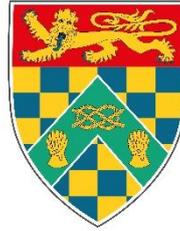


Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 18 February 2020



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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

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

Cabinet Members present

Councillor Annie Mason, Cabinet Member for Communities

Councillor Dr Peter Moseley, Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations

Councillor Robert Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Councillor Adam Stokes, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

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

Non-Cabinet Members present

Councillor Judy Stevens

Officers

Paul Thomas, Interim Chief Executive

Lee Sirdifield, Strategic Director, Transformation & Change

Gary Smith, Strategic Director, Commercial & Operations

Harry Rai, Interim Strategic Director, Growth

Richard Wyles, Interim Director of Finance

Shahin Ismail, Director of Law and Governance

Steve Bowyer, Chief Executive, InvestSK

Alison Hall-Wright, Head of Finance

Sarah Evans, Interim Principal Democracy Officer

The Leader advised that future Cabinet meetings would be held in the Council Chamber, South Kesteven House.

73. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

(a) Officers present be updated to reflect Steve Bowyer's role as the Chief Executive of InvestSK

(b) Page 6, paragraph 5

With regard to a travellers' site, the Leader advised that ~~there was no allocation this year but he would support this in the future when it was needed~~ we would deal with sites required on a needs basis and when reviewing the Local Plan we would also be looking at sites moving forward

(c) Page 7, paragraph 3

He referred to a mistype on page 38 under the heading of 'Lobbying' and explained that ~~the Council was not looking to abolish the right to buy as the Council did sell homes and received the full rate to invest back into building more social and private housing across the district.~~ the Council was not looking to abolish the right to buy as it did not have those powers as this was Government policy, but the Council was looking for 100 percent of the sale cost to reinvest into more Council housing

Minute 66 – Position Statement on the Intentional Release of Sky (Chinese) Lanterns and Balloons

As referenced in the above minute, the Leader asked whether a message had been conveyed to the town councils in the district as to following the Council's lead on their property. He added that he would follow this up with the Chief Executive after the meeting.

74. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

75. Budget Proposals for 2020/21 and Indicative Budgets for 2021/22 and 2022/23 - A district that works for everyone, delivering opportunity

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented the draft Budget proposals and drew Cabinet Members' attention to the following as well as a revised version of appendix Ai, showing a balanced budget and no surplus, which replaced the version circulated with the agenda:

- The budget had been under consideration for many months by all Members and had been reviewed by overview and scrutiny
- Consultation on council tax options had closed on 14 February 2020. The results were being collated and would be presented to the Council meeting on 2 March 2020
- The budget was for one year only
- There were challenges ahead due to the uncertainty of national funding and the business rates reset

- There was emphasis on delivering savings that were considered to be realistic and achievable
- Confirmation had been received from Government that the New Homes Bonus would end next year; it was noted that the Council did not need to rely on this to set a balanced budget
- The budget included provision for the refurbishment of the council offices
- Funding had been allocated for defibrillators in Grantham town centre
- Ward Member grants would continue on a reduced basis
- Inclusion of foodbank funding
- £60m investment in new social housing across the district
- Arrangements for the alignment of reserves to provide financial flexibility
- The Council did not need to use reserves to support the budget
- Savings and transformation savings were included in the proposals

He proposed that recommendations 1-18 be referred to the Council.

The Leader supported the budget and mentioned:

- Councils across the region and key stakeholders were lobbying the Government for a 4-year funding programme
- As in previous years there were challenges in balancing savings and growth expenditure
- Work to support the Council's Corporate Plan would be underpinned by redefining the operating model of the Council, maximising commercialism opportunities, service transformation and rationalisation of assets and operating costs
- A senior management team restructure was expected following the arrival of the new Chief Executive with a view to achieving efficiencies of £300k
- Proposed investment in the Council offices would create opportunities to set up a public sector hub where other organisations could work from the Council building
- The proposed office refurbishment represented the first real investment in the building for a number of years, and would provide a modern and agile working environment, helping with staff retention and attracting new staff
- Sound business cases would be required to ensure value for money and viability of all proposed projects, particularly the Capital Programme
- The partnership arrangement for St. Martin's Park, Stamford had been agreed with Burghley; Members would be kept apprised of the project's progress
- Cabinet Members were thanked for their contributions throughout the budget process

Other Cabinet Members expressed support for the budget. It was noted that Cabinet Members were individually responsible for their budgets and delivery of savings. There was recognition of the need to make compromises in the 2020/21 Budget, with some work rolled forward for future consideration including investment in assets (eg. refurbishment of the depot) and development of a car parking strategy.

Cabinet Members noted that the Council had a contract in place with Environment SK and it paid the company to deliver services as set out in that contract. Members noted that the Council would continue to identify and pursue other commercial opportunities, growing its expertise in this area.

An amendment was proposed that £20,000 be allocated towards events and festivals in the 2020/21 budget. This allocation would be used to support the wider cultural agenda across the District. Cabinet Members agreed to this proposal.

A further amendment to the draft budget was proposed: an allocation of up to £35,000 towards the funding for the university for one year only; this did not take account of revenue funding, which would be offset against the budgeted sum. This was also supported by members of the Cabinet.

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

The Cabinet recommends to Council:

- 1. To set a General Fund budget requirement of £15.114m for 2020/21 as detailed at section 3 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and shown in detail at Appendix A (inclusive of special expenses)**
- 2. To propose a Council Tax level of £163.62 for 2020/21 (Band D property)**
- 3. To note the indicative base estimates for 2021/22 and 2022/23 as detailed in the summary at Appendix A to the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**
- 4. To approve dwelling rent increases of 2.7% (CPI + 1%) in accordance with Government guideline rent providing an average rent of £79.64 (an average rental increase of £2.02 per a week)**
- 5. To approve an increase in garage rents of 3%**
- 6. To approve an average increase of 3% in service charges for communal facilities and communal rooms**
- 7. To approve an increase in shared ownership rents by 2.7% (CPI +1%)**
- 8. To approve the Housing Revenue Account for the year 2020/21 and indicative years 2021/22 and 2022/23 detailed at section 5 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and shown at Appendix A**
- 9. To approve the General Fund Capital programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23 detailed at section 5 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and shown at Appendix C;**
- 10. To approve the Capital Financing statement detailed at Appendix C to the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**
- 11. To approve the Housing Investment programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23 detailed at section 5 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and as shown at Appendix C**
- 12. To approve the Capital Financing statement detailed at Appendix C to the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

13. To approve the movements in Revenue and Capital reserves and balances detailed at section 7 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and shown at Appendix D
14. To approve the movements in HRA revenue and Capital reserves and balances detailed at section 7 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and shown at Appendix D
15. To approve the Treasury Management Strategy detailed at section 8 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources report and provided at Appendix E
16. To approve the Capital Strategy detailed at section 8 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and provided at Appendix F
17. To approve the fees and charges policy detailed at section 9 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and shown at Appendix G
18. To approve the fees and charges detailed at section 9 of the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and shown at Appendix H
19. To approve a sum of £20,000 towards events and festivals in the District
20. To approve a sum of £35,000 for 2020/21 (for 1 year only) towards the funding of the university

76. Matters Referred to Cabinet by the Council or Overview & Scrutiny Committees

The Leader of the Council presented a report which highlighted matters referred to the Cabinet by the Council or the Council's overview and scrutiny committees since the Cabinet's last meeting held on 21 January 2020.

The Chairman of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee was invited to present a recommendation from that committee's last meeting held on 11 February 2020 as follows:

- To provide the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a formal written response as to the status of the Bourne CiCLE Festival, and a response to their recommendation made to the December 2019 meeting of Cabinet: 'To support the CiCLE Festival being held in 2020, subject to stronger budgetary controls and greater community and business involvement'.

The Committee Chairman referred to festivals as taking place biannually and would appreciate a written response on the festival programme.

It was noted that the Bourne Corn Exchange and Town Hall provided excellent community space and venues for cultural activities. It was also noted that the Committee was working with the Arts Officer on a toolkit which included little interventions that improved quality of life and which did not impact on the Council's budget.

It was **AGREED** that the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy respond to the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on behalf of the Cabinet, and that the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy will work with the Committee over the next year to work on a festival programme moving forward.

77. Items raised by Cabinet Members including reports on Key and Non Key Decisions taken under Delegated Powers

The Leader of the Council presented his report giving an overview of decisions taken by individual Cabinet Members and it was noted that one decision had been taken by the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations since the last Cabinet meeting held on 21 January 2020. The decision related to repair works in those car parks operated by South Kesteven District Council.

78. Cabinet Forward Plan - 1 March 2020 to 28 February 2021

Cabinet Members noted the Forward Plan for the period 1 March 2020 to 28 February 2021 which had been distributed prior to the meeting. The Forward Plan gave an indication of the items that would be presented to Cabinet over the coming 12-month period. It was noted that the plan needed updating to reflect the new dates for Council (2 March 2020) and Cabinet (17 March 2020).

79. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent

There was a comment on hard copy agenda packs that supported the meeting. This was linked to the Council's commitment to climate change and the work of the task group in reducing waste including paper and printing. It was considered that there needed to be a thorough review on the use of printing.

It was noted that Karen Bradford, the new Chief Executive, would be taking up her position on 2 March 2020. A vote of thanks was expressed for the Interim Chief Executive, Paul Thomas.

80. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 14:32.