

# MINUTES

COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 1 JULY 2020

2.30 PM



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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## PRESENT

Councillor Jacky Smith Chairman

Councillor Bob Adams  
Councillor Ashley Baxter  
Councillor David Bellamy  
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing  
Councillor Mrs Pam Bosworth  
Councillor Robert Broughton  
Councillor George Chivers  
Councillor Louise Clack  
Councillor Kelham Cooke  
Councillor John Cottier  
Councillor Helen Crawford  
Councillor John Dawson  
Councillor Phil Dilks  
Councillor Barry Dobson  
Councillor Mike Exton  
Councillor Paul Fellows  
Councillor Helen Goral  
Councillor Breda Griffin  
Councillor Jan Hansen  
Councillor Graham Jeal  
Councillor Gloria Johnson  
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown  
Councillor Anna Kelly  
Councillor Ms Jane Kingman  
Councillor Philip Knowles

Councillor Annie Mason  
Councillor Penny Milnes  
Councillor Virginia Moran  
Councillor Charmaine Morgan  
Councillor Robert Reid  
Councillor Susan Sandall  
Councillor Ian Selby  
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith  
Councillor Lee Steptoe  
Councillor Judy Stevens  
Councillor Adam Stokes  
Councillor Ian Stokes  
Councillor Jill Thomas  
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew  
Councillor Sarah Trotter  
Councillor Dean Ward  
Councillor Hannah Westropp  
Councillor Hilary Westropp  
Councillor Mark Whittington  
Councillor Jane Wood  
Councillor Paul Wood  
Councillor Sue Woolley  
Councillor Linda Wootten  
Councillor Ray Wootten

## OFFICERS

Chief Executive (Karen Bradford)  
Director of Law and Governance  
(Shahin Ismail)  
Interim Director of Finance  
(Richard Wyles)  
Strategic Director, Transformation and  
Change (Lee Sirdifield)

## OFFICERS

Strategic Director, Growth (Paul Thomas)  
Strategic Director, Commercial and  
Operations (Gary Smith)  
Head of Governance (Jo Toomey)  
Democratic Officer (Naomi Page)

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### **103. Register of attendance and apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lee, Moseley, Robins, and Wheeler.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Manterfield, as she had a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 3: Grantham Hospital, which was the only substantive item of business.

### **104. Disclosure of Interests**

No interests were disclosed.

### **105. Grantham Hospital**

The Chairman of the Council introduced the Grantham Hospital item, explaining that this would be the only substantive item of business at the extraordinary meeting of Council. The Chairman wished to express her gratitude to the NHS staff for the work they were undertaking in challenging and unprecedented circumstances at the present time. Members of the public were thanked for expressing their views during the public speaking session, which had taken place immediately prior to the meeting.

In setting out the procedural rules for the item, the Chairman confirmed that no motions on notice had been submitted in advance of the meeting. It had been considered best practice on this occasion to allow all Members to have the opportunity to present a motion to Council or to propose amendments to any such motion, to ensure that the final decision was representative of the views of all Councillors present. It was intended that officers would capture any suggested resolutions and their corresponding amendments and display them via online screen sharing. A vote would then be taken at the end of the debate.

The Chairman proposed to suspend the rules of debate set out in Article 4.11 of the Constitution to facilitate the above proposed procedure. One Councillor expressed her disappointment that her motion had been appended to the item as a background paper, rather than submitted to Council as the basis for debate.

Another Member requested to speak first and propose his motion when the Chairman opened the session for debate. It was felt that the lack of clarity as to the intended procedure for the meeting had caused confusion and friction amongst Members. However, it was acknowledged that as a collective body, there was a need to address the important item on the agenda and collaborate across political parties to reach a collective decision that would reflect the strength of feeling displayed.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED:**

**That the rules of debate set out in Article 4.11 of the Constitution be suspended for this meeting only**

The Chairman then opened the session for debate. As Councillor Whittington had indicated that he wished to speak first, he proceeded by proposing his motion:

*That following this Emergency Full Council meeting this Council calls on the Leader of the Council, Cllr Kelham Cooke, to:*

- *Write to Andrew Morgan, Chief Executive of United Lincolnshire NHS Trust, John Turner, Chief Officer of NHS Lincolnshire CCG, and Sir Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, to express this Council's grave concerns that the temporary closure of Grantham Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit and loss of medical beds at Grantham Hospital may become permanent from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.*
- *Write to Cllr Carl Macey, the Chairman of the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee, to inform him of this Council's grave concerns that the temporary closure of Grantham Hospital Accident and Emergency unit and loss of medical beds at Grantham Hospital may become permanent from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.*

In proposing his motion, Councillor Whittington expressed his wish to focus on the actions that could be taken following the meeting. He referred to the history of Grantham Hospital and the changes it had undergone over the years from an independent hospital led by local decision makers to the merger into a single trust with Boston and Lincoln, which was felt to have led to a gradual erosion of services in Grantham.

The motion was seconded. A Member commented that an increase in the distance travelled in an emergency medical journey caused an increase in the absolute mortality rate and queried the decision to downgrade the hospital's accident and emergency service.

Councillor Morgan proposed an amendment to the substantive motion which added the following additional points to the motion proposed by Councillor Whittington:

*"We call for the full restoration of Grantham and District Hospital with a full Grade 1 accident and emergency unit providing full resuscitation and patient stabilisation.*

*We also call for the Health Minister to amend the Health and Social Care Act so in future local authorities have fair representation on the decision-making bodies affecting the health services in their communities."*

The proposed amendment was seconded. A Member suggested that the wording of the second part of the amendment be adjusted slightly to call on the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, rather than the Health Minister, and that the point be further expanded to call for the changes to downgrade Grantham Hospital to be reversed. Councillor Morgan accepted this and asked that the wording of the second part of her amendment be changed:

*“We also write to the Rt Hon Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to reverse the changes to downgrade Grantham Hospital.*

*We also call for the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to amend the Health and Social Care Act so in future local authorities have fair representation on the decision-making bodies affecting the health services in their communities.”*

Councillor Bisnauthsing proposed an additional point to Councillor Morgan’s amendment to add:

*“To call on the United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust to ensure onsite facilities to enable people from all communities to access video facilities to support remote consultation”.*

Councillor Morgan confirmed that she was happy for this point to be added to her amendment. During debate, a number of Members expressed their extreme concern regarding the United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust (ULHT) Board’s decision to make parts of Grantham Hospital a Covid-free site, which would be facilitated by downgrading the hospital’s accident and emergency service to an urgent treatment centre.

Councillors referred to the decision made in August 2016 to close the accident and emergency service overnight on a temporary basis and stated how disappointed and angered they felt that the move to further downgrade the accident and emergency unit until at least March 2021 had been made at a time when public consultation could not be facilitated. There was a feeling of distrust amongst Members of any assurances made that the further downgrading of Grantham Hospital was intended to be temporary.

One Member noted that the decision-making arrangements for the ULHT allowed non-elected senior executives to make decisions about services without a personal understanding of the effects of such decisions on local residents. He felt that there was disparity between the significant salary allocated to these posts and the level of accountability for the decisions made.

In stating their concerns, Members wished to take the opportunity to thank NHS staff for their hard work and commitment throughout the Covid-19 response period. Members of the public were also thanked for their statements in the public speaking session preceding the meeting. In their expressions of solidarity with NHS staff and members of the public, Members stated that the residents of Grantham deserved better. Sympathy was expressed for NHS employees in Grantham who had been informed that they would now be required to travel to work in Boston or Lincoln.

Taking into account the points raised by other Members, Councillor Morgan requested that, as part of her amendment, a preamble should be added to the substantive motion to reflect the impact of removing the service of a general hospital and accident and emergency unit on residents’ lives:

*“Without a fully functioning hospital in Grantham, the cost to local people, both financial and physical, will result in an increase in pain, suffering and anxiety.”*

Councillor Whittington seconded the further amendment to his substantive motion. As the debate continued, Councillors who also held positions on the Lincolnshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire gave reassurance of the firm stance they had taken against the changes to the Grantham Hospital provision since the accident and emergency service had first been closed overnight. A number of Councillors had worked together with campaigners and attended rallies and board meetings to support the cause on behalf of local residents.

The Leader of the Council reiterated the thanks expressed to the campaigners for this vital cause, adding his personal thanks to several Members who had worked tirelessly to support their constituents with the campaign over the past few years. He also thanked Members for their passionate contributions at the present meeting, stating that the debate had transcended party politics and underlined the Council's determination to do all that it could to support the cause. The Leader also referred to the importance of a health infrastructure in Grantham as an integral part of the Council's ambitions for growth in the town, highlighting the concern that the measures in place did not reflect the current needs and demands of Grantham's residents.

During the discussion, Members also referred to the historical underfunding of local government and public services in Lincolnshire and the cross-party Rural Fair Share Campaign group that was campaigning for fairer funding for all public services in rural areas. One Member stressed the importance of addressing this issue, which was the root cause of many of the pressures on the area and felt that Lincolnshire Members of Parliament should be encouraged to join the cross-party campaign group.

As no other Members indicated that they wished to add to the debate, Councillor Whittington was invited to sum up on his substantive motion and the proposed amendments. He thanked Members for their contributions and confirmed that he was happy to incorporate all of the amendments within the substantive motion. He referred to his experience as a member of the Lincolnshire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire and highlighted the ongoing fight that was being undertaken to keep an adequate provision at Grantham Hospital and the lack of answers that had been received from the ULHT Board. He stressed the importance of the Council sending a strong, unanimous message that Members were determined to receive answers and take actions to support their anger and frustrations over the decisions that had been made in relation to Grantham Hospital.

Officers displayed the wording of Councillor Whittington's motion using the screen sharing facility, including the proposed preamble and amendments so that Members could confirm if the wording was correct before the motion was taken to the vote. Councillor Morgan requested that her amendment regarding the preamble be adjusted to reflect the potential for loss of life:

“Without a fully functioning local district and general hospital with an Accident and Emergency department; the cost isn’t only financial, the risk to people’s lives is increased; their pain, suffering and anxiety extended”.

After confirmation had been received that Members were content with the final wording of Councillor Whittington’s motion (incorporating the proposed preamble and amendments from Councillors Morgan and Bisnauthsing), the motion was put to the vote and it was unanimously **AGREED**:

**Without a fully functioning local district and general hospital with an Accident and Emergency department; the cost isn’t only financial but the risk to people’s lives is increased; their pain, suffering and anxiety extended.**

**Following this Emergency Full Council meeting, this Council calls on the Leader of the Council, Councillor Kelham Cooke, to:**

- 1. Write to Andrew Morgan, Chief Executive of United Lincolnshire NHS Trust, John Turner, Chief Officer of NHS Lincolnshire CCG, and Sir Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, to express this Council’s grave concerns that the temporary closure of Grantham Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit and loss of medical beds at Grantham Hospital may become permanent from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.**
- 2. Write to Cllr Carl Macey, the Chairman of the Lincolnshire Health Scrutiny Committee, to inform him of this Council’s grave concerns that the temporary closure of Grantham Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit and loss of medical beds at Grantham Hospital may become permanent from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.**
- 3. We call for the full restoration of Grantham and District Hospital with a full Grade 1 accident and emergency unit providing full resuscitation and patient stabilisation.**
- 4. We also write to the Rt Hon Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to reverse the changes to downgrade Grantham Hospital.**
- 5. We also call for the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to amend the Health and Social Care Act so in future local authorities have fair representation on the decision-making bodies affecting the health services in their communities.**
- 6. To call on the United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust to ensure onsite facilities to enable people from all communities to access video facilities to support remote consultation.**

The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions and expressed her hope that positive actions would arise from the agreed resolution.

**106. Close of the meeting**

The meeting closed at 16:28.