

Minutes

Cabinet

Tuesday, 8 September 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 Penny Milnes

Councillor Ray Wootten

Officers

Chief Executive

Strategic Director, Growth,

Strategic Director, Commercial and Operations

Strategic Director, Transformation and Change

Assistant Chief Executive, Housing Delivery

Interim Director of Finance

Director of Law and Governance

Head of Customer Experience

Head of Leisure

Head of Governance

Democratic Officer

132. Register of attendance and apologies for absence

All Cabinet Members were present.

133. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the decisions taken.

The Leader of the Council requested that apologies of Cabinet Members be included when the register of attendance was reported in the minutes.

Following the last meeting of the Cabinet the Leader of the Council confirmed that Lindum Group had been awarded the contract for the refurbishment works for the property at Elm Street, Stamford. The contract had been awarded on 28 August 2020 and was subject to the delivery agreement being signed which was currently with the Council's Legal Department. Lindum Group should be on site from 5 October 2020 and the work would be completed between Christmas and the New Year.

At the last meeting, Local Government Re-organisation had been raised. The Leader stated that an invitation from the Minister was still awaited, although the Minister who had looked after Lincolnshire, Simon Clarke, MP had recently resigned from the Government. PA Consulting were still working with all seven districts, putting together a strategic business case for re-organisation, and members had been receiving regular updates on the issue.

134. Disclosure of Interests (if any)

None disclosed.

135. South Kesteven District Council Corporate Plan

The Leader of the Council introduced his report on the Corporate Plan for South Kesteven 2020-2023. The plan detailed the key actions and priorities of the Council for the next three years, to enable the Council to achieve its vision of "*the best district in which to live, work and visit.*" The Council would deliver this goal in the next three years by working with partners to see the district flourish.

A SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) had been carried out to understand the context and current performance of South Kesteven both as a district and as a council. The work on the SWOT analysis had been used to develop the Council's five key priorities: Growth and our Economy; Housing that Meets the Needs of all Residents; Healthy and Strong Communities; A Clean and Sustainable Environment and A High Performing Council. Under each priority area there was a set of actions which would help the Council achieve the outcomes required for the district.

Key priority actions included; the investment in leisure facilities as part of the leisure programme; a commitment to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council; the delivery of key strategic sites like St Martin's Park; the regeneration and improvement of the district's town centres; the building of high quality homes of all types and tenures across the district; and the implementation of the Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

A number of workshops had been held and the Leader thanked both members and officers for their work supporting the workshops and compiling the SWOT analysis, both pre and post Covid-19, which had been undertaken virtually. There were over 50 key actions to be taken forward to improve services. Values that had been contained previously in the Corporate Strategy, which pre-dated the Corporate Plan had been included within the Corporate Plan. Key Performance Indicators will be developed, through engagement with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Leader then spoke about the current financial pressures on Councils, particularly during Covid-19 but stated that South Kesteven had taken a prudent approach which had allowed them to respond better to the crisis than many other authorities. It was an ambitious, but deliverable Corporate Plan, and would enable South Kesteven to strive to be the best district in which to live, work and visit.

All Cabinet Members agreed that the Corporate Plan was easy to read, with clear actions and they fully endorsed it.

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

- 1) Recommends to Council the approval of the Corporate Plan 2020-23 as attached at Appendix A to the Leader of the Council's report.
- 2) Notes that the key performance indicators and success criteria for each action will be developed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Cabinet.

136. Amended Budget 2020/21

The Leader of the Council thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources for his strategic direction and also the Finance Team and the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work on the amended budget 2020/21.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented his report and stated that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic an amended budget was required to reflect significant changes in the income and expenditure budgets. The Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met on 26 August 2020 to discuss the amended budget for 2020/21. Members were supportive of the proposed amendments.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources highlighted two changes to the budget since the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He confirmed that the £168,000 budget for the Bourne Corn Exchange refurbishment would be fully utilised and that the £200,000 for the artificial football pitch at Deeping St James would be deferred until 2021/22 provided confirmation was received from the Football Foundation. The remainder of the budget remained the same. He drew members attention to the recommendation which proposed an increase of 0.75% on the salary and member allowance budgets to meet the national pay agreement of 2.75%; 2% had been allocated when the budget had been approved on 2 March 2020.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources stated that he was aware that the Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations also had an amendment to

propose. The amended budget proposed gave a deficit position, however, the report detailed a number of interventions and actions that would be overseen to mitigate the impact on the Council's budget stabilisation reserve. The budget would be kept under close review for the remainder of the financial year.

The report also detailed the Governments reimbursement scheme for fees and charges. A submission for the period April to June would be made in September 2020. The forecast was for £1.4m and was on top of the monies highlighted in Table 1 of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources' report.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations proposed a small amendment which concerned payment to waste operatives. During the Covid-19 pandemic it had become apparent that one of the critical services to be maintained was the collection of waste. To reward the diligence of teams during the crisis, a £50 per week bonus was given to the waste teams which was due to end on 30 September 2020. South Kesteven waste operatives were the lowest paid waste and street scene operatives in Lincolnshire. Plans were in place to correct the issue before the next year's budget, however in order to put their wages on a par with their colleagues in neighbouring authorities it was proposed to move their bonus status to their expected new level from October 2020. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations proposed an amendment to:

Adjust the proposed amended budgets to apply a 5% market supplement for loader and operational street scene staff to align their basic wage with that of the surrounding authorities. This would require a £93,000 adjustment to the Commercial and Operations service cost shown at Table 3 of the report increasing the 2020/21 proposed service budget to £8.727m (thereby increasing the proposed service variance to £1,319,000) and adjusting the general funding net budget requirement from £20.581m to £20.674m). The amendment, if supported would increase the forecast net budget deficit to £1,315,000 as shown at Table 3 of the report.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources supported the proposed amendment.

A question was asked by a Non Cabinet Member about the salaries of EnvironmentSK employees and it was stated that this was not a matter for the Council to discuss, the employees would be paid in line with market salaries.

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

Cabinet recommends to Council:

- 1) An increase in the salary and Members' allowances budgets of an additional 0.75% in order to meet the national pay agreement for 2020/21 of 2.75%.
- 2) The draft proposed budget amendments for the 2020/21 budget framework contained within the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources report and associated appendices subject to the following amendments:
 - i. The Bourne Corn Exchange refurbishment to fully utilise the £168,000 allocated budget.

- ii. The £200,000 replacement of the Deepings all weather pitch to be deferred until 2021/22 provided agreement is reached with the Football Foundation.
- iii. To adjust the Commercial and Operations service cost to apply a 5% market supplement from 1 October 2020 for loader and operational street scene staff to align their basic wage with that of the surrounding authorities. This will require a £93,000 adjustment to the Commercial and Operations service cost shown at table 3 of the report, increasing the 2020/21 proposed service budget to £8.727m (thereby increasing the proposed service variance to £1,319,000) and adjusting the general funding net budget requirement from £20.581m to £20.674m). The forecast net budget deficit will be £1,315,000 as shown at table 3 of the report.

137. Cultural Strategy

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy and the Chairman and members of the Culture and Visitor Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their work on the draft strategy. The visitor economy was critical to ensure that the district thrived and the culture economy helped to support the recovery of the district.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy presented her report on the new Cultural Strategy for the district. The Strategy provided a clear blue print of the cultural offer in South Kesteven to both providers and the residents of the district. Extensive conversations had been undertaken with a variety of organisations and the public. The document brought together the Arts, Heritage, the Sciences and Sports and would centre on wider collaboration within the sector, to provide greater efficiencies and connectivity between events, projects and initiatives.

It had been a challenging year for culture with the Covid-19 pandemic and events had been postponed or cancelled. It had also brought into focus the vital part that cultural activities had played on the health and wellbeing of communities and the role of culture in the economic and people's well-being.

The Cultural Strategy would focus on three key messages; partnerships, communications and accessibility. The Strategy provided a framework to guide South Kesteven District Council in supporting individual practitioners and organisations to re-establish the cultural landscape. Culture would be at the heart of the Council's Corporate Plan and would help to underpin the work carried out with residents to make South Kesteven a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy thanked the Chairman and members of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, together with the Head of Arts and his team for their work on the Strategy. She also thanked those who had taken part in the consultations.

Members of the Cabinet supported the proposals and the clear message sent by the Strategy and the sectors included, recognising the importance of culture and sport on people's wellbeing both physically and mentally.

A non-Cabinet Member asked about the measures for specific targets particularly in relation to sports and how they would be measured. He also made reference to the Bourne Cicle Festival. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy referred to previous conversations about the festival and she indicated that conversations were being held with a gentleman from Bourne about a sound business case. She was not in a position to say anything further at the present. Performance would be looked at as the Strategy was progressed.

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

1. Cabinet approves the adoption of the Cultural Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy's report.
2. Cabinet recognises that the adoption of a Cultural Strategy is a key action within the emerging Corporate Plan, which also supports improvement and investment in local arts and cultural venues across the district.
3. Cabinet notes the conclusions highlighted in the Cultural Strategy and advocates integrating these points into the Corporate Plan Action Plan, supporting the Authority's goal to become one of the best places to live, work and visit in the UK.

138. Area Offices Customer Consultation

The Leader thanked the Cabinet Member for Communities and the officers involved in the work that had been undertaken. The pandemic had shown how people's behaviour had changed in the way they interacted with the Council and he looked forward to the comprehensive improvement programme for Stamford Arts Centre.

The Cabinet Member for Communities presented her report on the outcome of two customer consultations relating to proposed changes to the Market Deeping and Stamford Area office provision. Customer expectations continued to increase and the way in which people accessed services had changed with the introduction of a wide range of modern technologies, this had been highlighted with the recent Covid-19 pandemic. To ensure that the Council continued to meet the needs of those who used its services on a regular basis, the report before members considered the face to face customer service provision at Market Deeping and Stamford area offices.

Two consultations exercises had been carried out. One had taken place before lockdown and one during lockdown to understand the needs and preferences of those who accessed the Council's services at these locations. Following the closure of the Council's offices in March 2020, due to lockdown, the way that people accessed services had changed to telephone, website and via email. There had been an increase in demand across these areas and between 23 March 2020 and 31 August 2020 the Council had received over 60,000 telephone calls and over 11,000 emails.

A second consultation exercise had been undertaken in June/July 2020 to better understand if there had been a shift in opinion as a result of the changes to the service offer for each of the sites during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Cabinet Member for Communities thanked all those who had provided feedback, which

indicated that residents were more supportive of the proposals to access services digitally.

A number of options had been outlined within the report to look at how the Council could modernise its offer to residents. Consultations had taken place with Deepings Community Library to put in a kiosk and to have access to PC's and signposting for those who needed to physically access services. Thanks were given to the Deepings Community Library for their help with the initiative and work would be undertaken to ensure a smooth transition took place.

The offer in Stamford would relocate to the Stamford Arts Centre. A kiosk and telephone service would be put in place and Customer Service officers would be available to support residents during seasonal or peak demand. PC support would continue to be accessible from Stamford Library. To ensure that a high quality service provision was delivered effectively, investment to renovate Stamford Arts Centre was proposed. This would help to improve the effectiveness of the facilities for those accessing the Arts and the for those accessing other Council services.

Cabinet Members were supportive of the proposals. The Cabinet Member for Culture and Visitor Economy welcomed the use of Stamford Arts Centre and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning was happy to see the joined up approach being taken at Stamford by utilising the Arts Centre and also the work done at Market Deeping as he had been involved early on with proposals. Questions were asked in relation to having a face to face option other than at peak times and it was stated arrangements would be made for those residents who required a face to face meeting.

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

- 1) That Cabinet approves the relocation of the Market Deeping Area Office based on option 3 contained within the Cabinet Member for Communities' report.
- 2) That Cabinet approves the relocation of the Stamford Area Office based on option 3 contained within the Cabinet Member for Communities' report.
- 3) Cabinet authorises the use of the property reserve to meet any costs relating to the exiting of each site.
- 4) Cabinet recommends to Council a funding allocation of £100k to be included in the 2020/21 capital programme in order to undertake a modernisation scheme at Stamford Arts Centre.

139. Matters Referred to Cabinet by the Council or Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Leader of Council informed the Cabinet that there were no specific recommendations from the Council or the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met to discuss the amended budget proposals for 2020/21 on 26 August 2020 and he thanked the Chairman of the Joint Budget Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all members for their work on the amended budget.

140. Key and Non Key Decisions taken under Delegated Powers

The Leader of the Council presented his report on Key and Non-Key Decisions taken since the last meeting of the Cabinet. One Non-Key Decision had been taken on the re-introduction of recovery activity.

141. Representations and questions from Non-Cabinet Members

A non-Cabinet member asked about the Deepings Leisure Centre which he had raised previously. It was now nine months since Deeping members had been promised regular updates in relation to the Deepings Leisure Centre and nothing had happened to date. He referred to meetings of both the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had taken place at the beginning of the year, and the establishment of a leisure working group which would meet monthly. He quoted from both sets of Committee notes about what the working group would look at and that local Ward members would also be involved. He wanted confirmation that no meetings of the leisure working group had taken place.

The non-Cabinet member then referred to a report that had been given to Deeping St James Parish Council in which it stated that the leisure centre would be entirely located on Lincolnshire County Council land and this also applied to the artificial pitch. The Chairman of the Parish Council had informed the non-Cabinet member that this was not true as the latest plans that he had, showed the artificial pitch on land owned by Deeping St James Parish Council. These plans had not been shared with Deeping Ward members and he asked the Deputy Leader to clarify the position. He also asked about a ball park figure for the cost of the leisure centre.

The Deputy Leader referred to when he took over the portfolio and the pandemic which had affected progress on the project. He referred to the meeting held on 30 January 2020 at which the non-Cabinet member was present, and where members discussed what they felt was important for a leisure facility at the Deepings. He had now visited all leisure centres in the district and this included the Deepings which he had visited three/four weeks ago. The wording contained in the report was incorrect. The artificial pitch would be located where the pitch was currently which was on land owned by Deeping St James Parish Council.

He referred to the recent meeting of Deeping St James Parish Council where the leisure centre had been discussed. The Deepings Rugby Club had stated that they wished to retain their pavilion which meant that the proposed changing rooms on the outside of the leisure centre would not be needed. Once the final plans were known these would be discussed with Deeping members including Market Deeping members.

The Deputy Leader had asked for two cost prices for running the leisure centre, one for an eight lane swimming pool for 25 metres with a movable floor and the other for an eight lane swimming pool with a 50 metre pool. It was noted that the cost of the 50 metre pool would be very high and it was doubtful that this would be included as he was aware that every 50 metre swimming pool in the country ran at a loss. He

believed there was a Parish Council meeting on Thursday of that week to which Deeping and Market Deeping members had been invited. In relation to the cost of the artificial football pitch, the Football Foundation had stated that they would provide 80% of funding, if the pitch was used for football only. Unfortunately, no contribution had come from Hockey England to enable hockey to be played there. It was hoped that the changing rooms would be eventually knocked down and go into the leisure centre, although plans had yet to be finalised.

In response to a request from a Cabinet Member regarding the evaluation of having a 50 metre pool, Members were advised that this would form part of the business case, however it was anticipated that a 50 metre pool would not be sustainable or viable.

The Deputy Leader had discussed with the Head of Leisure what would go into the leisure centre; saunas, fitness suite and indoor courts which could also be used as a performance venue, but he stressed that nothing had been confirmed apart from the swimming pool and he asked members for their patience.

The rough cost of the project would be in the region of £20million and the Council would be borrowing the money. Once the lease on the land for the artificial pitch had been signed then things could be progressed.

The Leader stated that it was not only the Deeping members and residents who would access the leisure centre but also those members and residents who lived in the surrounding wards such as the Casewick Ward. The Leader stated that engagement with members would happen at the appropriate time.

The Strategic Director for Growth reminded members of the response given at the end of the last Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the member working group and summarised the response given at the Committee. Until a site was secured to develop a new leisure facility in Deeping St James, it was impossible to finalise work in relation to the design and development costs. Once work had been concluded and where clear options were available, the member working group would be convened. Ward members would be included and a joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee would take place so that the appropriate level of scrutiny of the options could be undertaken. The options would then be presented to Cabinet and that was anticipated to take place towards the end of the year, November or December. The working groups would take place when the time was right and there was something meaningful and useful for the groups to discuss, further work was needed to be done until that position was reached.

The non-Cabinet member thanked the Deputy Leader and the Strategic Director for Growth for their comments. He did sympathise that this type of project took a long time, but he felt that decisions were being made and he was not aware of the meeting on Thursday.

The Deputy Leader stated that currently the lease agreement in respect of the land for the artificial pitch needed to be concluded. A meeting with the Deeping St James Parish Council Chairman and others had been arranged for 2pm on Thursday 17

September 2020. The Leader stated that a virtual roundtable meeting would be arranged for all Deeping St James, Market Deeping and members from surrounding Wards to update them with the current position.

The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations was asked if Lincolnshire County Council would be continuing with the food waste trial and whether this would be rolled out further, and a comment was made in relation to the proposed collection of paper and card by the County Council. The Cabinet Member for Commercial and Operations responded that Lincolnshire County Council would not be continuing with the food waste trial, however, the District Council would be continuing with the trial and was exploring with Lincolnshire County Council colleagues how the service could be expanded. Although the County had issued a press release in relation to their ambitions to collect paper and card it had not been discussed with the relevant Districts as to whether or not they wished to carry this out. A debate would happen to discuss the benefits especially in terms of cost, as it relied on residents receiving another bin. It was hoped that by the time that this happened, in the next two to three years, the food waste would have been rolled out.

A question was then directed to both the Leader and the Deputy Leader as directors of InvestSK in respect of the procurement process used to hire consultants at a cost of £155,000 for an InvestSK project. The Strategic Director for Growth stated that he would reply to the non-Cabinet member's email direct.

Further comments were then made in relation to the lack of meetings held in respect of the leisure centre for Deeping St James and including Deeping St James members in any decisions that had been taken. The Deputy Leader reiterated that no detailed decisions had been taken in respect of the leisure centre. Agreement was still needed with Deeping St James Parish Council for the lease of the land for the artificial pitch. Once agreement had been reached things could be progressed.

The Leader reiterated that he would arrange a round table virtual meeting for all stakeholders that would include senior officers where information to date would be discussed.

142. Cabinet Forward Plan 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021

Cabinet Members noted the Forward Plan for 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021 which was appended to the agenda. The Forward Plan gave an indication of items to be presented to the Cabinet in the next 12 months.

143. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 15:11pm.