

Minutes of a meeting of the **SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** held in line with the Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020, on Wednesday, 20 January 2021 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

P A Redgate (Vice-Chairman)

B Alcock	H Drury	M D Seymour
J R Astill	R Gambba-Jones	E J Sneath
J Avery	R A Gibson	G J Taylor
A C Beal	R Grocock	A C Tennant
H J W Bingham	M Hasan	J Tyrrell
M D Booth	C J Lawton	S C Walsh
C J T H Brewis	J D McLean	D J Wilkinson
P E Coupland	A M Newton	A R Woolf
A C Cronin	N H Pepper	C N Worth
T A Carter	G T D Rudkin	
A Casson	G P Scalese	

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors F Biggadike, J L King, J L Reynolds and S-A Slade,

In Attendance: The Executive Director Commercialisation (S151), the Chief Executive (Public Sector Partnership Services Ltd), the Executive Manager for Growth, the Executive Manager Governance, the Place Manager, the Communities Manager, the Head of Finance, the Revenue and Benefits Operations Manager, the Finance Manager Treasury, the Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Team Leader.

63. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 25 November 2020.

DECISION:

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

64. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

With regard to agenda item 15 and exempt agenda item 18 'Public Sector Partnership Services Limited', Councillors Newton and Grocock informed the Council that they did not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, but in the interests of transparency, they wished to declare that they represented the

Action By

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Council as Directors on the Board of PSPS Ltd. They would remain in the meeting for this item, but would not take part in any debate.

With regard to agenda item 12, Councillor Alcock informed the Council that he was a Director on the Board of Welland Homes, but held no financial interest.

65. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chairman announced the sad news that Glen Chapman, who worked for South Holland District Council as Environmental Services Business Support Manager, had recently passed away peacefully, with his family at his side, following a short illness. Glen had worked for the Council for many years, was a very popular figure, and was well respected by his colleagues.

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman passed on the Council's deepest sympathies to Glen's family, and Councillors held a minute's silence in memory of Glen.

66. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET.

There were none.

67. QUESTIONS ASKED ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

68. QUESTIONS ASKED WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

Question to: Leader of the Council

Question From: Councillor Newton

Subject: Covid-19 situation within the district

Councillor Newton requested an update on the current Covid-19 situation within the District. The Leader responded that as of 18 January 2021, the last 3 weeks' figures had shown a week on week decrease in numbers, but there had been one fatality reported today. Unfortunately, the decrease in numbers was not always reflected in the figures reported in the media, due to older cases sometimes being included within the real-time numbers. The figures for the district were at around half of the national average. However, this was no reason to become complacent, and the Leader re-iterated the advice to stay at home unless there

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was a good reason not to. Vaccination centres were being set up in the area with the centre based at Springfields doing a very good job, and a new site in Boston opening very shortly. There had been some confusion over where people should go for their vaccination – it was confirmed that where individuals received a letter, they could choose themselves where to go but that where letters provided options around the country, people should not have to travel that far and should go to Boston if possible. If individuals were prepared to wait, their GP surgery would contact them with arrangements closer to home.

Question to: Leader of the Council

Question From: Councillor Brewis

Subject: Covid-19 vaccination – distance to travel within rural locations

Councillor Brewis voiced the concerns of residents who did not wish to travel great distances to receive their vaccination, and asked that the Leader use his influence to encourage vaccinations in more accessible places for local, rural residents. The Leader acknowledged that the rural nature of the area did make it difficult for some people to access vaccination sites. Although larger sites had been set up to get as many people vaccinated as possible, he had raised with the CCG the need for sites to accommodate all in the district, and not only those in the larger settlements. He advised that there was a roving service in the district which would capture individuals wanting the vaccination within a 10 mile radius. He also agreed that there should be a vaccination centre in the Long Sutton area, and that he had fed this into the CCG.

Question to: Councillor Lawton

Question from: Councillor Astill

Subject: Concern of Deeping St Nicholas residents – excess surface water/sewage

Councillor Astill thanked Councillor Lawton for her help with regard to a recent incident at Campains Lane in Deeping St Nicholas. He raised the concerns of residents in three areas of the village who were serviced by a Council-owned sewage system, and issues that arose when there was heavy rainfall. Excess surface water resulted in some flooding that could contain excess sewage - could these and other locations in the district be looked at to ensure this didn't happen in the future. Councillor Lawton confirmed that, with regard to the recent incident at Campains Lane, the contractor had been on site and would remain on site whilst 'tankering out', and that an environmental health clean up would take place after it stopped raining. Moving

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forward, the Authority would carry out a full CCTV survey to determine any excess surface water entering the system, and could also carry out the same survey at other problematic sites. An officer was on site working with the Council's contractor. A second treatment works had been installed at Chapel Road/Coronation Avenue to alleviate any surplus ingress of water. A full drainage report had been undertaken at the start of lockdown, and the Authority planned to undertake remedial works once a drainage contractor had been appointed.

Question to: Councillor Worth

Question from: Councillor Rudkin

Subject: Holbeach regeneration

Councillor Rudkin requested an update regarding Holbeach regeneration, and whether the town would be included in any future bids. Councillor Worth confirmed that the recent bid had been unsuccessful– in his view, the proposal had demonstrated a positive financial and economic return, but had not met MHCLG's view of what they believed to be a suitable return on investment. The bid for Holbeach had been compared with similar bids elsewhere in the country. Moving forward, a conversation had taken place with MHCLG and more formal feedback from them had been requested, along with clarity regarding future funding, should any towns that had been awarded high street funding drop out. It was felt that this was quite likely as some bids may not have received the amount of money they required. Councillor Worth would also be speaking with the Greater Lincolnshire LEP and the County Council regarding alternative funding, particularly around Highways to resolve issues around the Market Hill junction. Conversations were also taking place with the private landowners at Chequers Yard regarding alternative sources of funding.

Question to: Leader of the Council

Question from: Councillor Alcock

Subject: Plan to improve traffic issues in Spalding, caused by the railway

Councillor Alcock highlighted the ongoing problem with traffic when large trains passed through the town – in light of the Council's wish to rejuvenate the town, what was the Authority's plan to improve the situation? A bridge over the railway had been a suggestion for many years – could the LEP provide a source of potential funding to bring together the variety of adverse issues around the traffic problems in Spalding? The Leader acknowledged the issues that an increase in rail traffic caused to the road traffic situation in the town (effectively splitting it in half),

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and that this was a major consideration in the town's regeneration. The Western Relief Road, and the road bridge that was part of the scheme, was an important part of dealing with the town's traffic problems, and it was important that the scheme was delivered. The Authority had already secured £12million, from the LEP and Central Government. Work on the bridge over the railway line was due to start in March. It would take some time to secure the various other sections of the road and it was important to work with the LEP, LCC, Homes England and the Government to achieve forward funding to complete the project. It was a medium to long term project, and the Leader shared members' frustrations at the length of time it would take to deliver the road, from its first inception many years ago, to when it would be ultimately delivered.

Question to: Leader of the Council

Question from: Councillor Newton

Subject: Johnson Hospital – withdrawal of Outpatients service

Councillor Newton stated that at a previous meeting, she had advised that a letter had been received giving six months' notice of the withdrawal of the Outpatients service at the Johnson Hospital, and that the Leader had stated that he would be writing a letter voicing concerns around this, and taking the issue up with the local MP – had he received a response? The Leader confirmed that a letter had been sent but that no response had yet been received. In response to Councillor Newton stating that LCC were looking into the situation, and the importance of not losing the service, the Leader requested that any intelligence on the matter be shared, and that it would be foolish for the service to be withdrawn from what was a relatively new hospital.

Question to: Councillor Casson

Question from: Councillor Gibson

Subject: Opening of Moulton Park to the public

Councillor Gibson was aware that the development of Moulton Park was under consideration and asked whether the space could be opened up in the meantime for local people to enjoy.

Councillor Casson responded that surveys of the space were currently being undertaken, but that it could not be opened up to the public until it was safe to do so.

69. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The minutes of the following Committees and Panels were noted:

- Governance and Audit Committee – 26 November 2020
- Licensing Committee – 10 December 2020

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- Planning Committee – 16 December 2020

70. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan.

- Councillor Newton asked the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Planning to provide an update on the item - Property Acquisition to support the Housing Options Service Deliver (acquisition of properties for the Next Steps Accommodation Programme). She also commented that at the last meeting, it had been stated that ward members would be engaged in meaningful discussions – was there an alternative plan if the properties were found not to be suitable?
 - The Portfolio Holder reported that the Authority was looking to acquire three properties. Initially, two properties had been identified – officers had started the legal work involved with this, ward members had been consulted, and were happy with the situation. A potential third property had been identified, and discussions with ward members, and the associated legal processes were about to start. The Government timeframes, linked to the funding, in which to acquire the properties were very tight. If any of the identified properties did not come to fruition, officers would need to identify new properties.

DECISION:

That the Key Decision Plan be received.

71. REPORT FROM CABINET MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2020

Consideration was given to the report of Cabinet which sought approval for the Cabinet's recommendations:

- Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 – To seek Council approval of the final proposals for the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 (Cabinet minute 50)(Cabinet agenda item 8)

The report was presented to the Council by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships.

DECISION:

- a) That the current Local Council Tax Support scheme be

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continued, including uprating in line with DWP's annual update of allowances and premiums for housing benefit for 2021/22;

- b) That the backdating period for working age claimants be extended from one month to three months; and
- c) That the Executive Director, Commercialisation (S151) be granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to approve the final scheme in line with the report, together with any administrative and minor changes.

72. HOUSING BENEFIT SUBSIDY CLAIM - 2019/20

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategies and Partnerships, and the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which reported the outcome of the 2019/20 Housing Benefit Subsidy claim audit.

The report was presented by the Revenue and Benefits Operations Manager, and it was noted that KPMG had undertaken the 2019/20 Housing Benefit Subsidy audit, in accordance with the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) reporting framework instruction.

The auditors had identified that the Council had not reviewed its policy with regard to War Disablement Pensions and Widows Pensions for some time. Council was advised that this was an area where the Authority had the discretion to increase the amount of disregarded income.

The Leader stated that the existing policy had not previously been reviewed as the Authority's view was that the current policy was appropriate and unlikely to change.

DECISION:

- a) That it be noted that the report had been considered by the Governance and Audit Committee; and
- b) That continuation of the disregard from the calculation of housing benefit of all income prescribed in the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (War Pension Disregards) Regulations 2007 be approved.

73. MID TERM TREASURY REPORT 2020/21

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which provided an update of the

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treasury management position of the Council as at 30 September 2020.

The report was presented by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships, who advised that it had recently been scrutinised by the Governance and Audit Committee.

DECISION:

That the Mid Term Treasury Report 2020/21, together with the treasury activity as detailed in Appendix A and the economic update from Link Group at Appendix B, be received and approved, as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

74. POLLING PLACE REVIEW

Consideration was given to the report of the Acting Returning Officer, to consider proposed changes to the polling places for the Polling Districts CRD2 and SMK2.

The report was presented by the Portfolio Holder for People, Places and Corporate.

- Councillor Astill commented that he and the other Crowland Ward councillors (Councillors Alcock and Pepper) had been consulted on the proposals with regard to designating the Snowden Pavilion in Crowland as a Polling Place. He requested that for future designations, consideration be given in particular to the continued expansion of the town.
 - The Portfolio Holder agreed that it was important that ward members were always consulted with regard to the location of Polling Places. He also stated that if Ward members had alternative suggestions for more appropriate venues that they liaise with the Elections team.
- Councillor Alcock agreed with the point raised by Councillor Astill, and commented that it was not satisfactory that the proposed Polling Place was not located within the appropriate ward, but he understood the difficulty in identifying a suitable venue. Should a suitable place within the ward be identified in the future, consideration should be given to using it as a Polling Place.
- Councillor Newton commented on the poor state of the area around the proposed Polling Place at Monkshouse Scout Hut, and raised concerns with regard to people accessing the Polling Station.

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- The Democratic Services Manager advised that an officer was currently looking into the state of the land surrounding the Scout Hut and that they would shortly be in contact with Councillor Newton regarding this.

DECISION:

- a) That the Snowden Pavilion in Crowland be designated as the Polling Place for Polling District CRD2;
- b) That Monkshouse Scout Hut, Spalding be designated as the Polling Place for Polling District SMK2; and
- c) That authority be delegated to the (Acting) Returning Officer, Rob Walker in consultation with the relevant Ward Members to approve any amendments to polling places prior to the next compulsory review.

75. NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEES AND OTHER SEATS AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION.

The following Committee change was reported to Council:

- Councillor Hasan to replace Councillor Newton as a member of the Governance and Audit Committee

DECISION:

That Councillor Hasan's appointment to the Governance and Audit Committee, in place of Councillor Newton, be approved.

76. PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIP SERVICES LIMITED

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Leader of the Cabinet and the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which asked the Council to consider a proposal to admit a third shareholder and to agree associated changes to the Joint Venture Shareholder Agreement ("JVSA").

Members noted that the report contained a confidential appendix, which was not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)). However, members agreed that Council could consider the report without going into the detail included within the appendix, and there was therefore no need for the meeting to go into private session for this item.

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The report was presented by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships.

Members requested that regular, informal updates on progress be provided as the proposal moved forward, and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships confirmed that this would happen.

DECISION:

To the extent that these were non-executive functions, the Council approved the following and, to the extent that the same were executive functions, the Council recommended to the Leader:

- a) That, subject to approval of East Lindsey District Council (“ELDC”) and the Board of PSPS, and subject also to (2), (3), and (4) below, the Council approves admitting Boston Borough Council (“BBC”) as a Shareholder in PSPS with an allocation of 240 shares.
- b) That legal due diligence be conducted to establish whether there were any extraordinary risks to the Council and delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director – Commercialisation (s151 Officer), in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Cabinet, to determine whether the level of risk was acceptable
- c) That the JVSA together with any associated contractual documents be amended or created as necessary, including the making of provision for a potential future fourth Shareholder, and that delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director – Commercialisation (s151 Officer), in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Cabinet, to approve and sign such revised or new documentation
- d) That the Leader completes any necessary company shareholder decisions required under the Companies Acts.

77. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

78. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION:

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That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12 (A) of the Act.

79. COVID IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LEISURE OPERATING CONTRACT

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director – Commercialisation (S151 Officer), which asked members to consider Covid implications for the leisure operating contract.

The report was presented by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Facilities

Members were advised that changes to the recommendations within the report were required, and these were agreed.

DECISION:

That the recommendations within the report, as amended within the exempt discussion, be agreed.

(The meeting ended at 7.52 pm)

(End of minutes)