

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2022

1.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Helen Crawford - Chairman
Councillor Gloria Johnson – Vice-Chairman

Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Robert Broughton
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor Louise Clack
Councillor Richard Cleaver
Councillor Kelham Cooke
Councillor John Dawson
Councillor Phil Dilks
Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Breda-Rae Griffin
Councillor Gloria Johnson
Councillor Anna Kelly
Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Matthew Lee
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Annie Mason
Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Julia Reid

Councillor Robert Reid
Councillor Kaffy Rice-Oxley
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Ian Selby
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Judy Stevens
Councillor Adam Stokes
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Jill Thomas
Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Dean Ward
Councillor Hilary Westropp
Councillor Amanda Wheeler
Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Mary Whittington
Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Paul Wood
Councillor Linda Wootten
Councillor Ray Wootten

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Alan Robinson, Deputy Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer)
Nicola McCoy-Brown, Director of Growth and Culture
Richard Wyles, Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)
Anne-Marie Coulthard, Assistant Director of Operations and Public Protection
Craig Spence, Acting Director of Housing
Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director of Culture and Leisure

Gary Andrew, IT Services Manager
Claire Moses, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service
Chris Prime, Communications Manager
James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Jordan Brooks, IT Help Desk Engineer
Louise Field, Executive Assistant to the Leader of the Council

47. Public Open Forum

Prior to the commencement of the formal business of the meeting, the Chairman of the Council invited Full Council to observe a minute's silence to remember former Councillor Philip Keddell.

The Chairman also gave thanks to Jan Hansen, Rosemary Kaberry-Brown and Jacky Smith, who had resigned from the Council since the previous meeting held on 22 September 2022.

Councillors Kelham Cooke, Ian Selby and Ian Stokes paid tribute to former Councillors Jacky Smith and Rosemary Kaberry-Brown.

The Council then heard questions from members of the public:

Question 1

From: Martin Reilly

To: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leisure

In 2017, the then Council Leader committed the Council to building two brand new leisure centres, in the Deepings and in Stamford. This promise was validated by a cabinet motion in March 2019 and released to much trumpeting and fanfare including on many election leaflets during the District Council elections of 2019.

Since then, a continued lack of maintenance resulted in closure of the existing Deepings Leisure centre for reasons of health and safety, leaving the residents in the Deepings, and surrounding area, no local access to leisure facilities forcing them to travel to neighbouring towns and even to centres in other districts.

In the last few years Bromsgrove, East Suffolk and many other councils have delivered similar sized, similar budgeted leisure centres for their communities yet South Kesteven has done nothing.

With the next election just 6 months away this backwards progress is a poor legacy for the current administration, which I hope the voting public will recognise.

It now transpires that money isn't the issue as the council has invested more than enough money to cover the cost of a leisure centre with a brutal state in the middle east where countless people have died building infrastructure projects and minorities continue to be persecuted. In any case, surely the Cabinet should have already allocated and secured funding before the announcement of the new build?

Will the Cabinet Member please explain to the residents of the Deepings and surrounding why it didn't progress with the announced plans in a timely manner, commit to getting this money back and spending it in the district on its own desperately needed leisure infrastructure, and urgently undertake a tender process to get a sensible cost of re-opening the Deepings Leisure Centre?

The Cabinet Member highlighted that all investments placed were in accordance with the criteria set out by legislation and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy which was approved annually by the Governance and Audit Committee.

The investments related to cash balances the Council held in its capacity as the billing authority rather than specific reserves that it controlled; the Council collected on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council, its Town and Parish Councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Information on the level of reserves was in the public domain and was most recently debated at the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2022. The level of reserves could be accessed via the Council's democracy page on the website.

Question 2

From: Ian Davies

To: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leisure_

SKDC have been providing leisure facilities in The Deepings for many decades, with an election pledge to provide a brand-new leisure centre. Whilst that has not come to fruition, SKDC's commitment to provision of the services via the refurbishment has been solid until the public announcement on 16 November 2022.

The Leisure Centre was first mooted in 2015; improved facilities had been committed for seven years and now a decision on whether to renounce on this commitment and permanently close the leisure centre is being taken within seven days of the announcement of this proposal.

With a similar layout to Deepings Leisure Centre, in May 2022 Easton Leisure Centre in Bristol installed a new renewable heating system for £89,000 – this capital investment has led to their pool heating bill being eliminated and the investment paying back many times during the centre's continuing lifespan. This sustainable solution should be contrasted with the Deepings Leisure Centre proposal to renew

the oil boiler with continuously fluctuating and ever rising utility prices. Following the Easton example, one would be extremely environmentally friendly eliminating over 20% of SKDC's leisure centre CO2 emissions.

Given the extensive expanses of water within our region, it is extremely important that school children learned how to swim. The closure of the leisure centre has already led to primary school children having to travel many extra miles with the inevitable expense for swimming lessons. Equally important to the expense is the additional time this travel is taking reducing their capacity to be in a classroom catching up on their education as a result of Covid.

The permanent closure of the Deepings Leisure Centre would disproportionately affect the young and the disadvantaged who have to rely on public transport. At weekends, when the facilities have their highest availability, rather than a short walk, they will have to take one or two buses to Bourne, or a bus to Peterborough, a train to Stamford with an extensive walk to Stamford Leisure Centre. As well as the additional expense this process totally flies in the face of sustainability.

Residents of The Deepings have paid their council tax in good faith based upon the provision of this service. There is a group of residents considering a class action lawsuit to recover their hard earned money for the lack of provision since 29 July 2021, the date of closure of the Deepings Leisure Centre.

In an effort to avert additional time and expense by SKDC, can I enquire how the council intends to reimburse this amount to the residents for failure to provide this service?

The Cabinet Member outlined that South Kesteven District Council collected Council Tax for a specific number of precepting authorities including the County Council, Parish and Town Councils and the Police.

Approximately 9% of all Council tax income received and retained by South Kesteven District Council was to fund a range of services. These fell into two areas - statutory services including waste collection, licensing, planning and environmental services, and discretionary services which are services the Council could choose to provide.

The provision of leisure was unfortunately a discretionary service, although as a Council the vital role leisure facilities played in keeping the Council's residents healthy and active was recognised.

For clarification Council tax was income to fund services to all residents across the District and not individually charged on locality.

Question 3

From: Mr Gene Plews

To: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leisure_

The county is experiencing a cost of living crisis; how much taxpayers' money has South Kesteven council provided in support of the Stamford diversity group during the last 5 years?

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council sold tickets for the group as an agent, and then paid to them the sum of £247.28 in September 2022. Payments were made to the Stamford Anti-Racism Group via the Ward member Grants' Scheme.

Question 4

From: Ian Stygall

To: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Leisure_

If £10.8m is not affordable in the current financial climate, then what in your opinion is affordable? As we the Deeping community were never asking for an all new gym in the first place. What we did require was somewhere to exercise locally without having to travel 15-20 miles to do so.

And as you were due to start the refurbishment works in January 2022 then you surely should have already had a financial structure in place at the lower borrowing rates from the time of planning your programme of works.

How much is now affordable?

Furthermore, according to one of my local Councillors, Councillor Judy Stevens who posted this statement on one of our local Deepings social media pages some months ago:

'I am happy to have secured £6.5million for the refurbishment of the Deepings Leisure Centre.'

We as a community are asking you this: if the money was secured for the refurbishment, where is it now? You promised us a new leisure centre; then you promised us a refurbished leisure centre, and now nothing.

Our community will not be let down or lied to any more. If you do not deliver on your promises, you will not only be letting down an entire generation of children to sporting opportunities, you will be letting down an entire community with your spurious promises. Our community deserves so much better than what you give us. Surely teaching your children an essential life skill such as swimming should be top of your priorities, as it can and will save lives. This is about poor decision making from the

outset, something you appear to be very good at Kelham. Despite your claims of wanting to represent and improve our area you are doing the complete opposite. Maybe it is time you stepped down as Council Leader and let someone who is passionate about taking our community and driving through positive changes. The Deeping community deserves so much better. Please save our leisure centre.

The Cabinet member responded that the refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre was always predicated on borrowing, and this fact was never hidden. At the time the scheme of refurbishment was approved the Council stated it would need to undertake a review of its spending priorities to ensure the cost of borrowing was affordable.

Work had been ongoing to identify sufficient headroom in the budgets to cover the cost of borrowing to refurbish Deepings Leisure Centre. However, the Council's financial outlook had significantly worsened due to external influences including the rising cost of energy including electricity and fuel – there was a paper on this subject on the agenda for today's meeting.

At the time the final scheme was approved in April 2022 interest rates were below 2%, however rates had subsequently risen significantly making the scheme unaffordable and placing significant pressure on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

Question 5

From: Sam Peeroo of Deepings Swimming Club

To: Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities

Physical inactivity costs the NHS in the UK around £1 billion per year. The SKDC population is growing quicker than the average for England, and the Local Plan is proposing up to 753 new homes in the Deepings.

Without Deepings Leisure Centre the people in the area have access to two swimming pools which have in total 6 swimming lanes. (Grantham Meres has eight lanes but is a 50-minute drive from Deeping).

Deepings Leisure Centre has been a central part of the community for over 45 years. It is more than bricks and mortar. Deepings Swimming Club's presence has helped the local economy and community over the years with swimmers becoming swimming teachers, lifeguards, centre managers and trainers. Our swimmers' parents have enabled local small businesses to thrive such as the pool cafe, sports centres, local sports clothing suppliers and trophy providers. We've given thousands of children somewhere to go on an evening where they can stay fit and swim off daily stresses with like-minded friends.

Swimming is an essential life skill, necessary for health and wellbeing being recommended by doctors to keep people active. LCC are expecting to spend £200m

on Adult Social Care and £80m on children's social care in 22/23. Inactivity in the elderly population is a key cause of frailty, which has a serious impact on social care and hospital admissions. Obesity is a massive driver for Social Care issues, including T2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Can the Cabinet Member for People and Safer Communities explain how voting in favour of this short-sighted decision protects the health and wellbeing of SKDC's constituents and what the cost implications will be to health and education services?

The Cabinet Member did not underestimate the impact a permanent closure of Deepings Leisure Centre would have on the local community; indeed, the cost of inactivity to the NHS was well documented, as were the physical and mental implications of inactivity.

The Council had previously approved plans to refurbish the existing leisure centre, this decision being made on the basis that the Council could make adjustments to its spending priorities to cover the cost of borrowing to finance the works. Due to the Council's wider financial pressures, which had been exacerbated by the worst cost of living crisis for over 40 years, the refurbishment was now an unaffordable proposition. Increases in utilities, fuel and staff costs had all had a detrimental impact on the Council's budgets without the added pressure of the increased cost of borrowing to finance the refurbishment.

The Council had recently been working with the other six Districts in Lincolnshire to develop a joint Districts' Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This was currently in draft form but would be considered at a meeting of Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December and at Cabinet in January. Once adopted this strategy would provide a framework for all district councils to work more closely with a full spectrum of health colleagues to improve the health and wellbeing of residents across the county.

In December 2021 the Council had adopted a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy which documented a proactive and collaborative approach to encouraging residents to be active, either through formal or informal activity.

The District Council had no control over the County Council or NHS's budgets and how these could be better distributed, nor did it have any means of calculating what the impact of the closure of Deepings Leisure Centre would have on County Council or NHS budgets. There was a commitment to continuing to work with other organisations to promote the benefits of investing in preventative measures rather than treating ill-health but, this would take a major shift in how all organisations think and were funded.

Question 6

From: Paul Swift

To: Councillor Matthew Lee

*Shortly after you became Leader of South Kesteven Council back in 2017 you hosted two 'economic summits' at which you declared your ambitions for the District. These included a promise of two brand new leisure centres in Stamford and the Deepings. Indeed, you stood in front of banners which stated "**Exciting New Leisure Centre planned for the Deepings – Delivered by South Kesteven District Council**".*

Did you ever really believe this was a realistic possibility and, if so, what is your personal opinion of why it never happened?"

Councillor Matthew Lee was not in attendance during the Public Open Forum. Following a point of order on whether the Chairman would use discretion under 11.4 of the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution to direct the question to another Councillor, it was suggested that the questioner would receive a written response to their question, as per 11.10 of the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution.

Note: Councillor Lee Steptoe informed members that due to Full Council clashing with a housing meeting in his Ward, he would unfortunately have to leave Full Council after the close of the Public Open Forum item.

48. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor David Bellamy
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor John Cottier
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren
Councillor Paul Fellows
Councillor Ben Green
Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Hannah Westropp
Councillor Sue Woolley

Councillors Philip Knowles and Kaffy Rice-Oxley notified the Chairman that they would likely have to leave before the end of the meeting.

Councillor Lee Steptoe was unable to attend the rest of the meeting due to other Council business.

49. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor Kelham Cooke declared on behalf of himself and Councillor Adam Stokes that they had resigned from the board of Leisure:SK so that they could take part in item 53 on the Deepings Leisure Centre.

Councillor Anna Kelly declared that she had taken her children to Deepings Leisure Centre as a parent and a teacher, but this did not preclude her from taking part in item 53 – Deepings Leisure Centre.

Councillor Phil Dilks declared that he had previously held family membership at Deepings Leisure Centre. He was also a Deeping St. James Parish Councillor and a member of Lincolnshire County Council, both of whom were stakeholders in the Deepings Leisure Centre. This however did not preclude him from taking part or voting on item 53.

Councillor Dilks also referred to a statement on item 53 (Deepings Leisure Centre) submitted by Deeping St. James Parish Council which had been circulated to all members of the Council for their information.

50. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2022 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

51. Communications

The Council noted the Chairman's engagements which had been circulated at the meeting, for information.

The Chairman highlighted her attendance at the Music for Youth Proms' at the Royal Albert Hall, in London. Over 400 children from Lincolnshire sung and played their instruments as part of a massed ensemble.

The Chairman also attended:

- a Civic ceremony at the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, which had the aim of bringing local businesses and industries together; and;
- Bourne Abbey Church to witness the 2500 knitted and crocheted poppies on display.

The Head of Paid Service informed members of the following:

Queen's Baton

The Council had recently received a certificate and relay baton in recognition of the part it played in the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay for the Commonwealth Games. These can be seen in the glass cabinet in the foyer of SK House.

Appointment of temporary Councillors to Stubton Parish Council

Stubton Parish Council was no longer quorate. Where a Parish Council was inquorate and unable to operate, the District Council could make temporary appointments to enable the Parish Council to progress urgent business. The making of temporary appointments to Town and Parish Councils was delegated to Chief Executive and any appointments were required to be reported to the next meeting of Council for information. The Chief Executive had used these powers to temporarily

appoint Councillor Paul Wood, Councillor Penny Milnes and County Councillor Alexander Maughan to Stubton Parish Council until new Parish Councillors had been elected or co-opted and taken up office.

52. Budget Framework Proposed Amendments 2022/23

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented a report considering amendments required to the 2022/2023 budget framework in response to the current financial climate and the impact on the budgets approved by Council on 3 March 2022.

The Deputy Leader highlighted that local government finances had been impacted by national and international events, which included increased energy costs, the employee pay award, and increased fuel and maintenance payments. A balanced budget position with no use of reserves had been presented at Council on 3 March 2022; since that time pressures on the budget had grown and therefore the immediate and medium-term outlook required revisiting.

It was estimated that the Council faced a net operating deficit of £800,000 in 2022/2023. Several actions to reduce this deficit were presented and debated at the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 22 November 2022; however, further action, by using specific reserves, such as the inflationary reserve to offset this deficit was presented to members for their consideration.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The Council had been given a grant of £1million to improve energy efficiency which could have been used to utilise new technologies. However, this grant could not be used because of the subsequent office move and due to supply chain issues.
- A member raised that it was right to approve pay rises for staff to help with the cost of living, but that it was disappointing that money could not be found for buildings such as the Deepings Leisure Centre.
- The Council was awarded £2million to enable the delivery of a new local University Technology and Innovation Centre within Grantham Town Centre, on the floor above the cinema. Initially it was expected that the University of Lincoln would occupy this space, but they gave notification that they no longer required this. The vacant space would now become the new offices for the Council, and it was confirmed that the Council owed a balance of £1.333million to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The conditions of the repayment would be presented to Council on 26 January 2023.
- With hybrid working being more commonplace since the Covid-19 pandemic, it was important to support staff that were increasingly working from home.
- Investments in health and safety, fire risk and security would take priority whilst spends on capital resources were under regular review.
- The pay award was settled by Government and would be applied locally.
- The new office space at St Peters' Hill was on track and on budget. There were interested parties in the old Council site that was for sale.

- There were challenging times ahead, and the Council needed more funding to continue delivering existing services.
- It was vital that a success be made of St. Martin's Park, as it was receiving further investment.

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

DECISION:

1. That Council approved the following amendments to the Budget framework for 2022/23:
 - a) Increase the following utility budget allocations:
 - General Fund – Electricity increase of £199k to be funded from the Inflation Reserve
 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Electricity increase of £167k to be funded from the HRA Priorities Reserve
 - b) Increase the Fuel budget allocation:
 - General Fund – increase of £200k to be funded from the Inflation Reserve
 - c) Increase the General Fund Workshop budget of £280k to be funded from the Local Priorities Reserve.
2. That Council approves the 2022/23 employee pay award which was in line with the National Employers' agreement, providing an increase of £1,925 on all SKDC pay points from SK1 and above (backdated to 1 April 2022). This would increase the salary costs for 2022/23 in the General Fund by an additional £880k and was to be funded from the Local Priorities Reserve. This would increase the salary costs for 2022/23 in the HRA by an additional £260k and is to be funded from HRA Priorities Reserve.
3. That Council delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) to implement the results of the National Pay Negotiations for Chief Executives in respect of the remuneration for South Kesteven District Council's Chief Executive for 2022/23.
4. That Council approves the budget of £192,630.23, to be met from the Regeneration Reserve, for the additional expenditure incurred in the contract with GF Tomlinson for the demolition works at St. Martins Park Stamford.

53. Deepings Leisure Centre

Note: The Chief Executive and Director of Growth and Culture left the Chamber for the duration of this item due to their position as a Directors of LeisureSK Ltd.

A point of order was raised as the second recommendation involved handing back to Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) the Deepings Leisure Centre building, impacting on their budget. There were several District Councillors who were also elected County Councillors present in the Chamber. The Monitoring Officer advised his view was that the impact of this recommendation on LCC's finances and risks was not significant enough to warrant any County Councillors declaring a conflict of interest and leaving the Chamber.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Leisure introduced a report to determine whether the previously agreed refurbishment of Deepings Leisure Centre, and the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields continued given the significant changes to the Council's financial outlook.

In proposing the recommendations of the report, the Cabinet Member outlined that there had been significant progress on creating budget headroom; however, that it was necessary to re-look at the decision to refurbish the Deepings Leisure Centre. A shortage of materials and labour, alongside increased costs of borrowing meant that the previously identified costs to the Council had doubled.

Other pressures on producing a balanced budget included rising fuel and staff costs. Nationally, there were sector wide issues; a local example given was a neighbouring authority who had suggested reduced opening hours to counteract the rise in utility costs.

The Cabinet Member outlined the work to date so far on the project, which included:

- work on the ownership of the land between LCC, the Anthem Trust and the Council;
- the terms of a service level agreement between the Council and the Anthem Trust had also been agreed; and;
- through a compliant procurement process a preferred design team and architect had been appointed.

Before the Council could invest capital into the existing leisure centre, it would be necessary to secure a leasehold interest in Deepings Leisure Centre to protect the significant investment which was required. This would require LCC and the Trust entering into a head lease, with the Trust subsequently granting a sub-lease to the Council. Such an arrangement would require approval from the Department for Education (DfE). To date, this approval had not been received.

In seconding the proposition, the Leader of the Opposition outlined that large sums of money would be required at Bourne, Grantham and Stamford Leisure Centres, as they were all aging buildings. He also highlighted the extensive negotiations that the Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure had held with the Anthem Trust.

The following points and queries were raised during debate of the motion:

- It was raised that during campaigning for the 2019 election Conservative Councillors in their leaflets had pledged to build a brand-new leisure centre in the Deepings, in addition to spending further monies at Bourne Leisure Centre and potentially relocating Grantham Leisure Centre.
- The Deepings Leisure Centre had been discussed at previous Cabinet meetings and a figure of around £21million had been identified as being necessary to fund a new leisure centre. The Leader of the Council had previously admitted that previous administrations had failed to look after the Deepings Leisure Centre.
- There were three other leisure centres in the district that people could use as an alternative to the Deepings Leisure Centre.
- Councillors in the Deepings had not asked for a brand-new leisure centre, they had initially only wanted a fix for the roof.
- Examples of new build leisure centres were given from a design and build company that specialised in leisure facilities around the country. Facilities had been built in Bolsover, South Thames, East Suffolk, Great Yarmouth at a lower price than that quoted for the Deepings.

Note: Councillor Matthew Lee joined the meeting.

- Businesses in the Deepings thrived with the leisure centre present. The local impact of closure across the following equality groups was negative: age, disability, race, gender reassignment, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage/civil partnership, carers, and other groups. These other groups included those from deprived communities, those from rural communities and those with an offending past.
- One previous option had been to repair the roof at the Deepings Leisure Centre to allow for a basic service to be provided.
- One question was raised about the future of other leisure centres in the district if the Deepings Leisure Centre was allowed to close.
- Access to amenities was important for those with mobility issues, those in lower income areas, and the most vulnerable. Whilst acknowledging the amount of work that officers were undertaking and the difficulty of providing a balanced budget alongside an increased cost of living, it would be a tough decision to take to remove a leisure centre from the local community.
- In 1974 the decision was taken to run a leisure centre in a building owned by Lincolnshire County Council. Protracted discussions with the County Council had followed since, but the building remained in their possession.
- The potential to consult with all stakeholders, including the Parish Council, local schools, and the County Council to further discuss issues around the leisure centre was raised.

An amendment to the motion was proposed:

“In consideration of this report, the Council defers any decision at this time and

1. Convenes a meeting of Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees to enable proper consideration of the relevant factors and figures.
2. Explores all options for retaining and re-opening the existing Deepings Leisure Centre.
3. Recognises the Council's increasing financial pressures and the additional costs identified since the council's commitment (in December 2021) to refurbish the Deepings Leisure Centre.
4. Revisits the costings and options for refurbishment of the Deepings Leisure Centre acknowledging that they may need to be scaled back.
5. Explores potential funding, and operational partnerships, with the Lincolnshire County Council, the Deepings School (and its parent trust) as well as other potential private, public, voluntary sector and community partners with regard to the future of the Deepings Leisure Centre.
6. Considered the most effective long-term future management of the Linchfield Road Playing Fields (with and/or without the anticipated application to the Football Foundation for a 3G pitch).

The amendment was seconded.

In debating the amendment, the following points were raised:

- A view was given that the Council's function now was not to consider anything other than the best possible outcome for the people of the Deepings. If the original £10.7million was still available, a question was raised as to what could be achieved with this sum of money? It would be worthwhile exploring the least-cost option rather than closing. An example of Yarborough Leisure Centre in Lincoln was given as the City of Lincoln Council were in the process of fixing a leaking roof at the site for around £1 million. The decision should be considered by the relevant Scrutiny committee to see what could be achieved within the existing budget.
- As the amendment outlined, the issue of private funding should be explored further. The value of learning to swim was being lost in the Deepings.
- In the time that the Deepings Leisure Centre had been closed, local residents had not received funding that they otherwise would have.
- A question was raised as to whether a decision on the future of Deepings Leisure Centre had to be taken during this meeting. It was difficult to conclude on affordability in the medium-term until the receipts from the development at St. Martins' Park Stamford had been received.
- The amendment did not commit the Council to any course of action at this stage but would give all parties the chance to look at the findings in more detail. The Council could facilitate discussions with private parties which could enable funding to be gained.

- Due to the age of the building, previous failures of this Council, and its previous management, financial support could not continue to be offered to the Deepings Leisure Centre. Lincolnshire County Council would not entertain any funding in relation to the building as they were dealing with their own set of financial pressures.
- Following building surveys, it was determined that the Deepings Leisure Centre building required significant work. Other options and opportunities had been explored at the site but the financial impact to the Council was too great.
- Discussions with Lincolnshire County Council on this subject took place on an almost weekly basis.
- It was queried whether the quotes attributed to fixtures and fittings in the report were higher than figures seen elsewhere.
- If the Leisure Centre were to close, it would not just be swimming that would cease in the Deepings. Amongst other activities, it would be football, taekwondo, and hockey.
- A view was given that a further public consultation needed to happen on this subject.

A request was made that a recorded vote on the amendment be taken, as in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.5 any ten Councillors present at the meeting of Full Council could request this.

For: Councillors Ashley Baxter, Harrish Bisnauthsing, Richard Cleaver, Phil Dilks, Anna Kelly, Philip Knowles, Penny Milnes, Virginia Moran, Charmaine Morgan, Ian Selby, Judy Stevens, Jill Thomas, Amanda Wheeler. (13)

Against: Councillors George Chivers, Kelham Cooke, Helen Crawford, John Dawson, Barry Dobson, Breda-Rae Griffin, Gloria Johnson, Matthew Lee, Nikki Manterfield, Annie Mason, Julia Reid, Robert Reid, Nick Robins, Penny Robins, Susan Sandall, Adam Stokes, Ian Stokes, Sarah Trotter, Dean Ward, Hilary Westropp, Mark Whittington, Mary Whittington, Jane Wood, Paul Wood, Linda Wootten, Ray Wootten. (26)

Abstain: Councillor Bob Broughton. (1)

(Councillors Louise Clack and Kaffy Rice-Oxley had left prior to the vote taking place).

The amendment to the motion fell.

Note: Council voted to extend the meeting under Council Procedure Rule 14.20 (g) as it was approaching three hours in length

Debate then resumed on the original motion:

- The leisure centres in Bourne, Grantham and Stamford had a programme of preservation for health and safety reasons; this programme also looked after the structure of the buildings and investigated the longevity of capital invested.
- There were other ways in which this facility could be delivered in the Deepings, which would enable a fresh start from funding partners. Lincolnshire County Council would not support the project as it represented seven districts and was not supporting similar projects in those areas. However, they could be persuaded to support a multi-funded arrangement.

In summing up, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Finance asked members to vote in favour of the proposition, as set out in the recommendations of the report. He also pointed members to comments made in the press on 2 September 2021 about having to revisit the decision on the Deepings Leisure Centre if budgets increased in the intervening period.

A request was made that a recorded vote on the motion be taken, as in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.5 any ten or more Councillors present at the meeting of Full Council could request this.

For: Councillors George Chivers, Kelham Cooke, Helen Crawford, John Dawson, Barry Dobson, Breda-Rae Griffin, Gloria Johnson, Matthew Lee, Nikki Manterfield, Annie Mason, Penny Milnes, Julia Reid, Robert Reid, Nick Robins, Penny Robins, Susan Sandall, Adam Stokes, Ian Stokes, Sarah Trotter, Dean Ward, Hilary Westropp, Mark Whittington, Mary Whittington, Jane Wood, Paul Wood, Linda Wootten, Ray Wootten. (27)

Against: Councillors Ashley Baxter, Harrish Bisnauthsing, Bob Broughton, Richard Cleaver, Phil Dilks, Anna Kelly, Philip Knowles, Virginia Moran, Charmaine Morgan, Ian Selby, Judy Stevens, Jill Thomas, Amanda Wheeler. (13)

Abstain: None.

Therefore, the motion was **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

1. Does not proceed with the project to refurbish Deepings Leisure Centre given the Council's increasing financial pressures and the additional costs identified.
2. Hands back to Lincolnshire County Council the existing Deepings Leisure Centre with no further financial liability or financial risk to South Kesteven District Council.

3. Withdraws from the management of Linchfield Road Playing Fields and no longer proceeds with an application to the Football Foundation for a 3G pitch with the playing fields being handed back to Lincolnshire County Council at the earliest opportunity.

There was a short adjournment following the vote.

54. Statement of Licensing Principles 2023-2026

Note: The meeting reconvened; Councillors Bob Broughton, Anna Kelly, Philip Knowles, Matthew Lee, Virginia Moran, Judy Stevens and Jill Thomas did not return.

The Chief Executive and the Director of Growth and Culture rejoined the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Governance and Licensing introduced a report asking the Council, as the Licensing Authority, to review and publish a Statement of Gambling Principles; it was required to do this every three years under the terms of the Gambling Act 2005.

The Statement sets out the general approach the Council would take when carrying out its regulatory role under the Gambling Act whilst promoting the three licensing objectives:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime;
- Ensuring that gambling was conducted in a fair and open way; and;
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

There were no changes proposed to the intent or direction of the Statement. Updates had been made to ensure the Statement reflected the current local profile and guidance and continued to be fit for purpose whilst promoting improvements.

The Cabinet Member informed members that public consultation on the draft Statement took place between 22 August 2022 and 18 September 2022, and 13 responses were received.

An amendment, in green text to the draft statement was proposed as a result of the consultations.

Members debated the report and noted that whilst the Council was fulfilling its duties as the Licensing Authority, it was important to keep in mind the negative effects of gambling on society. In addition, there were also a number of negative side-effects that resulted from gambling, such as suicides, addiction and domestic violence.

The Cabinet Member drew Members' attention to an awaited Government white paper on gambling; it was hoped that this would outline steps to address gambling addiction.

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

DECISION:

That Council:

1. Notes the proposed updates to the Gambling Statement of Principles 2023-2026 and consultation feedback, and therefore;
2. Approves the adoption of the revised South Kesteven District Council Gambling Statement of Principles 2023-2026.

55. Political Proportionality, Allocation of Seats on Committees and Appointment to an Outside Body

The Assistant Director of Governance provided Full Council with an update on the political proportionality and allocation of seats since the previous meeting of Full Council on 22 September 2022, taking into account two by-elections held on 10 November 2022 and notification of a resignation.

There was also the opportunity to appoint members to those outside bodies which now had a vacancy.

A supplement had been published which contained the changes to political balance, as well as the appointments that Council were able to approve.

The Leader of the Council put on record his congratulations to the two new Members of Council, Councillors Julia Reid and Mary Whittington. He made the following proposals:

- Councillor Julia Reid be appointed to a vacancy on Planning Committee;
- Councillor Ian Stokes be replaced on the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Councillor Julia Reid;
- Councillor Mary Whittington to be appointed to a vacancy on the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Councillor Ian Stokes be nominated for the Dame Margaret Thorold Educational Foundation Outside Body; and;
- Councillor Robert Reid to be nominated for the Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board Outside Body.

Councillor Paul Wood, Leader of the Opposition group requested to give his seat on the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing.

Councillor Ashley Baxter, Leader of the Alliance:SK group wished to continue the practice of holding a vacancy on each committee, with the exception of the Licensing Committee and Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Licensing Committee where the seat was already occupied by Councillor Phil Dilks.

Upon being taken to the vote the motion was **AGREED**.

DECISION:

That Full Council:

1. Notes the revised political proportionality and allocation of seats to Committees;
2. Approves the appointment of Councillor Julia Reid from the Conservative Group for one seat on the Planning Committee;
3. Notes that the Alliance:SK group would hold a vacancy on the Companies Committee.
4. Approves the following appointments and changes to the membership of Committees:
 - i. Councillor Ian Stokes be replaced on the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Councillor Julia Reid;
 - ii. Councillor Mary Whittington to be appointed to a vacancy on the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and;
 - iii. Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing be appointed to replace Councillor Paul Wood on the Finance, Economic Development and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
5. Approves the appointment of Councillor Ian Stokes to sit on the Dame Margaret Thorold Educational Foundation.
6. Approves the appointment of Councillor Robert Reid to sit on the Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board.

56. Interim Review of Polling Places

The Interim Review of Polling Places was not considered due to time constraints and would be considered at the next ordinary meeting of Full Council on 26 January 2023.

57. Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman Protocol

The Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman Protocol was not considered due to time constraints and would be considered at the next ordinary meeting of Full Council on 26 January 2023.

58. Proposed amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules and Planning Committee Scheme of Delegation

Proposed amendment to the Planning Procedure Rules and Planning Committee Scheme of Delegation was not considered due to time constraints and would be considered at the next ordinary meeting of Full Council on 26 January 2023.

59. Members' Open Questions

Members' Open Questions were not considered due to time constraints.

60. Notices of Motion

61. Councillor Amanda Wheeler

Councillor Wheeler's motion was not considered due to time constraints and would be tabled at the next ordinary meeting of Full Council on 26 January 2023.

62. Councillor Ashley Baxter

Councillor Baxter's motion was not considered due to time constraints and would be tabled at the next ordinary meeting of Full Council on 26 January 2023.

63. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 4:50pm.