

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 26 MAY 2022

1.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin (Chairman)

Councillor Helen Crawford (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Ashley Baxter

Councillor David Bellamy

Councillor Mrs Pam Bosworth

Councillor Robert Broughton

Councillor George Chivers

Councillor Louise Clack

Councillor Richard Cleaver

Councillor Kelham Cooke

Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren

Councillor Paul Fellows

Councillor Ben Green

Councillor Jan Hansen

Councillor Graham Jeal

Councillor Gloria Johnson

Councillor Anna Kelly

Councillor Ms Jane Kingman

Councillor Philip Knowles

Councillor Matthew Lee

Councillor Nikki Manterfield

Councillor Penny Milnes

Councillor Virginia Moran

Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Councillor Robert Reid

Councillor Kaffy Rice-Oxley

Councillor Nick Robins

Councillor Penny Robins

Councillor Susan Sandall

Councillor Ian Selby

Councillor Adam Stokes

Councillor Lee Steptoe

Councillor Judy Stevens

Councillor Jill Thomas

Councillor Sarah Trotter

Councillor Dean Ward

Councillor Hannah Westropp

Councillor Hilary Westropp

Councillor Amanda Wheeler

Councillor Mark Whittington

Councillor Jane Wood

Councillor Paul Wood

Councillor Sue Woolley

Councillor Linda Wootten

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford (Chief Executive)

Alan Robinson (Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer)

Richard Wyles (Chief Finance Officer)

Andrew Cotton (Director of Housing and Property)

Nicola McCoy-Brown (Director of Culture and Growth)

Graham Watts (Assistant Director of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Gary Andrew (IT Services Manager)

Chris Prime (Interim Communications Manager)

Patrick Astill (Communications Officer)

Lucy Bonshor (Democratic Services Officer)

Jordan Brooks (IT Services Officer)
Louise Field (Executive Assistant to the Leader of the Council)

1. Introduction

The Chairman welcomed those in attendance to the meeting.

Prior to the commencement of formal proceedings, the Chairman asked Members to join her in a minute's silence following the recent death of former Councillor Brian Sumner who had represented the District Council between 2015 and 2019. He had also been a Lincolnshire County Council between 2005 and 2009, a Stamford Town Councillor and held the office of Mayor of Stamford between 2013 and 2014.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harrish Bisnauthsing, John Cottier, John Dawson, Phil Dilks, Barry Dobson, Rosemary Kaberry-Brown, Annie Mason, Jacky Smith, Judy Smith, Ian Stokes, Rosemary Trollope-Bellew and Ray Wootten.

The Chairman extended the Council's best wishes for a speedy recovery to Councillor Ray Wootten who, following a recent admission to hospital, was convalescing at home.

3. Election of Chairman of South Kesteven District Council

Members were invited to make nominations for the Chairman of the Council for the 2022/23 municipal year.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Helen Crawford be elected as the Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A vote was taken and the Council **AGREED:**

To elect Councillor Helen Crawford as the Chairman of the Council for the 2022/23 municipal year.

The Chairman was invested with the chain of office and Members offered their congratulations.

COUNCILLOR HELEN CRAWFORD IN THE CHAIR

Members took the opportunity to thank the out-going Chairman of the Council, Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin, for the work she had done during her term of office.

Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin addressed the Council, outlining the many highlights she had experienced during her time as Chairman of the Council.

4. Election of Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council

Members were invited to make nominations for the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2022/23 municipal year.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Gloria Johnson be elected as the Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A proposition was moved and seconded that Councillor Paul Fellows be elected as Vice-Chairman of South Kesteven District Council.

A vote was taken and the Council **AGREED**:

To elect Councillor Gloria Johnson as the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2022/23 municipal year.

The Vice-Chairman was invested with the chain of office and Members offered their congratulations.

The Chairman of the Council congratulated the newly elected Vice-Chairman and stated that she looked forward to working together to get the best for the district and its residents. She reported that one of her first duties would be to write a letter on behalf of the Council to Her Majesty The Queen congratulating her on her Platinum Jubilee.

5. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted the outgoing-Chairman's engagements.

The Chairman announced that her charities during her term of office would be the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance and the St Barnabas Hospice.

The Leader of the Council presented Mr Paul Stokes, former Head of Corporate Operations, with a South Kesteven District Council shield in recognition of his 29 years' service and, on behalf of the Council, wished him the very best of luck in his future endeavours following his recent retirement. The Leader provided Members with some highlights of Mr Stokes' career with South Kesteven District Council and praised him in particular for his role in spearheading the Council's community hub at the start of the first lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2022 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

8. Announcement by the Leader of the Council on the Size and Membership of Cabinet and Cabinet Members' Remits

The Leader of the Council reflected on his term of office to date and noted the following achievements in that time:

- South Kesteven District Council had gone through immense change over the last three years, not only in how it worked as a Local Authority but also in terms of reforming the services it provided
- The Council had been proactive and transparent in addressing performance challenges and legacy issues, particularly in relation to housing, contract management and asset management
- The Council provided community leadership throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to businesses, residents and communities and was in the top 10% of authorities in the country in the distribution of its Covid-19 Business Support Grants as a result of the processes it put in place
- The Council was considered to be one of the most proactive authorities locally, working with the NHS in relation to testing and vaccinations
- During the last two years a review of the management structure had been completed, resulting in a much stronger, resilient, forward-looking Senior Management Team, as well as saving £1.2 million in costs, led by a Chief Executive who had been shortlisted for 'Chief Executive of the Year' through the Municipal Journal annual awards
- The Council had achieved a balanced budget year after year, in extremely challenging circumstances, with more engagement with Members from across the Chamber than ever before
- The Council had in place its Corporate Plan, providing strong strategic direction in respect of the ambitions of the administration, delivering on what it wanted to achieve
- The Council underwent its first ever open peer review in the history of the Authority, with the resulting report being hugely complementary whilst providing recommendations and key direction for the future. The Leader shared the following key comments from the review:
 - There was a strong commitment from the political and officer leadership to improvement, with leadership from the Leader and Chief Executive integral to the significant progress made to date
 - South Kesteven District Council could be proud in recognising and celebrating what it had achieved in the past 18 months and look forward to achieving its full potential
 - South Kesteven District Council had good relationships with a wide range of partners, including Home England, the Local Enterprise Partnership, businesses and neighbouring Lincolnshire authorities
- The Leader outlined that this demonstrated how far the Council had come in the last three years and gave him huge impetus in taking the organisation forward and in tackling those areas for improvement

The Leader confirmed Cabinet Portfolios for the forthcoming year as follows:

Councillor Kelham Cooke – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Growth

Councillor Adam Stokes – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Leisure

Councillor Robert Reid – Cabinet Member for Housing and Property

Councillor Linda Wootten – Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing

Councillor Nick Robins – Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Policy

Councillor Mark Whittington – Cabinet Member for Waste and Climate Change

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

Councillor Annie Mason – Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities

The Leader paid tribute to all Cabinet Members retaining their Cabinet Portfolios for the personal achievements they had made in respect of the previous year, together with areas of focus over the coming year. He also thanked Councillor Barry Dobson for his work as the previous Cabinet Member for Leisure and gave recognition to the immense contribution and time put in by the Council's Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Committee Members of all Committees, whose valued input contributed to the success of everything the Council achieved.

Over the next year the Leader looked forward to seeing the following:

- Continued progress on the St Martin's Park development, which would deliver significant benefits to Stamford and throughout the district
- Progression of plans for the Council's new depot, bringing significant benefits to the Council's operations and its residents, providing the Authority with stability for the future
- The embedding of the new Constitution, setting out improved governance across the Council
- Development of a much needed Asset Management Plan for the Council, setting out how it would manage its assets effectively
- The transition to new office accommodation, providing a modern, open and flexible working environment for the Council's staff and saving £300,000 year, as well as providing an regeneration opportunity in the centre of Grantham
- Development of a key internal and external communications plan
- Continued commitment to apply and bid for Government funding, building on the success of the £5.5 million from the Future High Street Fund and £1.2 million from the Heritage Action Zone Fund which would help transform Grantham Town Centre

- Development of a programme of investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund of over £3.9 million over three years, which would cover all four towns of the district and its rural communities

The Leader stated that the Council had demonstrated a strong record over the last few years, even with the challenges it had faced, but he remained confident and determined to make South Kesteven the best place to live, work and visit and thanked all Members for their continued support.

A Point of Order was raised which sought clarification as to whether it was permissible for the Leader of the Council to make an announcement with no restriction on the length of his speech and without any ability for Members to ask questions in response in respect of this item. It was confirmed that there was provision within the Constitution to allow for the Leader of the Council to announcement his appointments to Cabinet in the way that had been facilitated at the meeting.

9. Appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council and the Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

The Council was presented with a report of the Chief Executive on appointments to Committees and Panels of the Council and the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees.

Group Leaders were responsible for nominating Members from within their respective political groups to each Committee and Panel, in accordance with the political balance and allocation of seats as calculated and set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Nominations were put forward by Leaders of the Conservative Group and Independent Group.

Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees were appointed according to their suitability and merit in the opinion of the Leader of the Council.

Nominations were put forward by the Leader of the Council for Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees.

The nominations in respect of appointments to Committees and Panels and the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees were proposed and seconded. Upon being put to the vote the nominations were **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

- 1. Notes the political balance on its Committees and Panels as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.**

2. Approves the appointments to Committees and Panels and the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees as follows:

Planning Committee

<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Labour</i>
Cllr Bellamy (C) Cllr Cottier Cllr Kaberry-Brown Cllr N Robins Cllr P Robins Cllr Judy Smith Cllr Stevens Cllr I Stokes Cllr Selby (gifted seat)	Cllr Bisnauthsing Cllr Phil Dilks Cllr Milnes (V/C)	Vacancy

Licensing Committee

<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Cllr Bosworth (C) Cllr Broughton Cllr Chivers Cllr Crawford Cllr Griffin Cllr Kingman Cllr Manterfield Cllr Ward (V/C)	Cllr Bisnauthsing Cllr Fellows Cllr Knowles

Governance and Audit Committee

<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Cllr Dixon-Warren Cllr Johnson Cllr Rice-Oxley (V/C) Cllr I Stokes Cllr Woolley	Cllr Ashley Baxter Cllr Paul Wood (C)

Employment Committee

Conservative

Independent

Cllr Kelham Cooke
Cllr Annie Mason
Cllr A Stokes
Cllr Trollope-Bellew
Cllr Trotter (C)

Cllr Kelly (V/C)
Cllr Wood

Constitution Committee

Conservative

Independent

Cllr Bellamy
Cllr Griffin (V/C)
Cllr Sandall
Cllr I Stokes
Cllr Whittington (C)

Cllr Baxter
Cllr Fellows

Companies Committee

Conservative

Independent

Cllr Hannah Westropp (C)
Cllr Crawford
Cllr Dawson (V/C)
Cllr Dobson
Cllr Rice-Oxley
Cllr Thomas

Cllr Baxter
Cllr Knowles

Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Conservative

Independent

Labour

Cllr Crawford (C)
Cllr Green (V/C)
Cllr Dawson
Cllr Dixon-Warren
Cllr Johnson
Cllr Sandall

Cllr Dilks
Cllr Knowles

Vacancy

Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Conservative

Independent

Cllr Manterfield
Cllr P Robins (V/C)
Cllr Judy Stevens (C)
Cllr Judy Smith
Cllr Thomas

Cllr Fellows
Cllr Wheeler

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Conservative

Independent

Cllr Cottier
Cllr Green
Cllr Johnson (V/C)
Cllr Manterfield (C)
Cllr Hannah Westropp

Cllr Baxter
Cllr Dilks

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Conservative

Independent

Cllr Dixon-Warren
Cllr Dobson (V/C)
Cllr Trotter (C)
Cllr Hilary Westropp
Cllr R Wootten

Cllr Cleaver
Cllr Knowles

Chief Executive's Appeal Panel

Conservative

Independent

Cllr Hannah Westropp
Cllr Whittington

Cllr Dilks

10. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

The Council was presented with a report of the Chief Executive on the appointment of representatives to Outside Bodies.

The following nominations were proposed and seconded:

- East Midlands Councils – Councillor Kelham Cooke, in his capacity as Leader of the Council

- The Local Government Association – Councillor Kelham Cooke, in his capacity as Leader of the Council
- Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board – Councillor Robert Reid in place of a vacancy
- Joseph Clark’s (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation – Councillor Adam Stokes in place of Councillor Jacky Smith
- Welland and Deeping Internal Drainage Board – Councillor Barry Dobson in place of Councillor Jacky Smith

A second nomination was proposed and seconded for Councillor Ashley Baxter to be appointed to the Welland and Deeping Internal Drainage Board. Upon the taking of a vote, Councillor Barry Dobson was successfully appointed.

A comment was made that of those bodies where only one or two appointments were required, no Members of the Independent Group or Labour Group had been appointed to represent the Council. Confirmation was provided that the political balance rules did not apply to those particular bodies, although some bodies such as the Police and Crime Panel did require appointments to reflect the political balance of the Authority.

Having been proposed and seconded and upon being put to the vote, appointments to outside bodies were **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

- 1. Appoints Councillor Kelham Cooke to represent South Kesteven District Council on East Midlands Councils in his capacity as Leader of the Council.**
- 2. Appoints Councillor Kelham Cooke to represent South Kesteven District Council on the Local Government Association in his capacity as Leader of the Council.**
- 3. Appoints Councillor Robert Reid to represent South Kesteven District Council on the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board in place of a vacancy.**
- 4. Appoints Councillor Adam Stokes to represent South Kesteven District Council on the Joseph Clark’s (Grantham) Apprenticing Foundation in place of Councillor Jacky Smith.**

5. **Appoints Councillor Barry Dobson to represent South Kesteven District Council on the Welland and Deeping Internal Drainage Board in place of Councillor Jacky Smith.**

11. **Programme of Meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Committees for 2022/23**

Full Council was presented with a report of the Chief Executive which set out a draft programme of meetings for Full Council, Cabinet and Committees for 2022/23.

The draft programme of meetings for 2022/23 was proposed and seconded.

It was noted that an additional ordinary meeting of Full Council would be scheduled in July and that sufficient notice would be provided to Members once the date was confirmed.

Advance notice was provided of an intention to call for an extraordinary meeting of Full Council regarding Grantham and District Hospital and the proposed downgrade of its Accident and Emergency facility.

Having been proposed and seconded, upon being put to the vote the draft programme of meetings for 2022/23 was **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That the draft programme of meetings for 2022/23 be approved, subject to an additional ordinary meeting of Full Council to be held in July 2022.

12. **Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report for Year Ending 31 March 2022**

The Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee presented the Annual Report of the Governance and Audit Committee for 2021/22 and the indicative work plan and timetable for 2022/23, proposing their approval.

The report set out key outcomes arising from the work of the Governance and Audit Committee over the 2021/22 municipal year, together with the indicative work plan and timetable for 2022/23 which the Chairman of the Committee said represented an interesting programme of work to cover over the next year.

The proposal was seconded.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee were praised for the undertaking of their respective roles and a vote of thanks was also given to the team of Officers who supported the work of the Committee.

Having been proposed and seconded, upon being put to the vote the proposition was **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That the Annual Report of the Governance and Audit Committee for 2021/22 and indicative work plan and timetable for 2022/23, which reflect the terms of reference of the Committee, be approved.

13. Future Ways of Working and Making the Best Use of Corporate Assets

The Leader of the Council presented a report which provided Full Council with a summary of issues relating to office accommodation and the opportunities for new ways of working to better meet the needs of the Council.

The Leader reported that the Council over the last few years had seen a major change in the style of working in its office bases, with several change programmes to drive performance, improvements and savings being in place. A reduction in the amount of office space by introducing mobile technology and more flexible ways of working reflected an organisation-wide change programme, with work settings having been updated and new technology deployed as a result to support a more flexible way of working.

The main Council Offices at St Peter's Hill in Grantham was an aging asset with inadequate facilities that now required significant investment in order to provide modern, good quality, adaptable and flexible workspaces. An asset review had identified other locations in the vicinity of St Peter's Hill that were currently underutilised, which provided the Council with a unique opportunity to rationalise the Council's operations against the backdrop of continued financial challenges and to reflect the significant change in working practices accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Leader highlighted that a change to a mix of home and office-based working meant that the Council could continue to be an employer of choice in a competitive employment market, offering attractive work/life balance and decent office accommodation which was increasingly more important.

An overview of the options available to the Council were set out in the body of the report.

The Leader proposed the recommendation contained within the report and the proposition was seconded.

The following points were made during debate of the motion:

- Changing circumstances over the last two years had enabled the Council to reassess its office accommodation
- The proposal would deliver health and wellbeing benefits to the Council's staff, which should have a positive impact on services delivered to residents
- The annual saving in running costs in respect of the Council Offices at St Peter's Hill was significant

- The proposed re-development plans for the site would require additional car parking spaces which could not be facilitated on the footprint of the existing site
- Grantham did not have a community centre, even with a population of approximately 20,000 people. A decision such as this should be deferred until the proposal for a Town Council for Grantham had been determined which, if established, it should action
- A question was raised as to whether this initiative would improve efficiency and communication
- It was suggested that the cultural shift imposed on staff in terms of working from home was a culture that bred laziness and that difficulties had been experienced in contacting Officers via the telephone or making appointments to meet with them
- Hotdesking may make it difficult for Officers and Members to know where certain Officers were located on a day-to-day basis and there were challenges with working in open plan office accommodation to contend with, such as noise and other distractions
- A question was raised as to whether any consultation had taken place with staff. It was confirmed that informal consultation had been held and Trade Unions had indicated their support of the proposals. The Council also had in place a People Panel, made up of staff from across all service areas of the Council who had been engaged as part of the development of the proposals
- The Council's telephone system was not fit for purpose and needed addressing. It was noted that this was in the process of being resolved with the imminent introduction of a new system
- The existing office accommodation was in a disgraceful state of repair and the Council's staff should not be expected to work in such conditions. It would cost the Council £3.2 million to improve the building so that it was in a fit state, which it could not afford, and the building was not even worth. In the current climate it was necessary to look at ways of saving money and rationalising
- The Council did remarkably well to deliver remote working during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to maintain service delivery and modern technology would now allow for a flexible home and office-based working model going forward
- The accommodation above the cinema complex had remained empty since the building had been completed so it made sense to take this opportunity for the Council to move into the unit
- Millions of people now worked from home as part of the culture shift and in response to an earlier comment regarding laziness, it was clear that Officers at South Kesteven District Council were working very hard for the organisation
- The original plan for the cinema complex included provision for retail outlets, office accommodation for use by organisations such as the University and Local Enterprise Partnership and space for restaurants, together with a £1.66 million spend on a public realm development, all in an attempt to attract younger people into the town. This had not worked, with the only aspect being delivered being the cinema and empty retail units
- There was a reduced need for office accommodation, so the proposal raised questions as to who would be interested in purchasing the Council's Offices at

St Peter's Hill and whether it would perhaps become residential or leisure accommodation

- The Council had an opportunity to move into new, modern accommodation which it should take advantage of
- In terms of employee welfare, the Chairman of the Employment Committee gave an assurance that this was discussed and considered at length.

The Leader of the Council, in concluding the debate, made the following points:

- Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic 50% of the building was already inefficient and un-used
- Proposals for the new accommodation included a public sector hub, with opportunities to work in partnership with the County Council, library service and voluntary sector
- Grantham had some wonderful community spaces such as the Jubilee Life Church, the Guildhall and Grantham Museum, albeit not all owned by the public sector
- The world did not work in a traditional presentism way anymore, with lots of Councils and other organisations in the same circumstances
- Consultation had been undertaken with Trade Unions who were supportive of the proposals
- In response to comments about laziness, all staff had been working their hardest throughout the Covid-19 pandemic when they were required to work from home. It was important to be careful in the use of such language
- Significant investment would be put into Grantham through various Government grant funding initiatives, with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund being the latest which would deliver economic development and growth
- There was already interest in acquiring the site at St Peter's Hill

Having been proposed and seconded, upon being put to the vote the proposition was **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That a budget allocation of up to £500,000 to be funded from the Invest to Save Reserve in order to relocate the administrative offices to the first floor office space above the Cinema Complex at St Catherine's Road, Grantham, be approved.

The meeting temporarily adjourned at this stage of proceedings.

14. Review of the Council's Constitution

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing presented a report which provided Full Council with an opportunity to formally approve new Parts of the Constitution following a comprehensive review of the document.

The Cabinet Member reported that a key principle of the review had been openness, transparency and engagement with all Members of the Council. Mapping and working documents had been developed to make it easy for Members to identify and track where any amendments, deletions or additions had been made to the Council's existing Constitution as it transitioned into the new format. These documents had been shared with all Members of the Council prior to workshops held for specific sections as the new Constitution developed, where all Members were invited to make comments or suggestions. These workshops were very successful and lots of the comments and suggestions put forward had shaped the final versions.

In proposing the recommendations contained within the report, together with some amendments she had published as a supplement to the agenda pack for the meeting, the Cabinet Member thanked the Constitution Committee for its thoroughness in considering the various documents associated with the review. She also thanked those Officers who had been involved in the review for the work they had undertaken.

The proposition was seconded by the Chairman of the Constitution Committee who extended his gratitude to those Members who attended workshops and contributed to the development of the new document. He was of the view that this new document could act as a baseline and accepted that there may still be elements requiring further tweaks which his Constitution Committee would be able to consider in due course.

Councillor Richard Cleaver proposed the following amendments to the motion:

- Planning Procedure Rules (Appendix I), paragraph 6.3 – deletion of the existing paragraph and replacement with the following words:

'The order of speaking at the Planning Committee when considering applications will be:

- i. Any objectors to the application
- ii. Any supporters of the application
- iii. Any representation from the relevant Town or Parish Council
- iv. District Councillor for the relevant electoral ward
- v. The applicant or agent for the applicant

The 'relevant electoral ward' (to define the relevant ward councillors) is defined as those wards which fall inside or adjacent to the boundary of the planning application in question.'

- Planning Procedure Rules (Appendix I), paragraph 6.4 – replacement of the words 'three minutes' with the words 'four minutes.'
- Planning Delegated Powers (Appendix N), paragraph 2.2(1) – deletion of the first sentence and addition of the words or a minimum of any three councillors, or any member of the Planning Committee so that it reads:

‘Any application for planning permission, approval of Reserved Matters, Conservation Area Consent, tree works approval or Listed Building Consent where a Councillor from the relevant or an adjoining ward, or a minimum of any three councillors, or any member of the Planning Committee has requested, in writing within 21 days of being notified of the application, that the application be considered by Committee.’

- Planning Delegated Powers (Appendix N) – insertion of new paragraph 2.3(2) to read:

‘Any application for Major Development as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.’

In relation to the proposed amendment to change the running order of speakers at the Planning Committee, Councillor Cleaver explained that local ward Members would benefit from hearing and listening to what other speakers had to say prior to making their own contributions. He also explained that the definition of a relevant electoral ward should cover circumstances whereby the boundary of a site ran adjacent to the boundary of a neighbouring electoral ward to the ward within which it was located.

The amendments were seconded.

In debating the amendments, the following points were noted:

- The Chairman of the Planning Committee should be able to use their discretion to change the running order of speakers;
- All Councillors had the right to attend meetings of the Planning Committee so the amendment regarding reference to the relevant electoral ward was already covered as the Chairman could use their discretion to allow them to speak
- Allowing additional time as part of public speaking would result in longer meetings of the Planning Committee and multiple speakers on applications were already allowed and encouraged
- The proposed amendment regarding the adjoining boundary was understandable
- The proposed amendments should be reviewed in more detail before any decision was taken to adopt them as part of the new Constitution. The Chairman of the Constitution Committee highlighted that he would be willing to convene a meeting of the Committee for this purpose
- It was important that all Members understood the new call-in process relating to planning applications in their respective wards

Further to the invitation from the Chairman of the Constitution Committee to give due consideration to the proposed amendments, Councillor Richard Cleaver withdrew his amendments.

During the debate, Councillor Charmaine Morgan signalled her intention to propose a similar amendment regarding the definition of relevant electoral ward and was content for this to matter to also be deferred to the Constitution Committee.

It was proposed, seconded and upon being put to the vote **AGREED** that the duration of the meeting be extended for 30 minutes.

Councillor Ashley Baxter proposed the following amendments:

- Council Procedure Rules (Appendix C) – reinstatement of the paragraph titled ‘Supplementary question’ after paragraph 11.9
- Council Procedure Rules (Appendix C) – deletion of paragraphs 14.5(f) and 14.26 in respect of ‘Point of Information’
- Access to Information Procedure Rules (Appendix D) – deletion of paragraph 22.2 regarding discretion of the Leader to allow non-Cabinet Members to speak at meetings of Cabinet
- Access to Information Procedure Rules (Appendix D) – reinstatement of paragraph 8.5.7 of the current Constitution as a new paragraph 22.2
- Cabinet Procedure Rules (Appendix F), paragraph 7.2 – deletion of the words ‘at the discretion of the Leader, or person presiding the meeting, but the same provision must be available for all Councillors in attendance for the respective item’ and replacement with the words ‘and ask the relevant Cabinet Member questions on any item(s) on the agenda’
- Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Appendix G) – deletion of paragraph 4.4
- Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Appendix G) – insertion of the words ‘Between meetings, changes to’ at the beginning of the paragraph so that it reads:

‘Between meetings, changes to the work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be determined by the Chairman of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee.’
- Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Appendix G) – deletion of paragraph 5.3
- Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Appendix G) – deletion of the words ‘at the discretion of the Chairman, or person presiding the meeting, but the same provision must be available for all Councillors in attendance for the respective item’ and replacement with the words ‘and ask questions on any item(s) on the agenda’

The following points were noted in presenting the amendments:

- Removing the right to ask a supplementary question was an unnecessary new restriction on public participation which provided an opportunity for questioners to ask Councillors to clarify or elaborate on their previous answer or to ask a similar question if the Councillor had misunderstood the original
- The existing Constitution did not permit Points of Information and the new document should not as this could be a licence to interrupt the flow of another speaker
- Introducing new rules whereby the Leader of the Council or Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees had discretion to decide whether non-Cabinet or non-Committee Members could speak would not help with accountability or scrutiny and restricted opportunities to ask questions or make contributions
- Introducing a new rule to allow Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen to defer requests for agenda items to the subsequent meeting could delay consideration of urgent or contentious items

The amendments were seconded.

In debating the amendments, the following points were noted:

- It was concerning if this process had been used to facilitate a 'power grab'
- Anything that sought to close down or restrict debate would be frowned upon by the public, who were already sceptical
- The Council currently had in place some of the best Chairmen of Committees it had ever had who would allow non-Committee Members to participate at meetings
- This set of amendments should also be considered by the Constitution Committee prior to any decision being taken on them. The Chairman of the Constitution Committee reiterated his previous comment that he would be willing to establish a meeting of the Committee to facilitate consideration of these proposed amendments to the Constitution

Further to the invitation from the Chairman of the Constitution Committee to give due consideration to the proposed amendments, Councillor Ashley Baxter withdrew his amendments.

Having been proposed and seconded, upon being put to the vote the recommendations contained within the report, together with the amendments published in the supplementary agenda pack by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing, were **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

- 1. Approves the following new Parts of the Constitution, as appended to the report, subject to incorporation of the amendments set out in the supplementary agenda pack published by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing:**
 - Part 1 (Summary and Explanation), as set out in Appendix A**
 - Part 2 (Articles of the Constitution), as set out in Appendix B**
 - Part 4 (Rules of Procedure), as set out in Appendices C to K**
 - Financial Regulations, as set out in Appendix L**
 - Contract Procedure Rules, as set out in Appendix M**
- 2. Approves the proposed changes to delegated authority in respect of planning matters, as set out in Appendix N and that these be reflected in Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Constitution.**
- 3. Approves the Local Code of Good Practice, as set out in Appendix O as part of the Planning Procedure Rules for inclusion at Part 4 of the Constitution.**
- 4. Approves that the Councillor Code of Conduct, Protocol for Relationships between Members and Officers and the Code of Conduct for Council Staff form the new Part 5 (Codes and Protocols) section of the Constitution.**
- 5. Approves that the Members' Allowances Scheme forms the new Part 6 (Members' Allowances Scheme) section of the Constitution.**
- 6. Approves that the Council's management structure, following the Chief Executive's review of the Corporate Management Team and Senior Leadership Team, forms the new Part 7 (Management Structure) section of the Constitution.**
- 7. Authorises the Assistant Director of Governance to produce appropriate indexing, page numbering and formatting prior to publication of the new Constitution, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing.**

15. Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme

Mr John Cade, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, presented a report on the outcomes of a review the Panel had undertaken in respect of the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

A key component of the review was to examine how South Kesteven District Council's allowances compared to neighbouring authorities and authorities classed as 'statistical neighbours' who shared similar demographics. An evidence gathering session was also held on 9 March 2022 whereby all Members of the Council were invited to meet with the Panel or submit written representations on any aspect of the current Members' Allowances Scheme they wished to raise. Nine Councillors met with the Panel either in-person or remotely with one written representation also having been made. The Panel also met with the Council's Chief Executive.

Taking into account the benchmarking against other authorities and comments received as part of the evidence gathering session, the Panel agreed to twenty recommendations which impacted the Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, the allowance paid to the Council's Independent Person (Standards), the Childcare and Carers' Allowance, the Travel and Subsistence Scheme and the Broadband Allowance.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Panel for conducting the review and producing a comprehensive report. He acknowledged that it was always difficult as a Council making decisions on its own Members' Allowances Scheme, recognising in addition that South Kesteven District Council's represented one of the highest paid of the county's second tier authorities, although also being the largest district. In the current economic climate he did not think it was appropriate to agree to any increases in the Basic Allowance or Special Responsibility Allowances received by Councillors and therefore proposed that Full Council did not accept recommendations 6.1 to 6.14. He also proposed, however, approval of recommendations 6.15 to 6.20.

The proposition was seconded and the following points were made during debate of the motion:

- It was the correct decision in the current economic climate not to accept an increase in the Basic Allowance or Special Responsibility Allowances received by Councillors
- The Childcare and Carers' Allowance should be increased and continue to reflect the national minimum wage

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** that the meeting be extended by a further twenty minutes.

Having been proposed, second and voted upon it was **AGREED** that recommendations 6.1 to 6.14 be not accepted by the Council.

Having been proposed, seconded and voted upon it was **AGREED** that recommendations 6.15 to 6.20 be approved.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

- 1. Approves that the allowance paid to the Independent Person (Standards) be set at £1,500 per annum.**
- 2. Approves that the Childcare and Carers' Allowance be set at £9.50 per hour with an annual cap of 200 hours.**
- 3. Approves that, until the next Independent Remuneration Panel's report or for a period of four years, whichever is the sooner, the hourly allowance for childcare and carers be increased in line with the increase in the national minimum wage.**
- 4. Approves that no change be made to the Travel and Subsistence Scheme.**
- 5. Approves that allowances continue to be linked to any annual salary increase awarded to South Kesteven District Council Officers and that such index-linking continues until the next Independent Remuneration Panel's report or for a period of 4 years, whichever is the sooner.**
- 6. Approves removed of the Broadband Allowance from the Members' Allowances Scheme.**

16. Kirkby Underwood Parish Council - Temporary Appointment

The Chief Executive reported that she had used her delegated powers to make a temporary appointment to Kirkby Underwood Parish Council to allow the Parish Council to progress urgent business until a new Parish Councillor had been co-opted and taken up office. She had therefore appointed Councillor Nick Robins as a temporary member of the Parish Council.

The report was noted.

17. Community Governance Review for Grantham Town

Councillor Mark Whittington presented a report which provided Full Council with an update on the outcome of the consultation undertaken in respect of a Community Governance Review for Grantham and set out recommendations from the Community Governance Review Working Group.

The public consultation began on 11 March and closed on 22 April 2022, the aim of which was to gauge public support for the establishment of a new Parish or Town Council for Grantham and obtain views on the boundary and electoral arrangements should a new Council be established. During the initial consultation, an information document and printed survey together with an accompanying letter was sent to a total of 23,201 residential properties within the unparished area of Grantham and the neighbouring parishes of Barrowby, Belton and Manthorpe, Great Gonerby, Harlaxton, Little Ponton and Stroxton and Londonthorpe and Harrowby Without. Statutory consultees were also provided with the opportunity to respond and an online version of the survey could also be completed.

A detailed analysis of the responses received to the consultation were set out at Appendix 3 of the report, which were reviewed by the Community Governance Working Group at its meeting on 29 April 2022. There was clear indication of support for the creation of a Parish or Town Council for Grantham and the Working Group unanimously agreed to recommend to Full Council that a Parish Council be created for Grantham, in principle.

The Working Group noted that responses to the questions relating to the boundary of any new Council with neighbouring parishes were much less clear and felt that it was not at the present time in a position to make a recommendation to Full Council. There was therefore further discussion and consideration to take place, particularly in respect of growth areas on the periphery of the currently unparished area of Grantham.

Councillor Whittington therefore proposed the recommendations contained within the report, which sought approval of option 1 contained within the report to agree in principle of the establishment of a Parish Council for Grantham, subject to undertaking further consultation with residents of neighbouring parishes and Parish Councils to consider the boundary.

The proposition was seconded, further to which the following points were noted in debating the motion:

- The meeting of the Community Governance Working Group on 29 April 2022 was a very productive meeting and demonstrated very good cross-party working
- There was further work to do in respect of consultation with parishes, which would be the main challenge in reaching a resolution with regard to the boundary
- This represented an exciting moment for Grantham and would provide a voice and identify for the town, particularly on important matters such as planning
- Aiming for implementation of a new Parish or Town Council for Grantham in May 2024 was more realistic, giving sufficient time for the additional consultation that was required

Councillor Whittington, at this stage of proceedings, highlighted that he was a Member of Barrowby Parish Council.

Having been proposed and seconded, upon being put to the vote the proposition was **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

- 1. Approves option 1 as set out in the report to agree in principle with the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Working Group for the establishment of a Parish Council for Grantham, subject to undertaking further consultation with residents of neighbouring parishes and Parish Councils to consider the boundary.**
- 2. Notes that the Community Governance Review Working Group will reconsider the Terms of Reference in relation to the timeline for the review, consider the format and process for the next stage of the consultation in relation to the boundary and develop draft proposals for consideration by Full Council at a future meeting.**

18. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 17:10