

Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 17 March 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 Ashley Baxter

Councillor Phil Dilks

Councillor Ian Selby

Councillor Jacky Smith

Councillor Ray Wootten

Councillor Linda Wootten

Officers

Chief Executive (Karen Bradford)

Strategic Director, Growth (Paul Thomas)

Strategic Director, Transformation & Change (Lee Sirdifield)

Interim Director of Finance (Richard Wyles)

Director of Law and Governance (Shahin Ismail)

Assistant Director, Housing (Harry Rai)

Head of Governance (Jo Toomey)

Statement by the Leader of the Council

Before turning to the formal business of the meeting, the Leader of the Council made a statement regarding the response of the Council to the Covid-19 outbreak. He stated that, whilst to date Lincolnshire had not been impacted by the virus, preparations still needed to be made. The Leader announced, therefore, that a decision had been made in consultation with the Showman's Guild to cancel the

Grantham and Stamford mid-Lent fairs. He also announced the closure of the Guildhall Arts Centre, Stamford Arts Centre, Bourne Community Access Point and Wyndham Park Visitor Centre to the public. Staff that worked within those buildings would be redeployed to help deliver key services.

Measures had been put into place to protect tenants, including closing communal rooms and cancelling external bookings. The improvement programme had also been suspended, meaning that only urgent repairs would be carried out. Written notice had been sent to tenants about changes and letting them know the best ways to contact the council with their questions or concerns.

Council officers were being updated regularly by the Leader and Chief Executive, with Government advice being followed in relation to meetings, travel and home working. An emergency planning team had been established and an incident room was in operation.

A decision was then taken to suspend all Council and Committee meetings for the foreseeable future. Emergency legislation was expected, which would support the Council's decision-making through remote participation, clarifying in particular the arrangements for dealing with planning and licensing applications. It was agreed by the Cabinet that the Leader of the Council, under the strong Leader model, would assume full control over making all Key Decisions of the Council, which would normally have been taken by the Cabinet. Arrangements for deputising duties would be included, so that there was resilience in the event of the indisposition of the Leader. The arrangements for Executive decision-making would be kept under review and captured within the Council's Constitution. A report would also be provided to Council setting out those decisions that had been made by the Leader. Cabinet Members indicated their support for this arrangement by way of a show of hands.

81. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the decisions taken subject to clarification under the Budget item that the Council had a contract with EnvironmentSK and made payment for the services provided by the company through that contract.

82. Disclosure of Interests (if any)

No interests were disclosed.

83. Tenancy Strategy 2020-2025 (Key Decision)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning presented his report on the Tenancy Strategy. This had been considered by the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the recommendations from which had been captured within the document.

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

- 1. That Cabinet approves the Tenancy Strategy 2020-25 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning)**
- 2. The Cabinet will receive an annual report (via e-mail) on the impact of the changes to the Strategy (in particular the number of fixed term tenancies issued and to the types of household to which they are issued)**

84. Safeguarding Policy 2020-2023 (Key Decision)

The Cabinet Member for Communities presented her report on the Safeguarding Policy 2020 to 2023. She explained that the seven district councils in Lincolnshire had worked together to develop a combined policy. She highlighted the proposed change with regard to training for elected Members. When the draft policy was considered by the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members recommended increased training. Instead of just providing safeguarding training as part of Members' induction, the Committee recommended completion of e-learning to ensure Members' knowledge was refreshed more frequently than once every four years. The Committee also requested that 'Keeping People Safe' cards setting out key contact numbers, should be provided for all Members. The revised policy would be shared with officers through Net Consent and the intranet. Face-to-face training sessions would also be arranged.

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

- 1. Cabinet approves the Safeguarding Policy 2020-23**
- 2. Cabinet approves the introduction of mandatory safe-guarding e-learning for elected Members to be completed across their term of office and to complement the in-house training provided during Member induction**

85. Area Offices - Customer Consultation (Key Decision)

This item was withdrawn from the agenda for the meeting.

86. Matters referred to Cabinet by the Council or Overview & Scrutiny Committees

Members noted the report of the Leader of the Council outlining matters referred to Cabinet by the Council's overview and scrutiny committees.

87. 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 since the last meeting of Cabinet. Since the Cabinet last met on 18 February 2020 one decision had been taken by the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations for the lease of land from the National Trust for the site on which the Heroes' Orchard was being planted.

88. Representations and questions from Non Cabinet Members

One Member referred to the announcement that was made by the Leader at the start of the meeting and the opportunities for using technology to keep Members engaged in Council business. The Leader was asked when training would be offered on programmes like Skype and Teams, which facilitated virtual meetings. The Leader responded, stating it was key for Members to be fully trained on modern.gov and the use of their devices, however training would be suspended while restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak were in place. The Member suggested that earlier training would have been beneficial. The Leader referred to the restrictions about decision-making meetings, where Members had to be present; guidance from Government was awaited about opportunities for remote decision-making. The Leader responded to a further comment by stating that any decisions made during the interregnum of meetings would be done in a transparent way, with a record being provided for all Members. He also indicated that he would be happy for the use of webinars to engage Members and would speak to the training team.

A question was put about a footpath running across the St. Martin's Park site in Stamford. The footpath had been blocked and the Leader was asked what the Council was doing to ensure it remained accessible. The Leader stated that he would speak to the appropriate officer to ensure that the blockage was removed.

The Leader was asked for assurance that the Council would take a flexible and benevolent approach to people who could not pay their council tax because of the coronavirus outbreak. The Leader stated that the Council was following the guidance provided by the Government. He added that he did not wish to see residents removed from their homes for non-payment of Council Tax, adding that the Council was waiting to see what funds would be made available by Government.

In the final question that was put to the Cabinet, reference was made to a recent incident in Grantham town centre when an assault near a public house had resulted in a fatal injury. Following the incident, support had been expressed locally for the reintroduction of a Pubwatch scheme. Reference was made to provisions within the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, which allowed local authorities to introduce a Late Night Levy and Early Morning Restriction Orders. The Late Night Levy would put a charge on premises selling alcohol between midnight and 6am; income from this levy would be used to support the cost of policing the night-time economy.

When the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy was reviewed in 2016, the Council decided against implementing the Late Night Levy, however, it did provide for the introduction of the Levy at any point if there was a change in circumstances and evidence to support its implementation. The same provision was included in respect

of an Early Morning Restriction Order. The Cabinet was asked to support the introduction of a Pubwatch scheme and the review of the Statement of Licensing Policy to enable the introduction of a Late Night Levy.

The Leader stated that he would support an urgent review of the Statement of Licensing Policy being undertaken by the Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committee to consider the introduction of a Late Night Levy.

89. Cabinet Forward Plan - 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Cabinet Members noted the Forward Plan for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 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 proceeding 12-month period.

90. Close of meeting

The meeting was closed at 14:26.