therefore, notice would need to be given prior to 1 April 2024.

The current discount of 10% was a total cost of £56,453. The 10% discount would be removed and an additional 100% charge would be applied.

There were currently 353 Council Tax properties which would attract a premium. Such premiums would increase Council tax annual liability by £631,915 per annum. If this was paid in full, South Kesteven's share of this additional income would be £56,872 (9%).

57. Safer Streets Funding

Purpose of report

To accept the Safer Streets (Round 5) funding allocated via the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire following a bid submitted by South Kesteven District Council.

Decision

1. That Cabinet accepts the funding awarded by the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner as part of the Safer Streets (Round 5) Scheme.
2. That the General Fund Revenue Budget be amended by £71,835 for 2023/2024 and £100,203 for 2024/2025 to reflect the above award of grant funding.

Alternative options considered and rejected

To not accept the funding.

Reasons for decision

To ensure that the interventions identified within Appendix 1 of the report can be implemented which will be of benefit in particular to Grantham, as well as safety in the nighttime economy.

The Council had been awarded £172,000 of funding from the Safer Streets Bid. The Council was required to allocate match funding of £93,000 of which £76,000 would be from the CCTV upgrade project and the balance of £16,000 could be met from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The measures covered by the Safer Streets Funding included:

- A Safer Streets Champion post
- CCTV operative cover for weekends
- Increased nighttime and weekend patrols
- Information boards
- Extension of the Pub Watch scheme
- Money for the 'Ask for Angela' project and 'Street Safe' scheme
- CCTV upgrade
- Awareness campaigns around safety
- Working with Lincolnshire Police on anti-spiking measures.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- Extra funding was welcomed, however this appeared to be due to the reduction in provision of PCSOs. Policing on the streets was a reassurance to people, and an opportunity to get to know the community. There were now

approximately 50 PCSOs across Lincolnshire, with none in the District south of Grantham.

- It was pleasing to note the introduction of self-defence classes, as people were more empowered when they were able to defend themselves. However, it might be useful to give future consideration to avoidance training.

58. Finance Update Report: April - September 2023

Purpose of report

To present the Council's forecast 2023/24 financial position as at end of September 2023. The report covers the following areas:

- General Fund Revenue Budget
- Housing Revenue Account Budget
- Capital Programmes – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account
- Reserves overview – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account

Decision

That Cabinet notes the forecast 2023/2024 outturn position for the general Fund, HRA Revenue and Capital budgets as at the end of September 2023.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not to receive the update.

Reasons for decision

Committee Members should be kept updated on the financial position of the Authority, as effective budget management was critical to ensuring financial resources were spent in line with the budget and were targeted towards the Council's priorities. Monitoring enabled the early identification of variations against the plan and facilitated timely corrective action.

The report had already been subjected to a good debate at Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28 November 2023. The direction of travel was positive and there was less pressure on reserves planned. The situation would of course be monitored as the Council approached the financial year end.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The original capital programme was estimated to replace 112 roofs which had been reduced to 59 due to delays in procuring a contractor. Procurement was underway to secure a contractor to re-commence the programme.
- An estimated 267 re-wires were budgeted for, however due to delays awaiting survey works, and 10 access refusals, this programme would not be fully

delivered within the financial year 2023/24. To date 32 had been completed and a further 30 were scheduled to be delivered this year.

59. Cabinet's Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

The meeting closed at 2:26pm.