

Minutes

Cabinet

Thursday, 18 January 2024



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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date for call-in would be 31 January
2024**

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 Rhys Baker, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste (jobshare)
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 Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Ian Selby

Officers

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Nicola McCoy-Brown, Director of Growth and Culture
Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) and Deputy Section 151 Officer
Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place
Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits Customer and Community)
Debbie Roberts, Head of Corporate Projects, Policy and Performance
Nick Thacker, Interim Head of Housing (Technical Service)
Chris Prime, Communications Manager
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Amy Bonfield, Planning Policy Officer
Shaza Brannon, Planning Policy Manager

Charles James, Policy Officer

60. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Patsy Ellis.

61. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

62. Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interests.

63. Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy - 2024/2025

Purpose of report

This report provided an update to Cabinet on Discretionary Council Tax Payment (DCTP) expenditure, and requested that Cabinet approved the Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy for 2024/25.

Decision

That Cabinet:

1. Recommended to Council the continuation of the £30,000 Discretionary Council Tax Payment fund for 2024/2025.
2. Approved the Policy for the administration of Discretionary Council Tax Payments for 2024/2025.

Alternative options considered and rejected

To not approve the Policy or continue the Discretionary Funding

Reasons for decision

The Council had a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2020-2023 to healthy and strong communities and being a high performing council. This report, and the support provided through the Council's Discretionary Council Tax Payment Scheme, delivered these priorities.

Each year, as part of the Council Tax Support Scheme consultation, the Council had agreed to provide £30,000 funding for this scheme. This would be a direct cost to the General Fund.

The Discretionary Council Tax Payment (DCTP) policy for 2024/25 would be put in place to ensure effective financial support was provided to eligible recipients.

A DCTP was available to anyone in receipt of Council Tax Support who had a shortfall between the weekly amount awarded and their Council Tax liability. In addition, the DCTP scheme provided additional funding to help those with a Council Tax liability who were experiencing exceptional hardship in situations where Council Tax Support did not cover all of their council tax liability. To qualify for consideration for assistance under this scheme the customer must already be in receipt of some Council Tax Support.

Since Covid, Government had provided a number of additional top-ups of support for those in receipt of Council Tax (beyond Council Tax Support). As a result, this had had an impact on the amount of funding remaining, which had been rolled over into the forthcoming financial years.

This ongoing top-up support was currently in place to 31 March 2024, and it was not known whether there would be a new top-up announced. It was therefore important the Council continued to approve the roll-over of the underspend as this would provide additional budget in a year in which other government top-up would not be available.

Discretionary Council Tax Payment Policy

The administration and payment of DCTP was at the discretion of each local authority. South Kesteven District Council had a DCT Policy which set out eligibility for the scheme and the application process.

The aim of the policy was to enable the most vulnerable residents, who could not access any other income, to sustain their home and health. Discretionary payments could be applied for independently but were often considered as part of the application process for Discretionary Housing Payments (support for shortfall between Housing Benefit / Universal Credit award and eligible rent). Officers were aware of the discretionary payments and actively encouraged customers to apply where eligibility criteria were met.

There was a need for proactive work and support due to the ongoing impacts of cost of living on residents. However, it was important DCTP was recognised as support for those in short-term crisis. Where longer term support was identified – such as income top-ups, referrals were made to the Council's Cost of Living Team, external support agencies such as Citizens' Advice and Money and Pensions Service. For all residents with a Council Tax liability, the Revenues Enforcement Team was able to provide a holistic approach to advice and support.

The Council's current policy had been in place for some time and had been updated annually in line with delegated powers. It was appreciated that this was an important policy, which provided detail of additional financial support available to residents. Therefore, it was important this policy was reviewed on an annual basis, not only to ensure the policy was fit for purpose, but to be reactive to any issues residents were

facing.

The report was scrutinised by the Finance and Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee and was recommended for approval by Cabinet.

64. Corporate Plan

Purpose of report

To seek Cabinet support of the draft Corporate Plan for the period 2024 to 2027 and to recommend to Council its approval and adoption from the 1st April 2024.

Decision

That Cabinet:

1. Recommends the new Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to Council for approval and adoption from 1 April 2024.
2. Delegates to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing to make any minor amendments to the design of the Corporate Plan 2024-2027 document prior to final Council approval.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council could have decided not to have a Corporate Plan. This was not a prudent or viable approach. The absence of a Corporate Plan would have resulted in a lack of strategic direction and at best an ad hoc and disjointed focus. Effective performance management and delivery of the Best Value Duty would be compromised.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) published draft statutory guidance on compliance with the Best Value Duty for local authorities in July 2023. The Best Value Duty related to the statutory requirement for local authorities and other public bodies defined as best value authorities in Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 ("the 1999 Act") to *"make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness"*.

The guidance provided greater clarity to local government on how to fulfil the Best Value Duty by describing what constituted best value, the standards expected by the department and the models of intervention at the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' disposal in the event of failure to uphold these standards. DLUHC was currently analysing consultation responses to the draft guidance. The final document was expected in 2024.

The draft guidance was clear that possession of a Corporate Plan was a marker of

well-functioning local authority under the Best Value theme of Leadership. The Corporate Plan was required to be *“evidence based, current, realistic and enables the whole organisation’s performance to be measured and held to account. Strategic priorities are aligned with the authority’s financial strategy and delivery arrangements, and respond appropriately to local need, including the plans of partners and stakeholders.”*

It was considered an indicator of potential failure if the *“Corporate plan is out of date, unrealistic and unaffordable and/or has too many priorities”* or was absent entirely.

Reasons for decision

The Corporate Plan would give a strategic framework for operational and medium-term financial planning and provided a clear direction for the Council. This provided a clear view of what the Council was delivering for the public, residents, businesses, key stakeholders and for its own staff.

The Corporate Plan (the Plan) set out the strategic vision of the Council for the next 4 years, and provided a performance framework for the delivery of the actions within the Plan, utilising a comprehensive evidence base.

The Plan informed the Council of strategic decisions and priorities and was designed to be realistic and dynamic.

The three principles that were fundamental to the Plan, identified through meeting with external partners were:

1. Listening and being responsive to needs of communities.
2. Building public trust and confidence by building a culture of openness and transparency wherever possible.
3. Providing value for money for residents and businesses through responsible and prudent use of resources.

The structure of the Plan contained several elements; vision, mission statement, priorities, ambitions, actions, outcomes for 2034, and foundations, and these were outlined within the Plan.

The vision for South Kesteven was to be *‘a thriving district in which to live, work, and visit.’* This phrase encapsulated the visions for the District. Above all, it was important for South Kesteven to be a place that residents were proud to call home. The mission for the organisation was to provide excellent public services, alongside being a modern and forward-looking Council delivering efficient public services.

There were five major priorities within the Plan:

1. Connecting communities
2. Sustainability
3. Enabling economic opportunity
4. Housing
5. To be an effective council

Each priority had a series of ambitions contained within. Each would stimulate a range of programmes and projects; the actions within each ambition detailed specific work that the Council would be undertaking.

Additionally, each priority contained a number of outcomes for a decades' time (2034), giving an example of longer-term strategic planning. The Plan was underpinned by three foundations:

1. Financial sustainability
2. Performance management
3. Corporate values and equalities, the ethos through which the plan will be delivered.

The Plan was the blueprint for the next 4 years and was a clear view of what the Council was delivering for the public, stakeholders and its own staff.

Cabinet approved the State of the District report on 11 September 2023. This, in conjunction with the socio-economic indicators document evidenced where South Kesteven District Council was placed in comparison to other local authorities.

The Plan was developed and refined through three workshops that all elected members had the opportunity to feed into. A further opportunity to input was given through a public consultation. The priorities within the Plan were supported by 80% of respondents and the ambitions of the Plan supported by around 85% of respondents.

Thanks were expressed to all officers and members that had taken part in the drafting of the Corporate Plan, in particular Debbie Roberts and Charles James.

The following points were raised during debate:

- It was disappointing that take up amongst members for the Corporate Plan workshops was lower amongst some political groups.
- Officers and members had to lead by example on the Plan. The goals within the Plan were 'middle-distance' so that they could be realistic – there was little point setting goals for 100 years' time when no-one would be around to defend them.
- A 'golden thread' approach was embedded in the Plan. This was the link that connected all work, at all levels of the organisation, directly to the overarching vision, priorities and ambitions of the Plan.

65. Fees and Charges Proposals 2024/25

Purpose of report

To set out the proposed fees and charges to be introduced for the financial year 2024/25.

Decision

That Cabinet:

1. Adds a charge to the proposed fees and charges to recommend to Council, to read '*Discharge of Planning obligation, approval of details pursuant to a planning obligation (Section 106 agreement) per clause £162 plus VAT*'
2. Recommended to Council the following fees and charges proposals for the financial year 2024/2025:
 - a. Green waste bin annual collection charges
 - i. Increase of £2 on the first bin to £51
 - ii. Increase of £15 on all subsequent bins to £42.
 - b. Departure fees for buses should not be increased from 87p to 90p.
3. approve the drafting of the South Kesteven District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement Order) 2023, with or without amendments, for consultation in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 to incorporate the following recommended changes:

Stamford:

- new tariff structure Monday to Saturday 8am-6pm
- £3 charge for evenings (long stay car parks only)
- £3 maximum charge for Sundays and Bank Holidays (Wharf Road Stamford exempt from Sunday charges)

Grantham:

- New tariff structure Monday to Saturday 7am-7pm
- 1 hour free parking at all car parks (except Wharf Road car park)
- 2 hours free parking at Wharf Road car park
- £2 charge for evenings
- £3 charge for Sundays and Bank Holidays
- The reclassification of Conduit Lane car park to a short stay car park

Long Stay Car Park Season tickets:

- Monday to Friday weekly charge of £18, monthly charge of £65, and a quarterly charge of £170
- Monday to Sunday weekly charge of £25, monthly change of £90, and a quarterly charge of £200.
- Consultation on offering a 15% discount for employers who purchase 4 or more quarterly season tickets.

4. Notes the proposal from the Finance and Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee to introduce 2 hours free parking on Saturdays for Conduit Lane Grantham, Watergate Grantham, and Guildhall Street Grantham, and agrees to consult on the proposal.
5. Instructs officers to draft the appropriate Order, consultation and advertising for the Notice of Variation to formally vary the South Kesteven District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Civil Enforcement Order) 2023.
6. Agrees to receive a further report summarising any consultation feedback received during the statutory period.

Alternative options considered and rejected

To not recommend fees and charges to Full Council.

Reasons for decision

The Council would often require additional information to be submitted for agreement via planning conditions or clauses within the legal Section 106 agreement. This included details such as affordable housing strategies, landscaping information or details of road junctions. Whilst there were statutory planning application fees for many application types, including agreeing details reserved by planning permission, there was no such similar set fee where details were required to satisfy the requirements of the legal agreement. The Council was able to set its own fees and charges for discretionary services, including the monitoring and administration of Section 106 agreements; where the Council received a request to agree details reserved by conditions, a significant amount of officer time was spent processing and assessing the information submitted. In setting these fees, the Council ensured that they were proportionate and should not exceed the overall estimated costs of delivering the service. The proposed fee would typically not exceed the overall costs of reviewing and assessing the details submitted and would support the Council in covering its costs.

The green waste charges were set in response to ongoing service cost increases relating to vehicle, operational and staffing costs in providing this discretionary service. However, the charge still remained low when compared to neighbouring authorities.

The majority of the discretionary fee increases were in line with the directly related costs associated with delivering the service and therefore increases had been applied. However, it was noted that there were no proposed increases to the market service in order to encourage trader numbers to increase particularly at Grantham and Bourne. Market Deeping and Bourne were not included in the consultation as they did not form part of the South Kesteven District Council Order 2023.

In relation to the proposed 3p rise in bus charges (departures), it was decided not to proceed and to retain the current charge.

A capacity study on car parks had been undertaken and the results were due. This study gave an overview of the use of car parks in Bourne, Market Deeping and Stamford. Any car park changes would be subject to the consultation process, in both Stamford and Grantham; it was important to note that the consultation was so extensive since it was not purely related to tariffs.

The Finance and Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 28 November asked the Cabinet to consult on free Saturday car parking for Grantham Market.

Further points were highlighted during debate:

- Negative publicity around proposed car parking changes was disappointing, given the offer of 1 hour free parking at Grantham.
- When the results of the consultation were known officers and members could do a cost benefit analysis on the feedback against costs to the Council.

66. Budget Framework Amendments 2023/2024

Note: Debbie Roberts was a Director on the Board of LeisureSK Limited (as well as being an officer at South Kesteven District Council) and left the Council Chamber during this item.

Purpose of report

This report sought approval to make in-year amendments to the Budget Framework for the financial year 2023/2024.

Decision

That Cabinet:

1. Recommends to Council the following budget amendments to the 2023/2024 Budget Framework:
 - a. Subject to a successful outcome of the phase 3C Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to increase the Capital General Fund decarbonisation scheme contribution to £492,500.
 - b. Delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Finance to accept the Phase 3C Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding if the grant application is successful.
 - c. Provide an additional management fee of £123,000 to LeisureSK Limited for the current financial year only.
2. Notes, with grateful thanks, the actions taken by Council members and officers in response to the impact of Storm Henk in the South Kesteven District.
3. Approves the following actions in response to the request from LeisureSK Limited for additional funding for the current financial year:
 - a. To request officers write to LeisureSK Limited to request a mitigation and recovery plan for the financial years 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 in response to the management fee request with a view to seeking the level of management fee being requested reducing further for 2024/2025.
 - b. To request that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Cabinet Member for Leisure receive regular detailed budget forecast reports from LeisureSK Limited between now and the end of the financial year 2023/2024.
 - c. To strongly request an invite for the Cabinet Member for Leisure to attend the LeisureSK Limited board meetings as an observer.
 - d. To request an urgent independent assessment of the business plan and profit and loss account for the financial years 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 and propose any corrective action or mitigations that can be undertaken.

- e. To initiate an independent assessment of the existing governance model and operational financial management controls to ensure they are fit for purpose and effective.
 - f. To note that an independent review of the VAT and taxation implications is underway.
 - g. To ask the Section 151 Officer, on behalf of the Council, to undertake a review of the financial information, a review of the Board minutes and level of financial support being provided to LeisureSK Limited and to recommend to Cabinet any corrective actions that may be required.
 - h. Accelerate the options appraisal for the future delivery model of SKDC's Leisure Services including insourcing and full market testing by tender with leisure providers. This is to be undertaken within the shortest of timelines.
4. Recommends to Council the formation of a Leisure Reserve of £850,000 in order to fund the contribution towards the refurbishment of the Deepings Leisure Centre

Alternative options considered and rejected

LeisureSK Ltd - Councils received no dedicated funding from Government to provide sports and leisure services and facilities. Without the requested additional funding, the Council could decide to close some or all of the leisure centres.

As the current contract with LeisureSK Limited was nearing the end of its period a thorough options appraisal would be undertaken to establish the most appropriate delivery model going forwards.

Reasons for decision

A Joint Meeting of the Culture and Leisure and Finance and Economic Overview & Scrutiny Committees met on 9 January 2024 to discuss and recommend the creation of a reserve to contribute towards the refurbishment of the Deepings Leisure Centre. Full Council subsequently met on 11 January to agree that the contribution of £850,000 would go forward, as and when the conditions of the Deepings Leisure Centre proposal were met.

The Council was required to provide match funding of £492,500 for the Decarbonisation Fund application; creating this budget provision would ensure that the Council was able to accept the funding if the bid was successful.

The allocation of an additional management fee to LeisureSK Ltd would ensure that the Company could continue to operate.

LeisureSK Limited had been operating since 2020, and an additional £500,000 of funding had been provided in the previous financial year. Between Christmas 2023 and the New Year there had been an anticipated shortfall of £272,000. The £123,000 of funding within this report was required in order for the Leisure Centres to continue operating.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The response of South Kesteven District Council officers to the flooding across the District was exemplary. The positive contributions of Members, Parish Councils and the Communications Team was highlighted. In particular, the contributions of the Ward Members for Casewick was highlighted.
- A fuller update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund would be held at Housing Overview and Scrutiny on 22 January 2024.
- Cabinet Members remained wholly committed to the leisure provision across the District and were grateful for the work of those across the three leisure centres.
- One member suggested that the existing governance model and financial management controls within LeisureSK Limited were not fit and effective, therefore an urgent governance review was necessary.
- It was vital to ensure value for money, and fit and effective leisure facilities across the District.
- Non-executive directors had a duty to uphold strong corporate governance.

67. Sheltered Scheme Passenger Lift Replacements

Purpose of report

To obtain approval to enter into a contract with Allied Lifts for the provision of replacing six passenger lifts at South Kesteven District Council's sheltered housing schemes. The contract would be awarded through the Fusion 21 Framework and would be for an initial period of 3 years with an option to extend for a further 1 year.

Decision

That Cabinet approves the award of a contract to Allied Lifts for the replacement of six lifts at the Council's sheltered housing schemes with a contract value of £600k for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for a further year.

Alternative options considered and rejected

There had been the option of maintaining the existing lifts and replacing parts to keep them in service, but availability of parts was low or non-existent, hence the need to replace the lifts.

Reasons for decision

The proposed contract award had followed compliant procurement processes and would provide the Council with the appropriate contracts to aid officers to deliver on the Corporate Priority to provide "Housing that meets the needs of all residents".

There were 14 lifts across the sheltered housing schemes, two of which were replaced last year. The existing lifts had been in situ for a number of years, and

despite regular maintenance, there was still a number of callouts for repairs. Supply of parts was becoming increasingly difficult. Replacing them now was the best option as the lefts were an essential part of people's homes as well as giving access for members of the community.

68. Discretionary Housing Payment Policy - 2024/2025

Purpose of report

This report provides an update on Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) expenditure and requests Cabinet approves the policy for 2024/25.

Decision

That Cabinet approves the policy for the administration of Discretionary Housing Payments for 2024/25.

Alternative options considered and rejected

There were no other options to consider, other than to not approve the policy.

Reasons for decision

The Council had a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2020-2023 to healthy and strong communities and being a high performing council. This report, and the support provided through the Council's Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme, delivered these priorities.

The administration and payment of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) was at the discretion of each Local Authority. South Kesteven District Council had a DHP Policy which set out eligibility for the scheme and the application process.

The aim of the policy was to enable that the most vulnerable residents, who could not access any other income could sustain their home and health.

Awards of Discretionary Housing Payments may be made where a resident had a short-term financial difficulty or had continuing and unavoidable needs that meant they were unable to pay their rent. Awards would normally be for a defined period.

Consideration would be given to whether all other discounts and sources of help had been exhausted. Where appropriate, decisions would be deferred until other avenues had been explored.

There was a need for proactive work and support due to the ongoing impacts of Welfare Reform and Cost of Living on residents. Whilst the effects of Welfare Reform had impacted a significant number of people and increased the need for DHP, it was important to note that DHP was also payable to people who required further financial assistance that had not been impacted by these changes. The ongoing reduction in DHP funding would inevitably have an impact on the level and duration of DHP

awards, however, it was intended that by working with customers in line with the policy these impacts would be managed and mitigated with longer-term sustainable solutions.

It was important DHP was recognised as support for those in short-term crisis. Where longer term support was required, this was achieved through identification of additional longer term financial support – such as income top-ups, referrals to the Council's Cost of Living Team, referrals to external support agencies such as Citizens Advice and Money and Pensions Service. For South Kesteven tenants, liaison with the Housing Team was important to ensure there was a holistic approach to prevent homelessness and to ensure the resident was supported through the Tenancy Support Team.

The Council's current policy had been in place for some time and had been updated annually in line with delegated powers. It was appreciated this was an important policy, which provided detail of additional financial support available to residents. Therefore, it was important this policy was reviewed on an annual basis, not only to ensure the policy was fit for purpose, but to be reactive to any issues residents were facing.

69. Award of Contract for Space Heating, Installation and Servicing in respect of HRA Properties

Purpose of report

To seek approval to enter into a contract with Aaron Services for the provision of asset services and the repair, maintenance and installation of domestic heating and mechanical services, including low carbon installations to South Kesteven District Council's housing stock.

Decision

That Cabinet approves the award to Aaron Services Ltd for the contract for a 3 year period (with the option to extend by a further 1 + 1 years) of an annual value of up to £3m for the provision of asset services and the repair, maintenance and installation of domestic heating and mechanical services, including low carbon installations to the Council's housing stock.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The ongoing maintenance of a number of existing systems, as opposed to replacing them had been considered, but this could be difficult due to the availability of parts.

Additionally, consideration was being given to obtaining grant funding to check the integrity of cavities and lofts, as insulation in these key areas of property construction was unknown. A further report on this would follow in due course under Fabric First.

Reasons for decision

The proposed contract award had followed compliant procurement processes and would provide the Council with the appropriate contracts to aid the delivery of the Corporate Priority to provide “Housing that meets the needs of all residents”.

The contract award was one of the largest that the Council granted, as it was for up to £15 million over 3 years with an option to extend by another two years.

Collaboration was underway with Aaron Services Limited; they were willing to relocate some of their staff into Council premises, which added value to the contract.

One other advantage was that Aaron Services Limited had for many years serviced a similar contract at North Kesteven District Council, who seemed to have received an efficient.

Considerable work had been carried out to ensure that under the new contract there would be marked improvements to the Council's housing tenants.

70. Budget Proposals for 2024/25 and indicative budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27

Purpose of report

To present the draft Budget proposals and estimates for 2024/25 for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

Decision

That Cabinet:

1. Had considered, and noted the budget proposals for 2024/2025 in respect of the General Fund (Revenue and Capital), and the Housing Revenue Account (Revenue and Capital).
2. Approves a rent setting increase of 7.70% for 2024/2025.
3. Proposed an increase for garage rents and service charges of 6.7%.
4. Approves a consultation in accordance with the requirements of Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for the financial year 2024/2025.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council was legally required to set a balanced budget each financial year, therefore there had not been a ‘do nothing’ option.

Reasons for decision

The Council was legally required to set a balanced budget each year. The Budget Proposals would be further considered by Cabinet on 6 February 2024, and then go to Full Council for final approval on 29 February 2024.

71. 2022/2023 Authority Monitoring Report

Purpose of report

The annual publication of the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) was a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities. The AMR covered the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and reviewed progress in preparing development plans and the extent to which South Kesteven District Council's policies had been put into effect.

Decision

That Cabinet:

1. Endorse the 2022-2023 Authority Monitoring Report (Appendix A) and agreed to its publication on the Council's website.
2. Delegates the preparation and publication of a non-technical summary of the Authority Monitoring Report to the Assistant Director of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning.

Alternative options considered and rejected

As publication of the AMR was a regulatory requirement, there were no feasible alternatives to publishing the document. The AMR was a factual report which provided clarity around progress on the delivery of the Local plan's objectives and policies. The AMR would help to ensure the emerging Local Plan's policies were fit for purpose.

Reasons for decision

Regulation 34 of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012 required Local Planning Authorities to publish an AMR.

The AMR provided a means through which monitoring data could be presented within one document. It contained progress of the emerging Local Plan, and of any Neighbourhood Plans in the District. A draft version of the report was considered by Planning Committee in December 2023.

Also included within the report were the following items:

- Details of the authority's housing delivery, including the number of affordable housing completions.
- Progress of allocated housing sites, as well as information on gypsy and traveller provision.
- Information on allocated employment sites.

- A non-technical summary was required as the Council was committed to improving public understanding of its work.

The Planning team would report this information annually.

72. LeisureSK Limited - Urgent Funding Request

Note: Debbie Roberts was a Director on the Board of LeisureSK Limited (as well as being an officer at South Kesteven District Council) and left the Council Chamber during this item.

Purpose of report

To consider a request for an immediate payment to LeisureSK Limited of £150,000 to ensure the continued delivery of leisure centre services.

Decision

That Cabinet:

1. Approves an immediate management fee payment of £150,000 to LeisureSK Ltd.
2. Delegates to the Council's Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Economic Development responsibility to identify the most appropriate source of funding from which to make the payment.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council could have chosen not to approve the increased management fee request. However, this would have meant LeisureSK Limited would not be able to meet its cashflow requirements which would have resulted in centres facing immediate closure.

Reasons for decision

To ensure LeisureSK Limited could meet its cashflow requirements in January 2024 and that the leisure centres across the District could continue to operate.

73. Key and Non-Key Decisions taken under Delegated Powers

The Key Decision taken under delegated powers was noted.

74. Cabinet's Forward Plan

The Forward Plan was noted.

The Leader of the Council, in closing the meeting noted that it had been a pleasure to Chair Cabinet for the preceding 8 months.

Meeting closed at 3:51pm.