

Minutes of a meeting of the **SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Wednesday, 22 November 2023 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

A R Woolf (Chairman)
J Whitbourn (Vice-Chairman)

B Alcock	S Chauhan	S-A Slade
D Ashby	L J Eldridge	E J Sneath
J R Astill	M Geaney	T Sneath
J Avery	R A Gibson	A Spencer
P Barnes	A Harrison	G J Taylor
A C Beal	S Hutchinson	A C Tennant
H J W Bingham	J Le Sage	J Tyrrell
C J T H Brewis	M Le Sage	D J Wilkinson
T A Carter	P A Redgate	C N Worth
A Casson	G P Scalese	
N Chapman	I Sheard	

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors M D Booth, M Hasan, J L King and J L Reynolds.

In Attendance: The Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive – Programme Delivery, the Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Assistant Director – Corporate, the Head of Environmental and Operational Services, the Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Team Leader.

51. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of Full Council held on 27 September 2023.

Members also agreed that there was no requirement to discuss the content of the exempt minute from the meeting of Full Council held on 27 September 2023, included later in the agenda.

DECISION:

- a) That the minutes of the meeting of Full Council on 27 September 2023 be signed as a correct record; and
- b) That the exempt minute from the meeting of Full Council on 27 September 2023 be signed as a correct record.

Action By

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52. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

There were none.

53. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The following announcements were made:

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Glynis Scalese to the meeting of Full Council, following her election on 9 November 2023.

The Chairman reminded members that details of events that he had attended as Chairman could be viewed under the Chairman's Log on the Council's website.

The Chairman advised of the following forthcoming events:

- 23 November 2023 - Chairman's Quiz at the Elizabethan Centre, Whaplode Drove;
- 25 November 2023 - Christmas Celebrations/Santa's Grotto in Spalding;
- 9 December 2023 - Halmer Harriers were undertaking a Santa/Reindeer Run in Spalding. The Chairman would be taking part;
- 9 December 2023 - Chairman's Christmas Coffee Morning – Ruby Hunt Centre, Donington;
- 26 January 2024 – Open Mic Comedy Night at the South Holland Centre

54. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET.

The Leader made the following announcement:

Devolution

As part of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, an announcement had been made in relation to a Level 3 deal for a Mayoral Combined Authority for Greater Lincolnshire. The Leader would provide members with the text to this as soon as he was able.

Much had moved on since the Leader had given his last briefing to members, and the proposal was much improved. All three Leaders at each of the authorities within the Partnership had received a thorough, verbal briefing regarding the deal.

The proposals were:

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- Receipt of £24 million per year for 30 years (increase from £18 million);
- £28.4 million for one-off projects of which £20 million was for local place-based economic regeneration, and £8.4 million was for housing on brownfield sites;
- Key areas within the document related to skills, transport and infrastructure;
- South Holland benefitted from being at the heart of the food manufacturing industry and the UK Food Valley (a key part of the vision for Greater Lincolnshire);
- Growth would be boosted and going forward, high skill/high wage jobs would be created;

With regard to governance:

- There would be an elected Mayor;
- Two members from each constituent council (Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Council);
- Four non-constituent members (for district/borough councils);
- One of the Police and Crime Commissioners;
- One other (business or skills representative)

Representation of district councils on the board was extremely good. The decision of who would go on the board to represent districts was a matter for District Councils themselves to decide. All Districts would play a part – if not on the board, then on scrutiny or specialist panels.

With regard to timelines:

- Proposals to be presented to upper tiers on or around 1 December 2023;
- Public consultation to take place December 2023/January 2024 (SHDC would be consulted as part of that process);
- Upper tiers to then consider feedback. If no major issues, they would formally agree the proposals in March 2024 after which it would go to the Secretary of State to go through the parliamentary process;
- Shadow Board would be in place by May 2024;
- Elections for a Mayor to be held in May 2025, to run alongside County Council Elections.

The Leader concluded that he was supportive of the proposal, and that Greater Lincolnshire could not afford to turn down this level of funding.

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The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, Leisure Centre Deliver and Spalding Town Improvement made the following announcement:

Spalding Railway Station – Ticket Office

The campaign to save the ticket office at Spalding Railway Station had been successful, with closure now not taking place. He thanked all those who had signed the petition and commented that Councillors Whitbourn, Brewis and Sneath, and Sir John Hayes MP had been integral in supporting and promoting the petition. Working together as a community had been successful, and it was important to continue in this way regarding any future issues of concern.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Operational Housing made the following announcement:

Foodbank collection points

The Communities Team were currently organising collection points for the donation of groceries, to be distributed to five foodbanks across the district. She advised that there were collection boxes situated throughout the Council building and asked all to contribute.

55. QUESTIONS ASKED ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

56. QUESTIONS ASKED WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

Question to: Councillor Worth

Question from: Councillor Gibson

Subject: Designated Member Budgets v Future funding for items such as flower baskets

Councillor Gibson commented that members, particularly those with wards in Spalding, had been asked to contribute from their Designated Member Budgets towards flower baskets, the Remembrance Day Parade and a Christmas Tree for the town centre. While members were happy to contribute, this was not what Member Budgets should be used for – what were the plans for funding going forward? Councillor Worth commented that with regard to Christmas lights, approximately £20,000 from the

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Economic Development budget had been spent on reconnecting electricity and ensuring that Christmas lights were up to date. In future, it was suggested that the Spalding Town Forum could make recommendations to Cabinet for decision regarding any specific items that may be required that were not included within the budget. With regard to hanging baskets, all other towns paid for their own baskets and found their own sponsors and volunteers. He did not believe that it was fair to other towns in the district for the Authority to fund hanging baskets in Spalding when all others funded their own.

Question to: Councillor Taylor

Question from: Councillor Gibson

Subject: Christmas lights in The Crescent, Spalding

Councillor Gibson commented that traders in The Crescent were unhappy not to have any Christmas lights in the area last year. Could it be confirmed that there would be lights this year? Councillor Taylor stated that a Christmas event was to take place in Spalding over the weekend. With regard to The Crescent, a major investment in the electrical infrastructure was taking place this year which would assist in moving this issue forward.

Question to: Councillor Worth

Question from: Councillor Brewis

Subject: Future special interest groups

Councillor Brewis was very pleased to hear that a special interest group had been set up to take the issue of IDB funding forward. As the Partnership was becoming more influential, could other areas of work be taken forward in a similar way? For example, some years ago a debt to the Authority had arisen from the compulsory purchase of HRA from central government – could a special interest group be set up with the aim of encouraging the write-off of this debt? Councillor Worth had some sympathy with this issue - he responded that this could be looked into however, special interest groups were very time consuming and required a lot of support and the support of 15 other councils.

Question to: Councillor Worth

Question from: Councillor Barnes

Subject: Increase in senior officer pay

Councillor Barnes commented on a recent Press article detailing a salary increase (31% of which was covered by SHDC) for the Joint Chief Executive. He commented that SHDC had not had a say in this decision and queried thus how finances could be controlled. He asked for an explanation on this case and also

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how many other officers may be in the same position of receiving salary increases. Councillor Worth explained that when the Partnership had been set up, senior officers remained with their employing authority. In this instance, East Lindsey District was the employing authority but this would not always be the case meaning that the pros and cons to an employing authority would be spread. This was the way of working that had been agreed and no changes to this arrangement were planned.

Question to: Councillor Casson

Question from: Councillor Scalese

Subject: Enforcement – Fly tipping and littering fines

Councillor Scalese asked how many fines had been given out since the commencement of the environmental crime enforcement contract, and whether only Spalding, or all other towns and villages in the district were covered. Councillor Casson responded that he was provided with a monthly update and that for October 2023 the following had been issued – 121 fixed penalty notices, which included 5 fines for fly tipping, 14 fines for spitting, and 1 fine for dog fouling. Since March 2023, 703 fixed penalty notices had been issued. The contractors covered all towns in the district.

Question to: Councillor Carter

Question from: Councillor Harrison

Subject: Community Lottery

Councillor Harrison commented that the Community Lottery was a great initiative which had now been running for a while. How much money had been raised for good causes and how many groups across the district had benefited? Councillor Carter agreed that the aim of the Community Lottery was to raise funds for good causes, and that all local groups could register. The Community Lottery had been running for nearly a year (the first draw had taken place on 26 November 2022), to date 83 good causes had received funds and just under £32,000 had been paid out to them. It was expected that, dependent on ticket sales, this would be around £36,000 by the end of the year.

Question to: Councillor Astill

Question from: Councillor Eldridge

Subject: Customer Services – call back facility

Councillor Eldridge asked how effective the customer services call back facility had been since its implementation. Councillor Astill responded, advising that the service had been introduced in May 2023 and that there had been approximately 400-500 successful

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call backs per month. Since its introduction, Key Performance Indicators were showing a significant improvement.

Question to: Councillor Bingham

Question from: Councillor Hutchinson

Subject: Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act/Capacity to undertake Local Plan review and to reap benefits of LURA and Biodiversity net gain

Councillor Hutchinson commented that the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act became law in September however, members had not yet received information on this. In addition, with the LURA and Biodiversity net gain coming into force, and the Local Plan requiring a review before mid-March 2024, reassurance was required that the authority not only had the capacity and skill set to meet requirements, but also to reap the benefits and the opportunities that these could bring to the local area. Councillor Bingham confirmed that the department was currently complying with all relevant legislation. Information on the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act and Biodiversity Net Gain would be sent to members in due course. With regard to capacity and skill sets, the Portfolio Holder believed that these were in place, but stated that he would come back further on this.

Question to: Councillor Tyrrell

Question from: Councillor Avery

Subject: Refuse bags for SHDC residents

Councillor Avery referred to a recent comment in the Press that stated that the Authority was spending £1/4 million on refuse sacks. Would the residents of Pinchbeck and Surfleet and the wider district still be receiving 52 free black bags per year? Councillor Tyrrell responded that this would continue.

Question to: Councillor Worth

Question from: Councillor James LeSage

Subject: Options for car park charging

Councillor J LeSage understood that a trial for a voucher for free parking was being considered. Would it not be more simple to provide 2-3 hours of free parking, or completely free parking in order to support use of the market? Councillor Worth responded to say that he was willing to look at any options however, consideration had to be given to how other options could be put into practice and whether they would work within the constraints of the budget.

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Question to: Councillor Worth
Question from: Councillor Beal
Subject: Excess food risk

Councillor Beal referred to Northampton Council and asked for clarification that SHDC did not suffer from excess food risk? Councillor Worth confirmed that the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling Up had a tight rein on finances and that there were no concerns in this regard.

Question to: Councillor Redgate
Question from: Councillor Sheard
Subject: Savings by the Partnership

Councillor Sheard commented that a recent quote in the local Press by Councillor Worth stated that the Partnership had made more than £21 million of savings, 50% of £42 million of savings targeted two years ago. She requested that a breakdown of this be provided, along with details of what percentage of this would come back to SHDC. Councillor Worth advised that this information would be sent to members.

57. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The minutes of the following Committees and Panels were noted. Members also agreed that there was no requirement to discuss the content of the exempt minute from the meeting of Performance Monitoring Panel held on 13 September 2023, included later in the agenda:

- Performance Monitoring Panel – 13 September 2023
- Performance Monitoring Panel – 13 September 2023 (exempt minute)
- Governance and Audit Committee – 19 September 2023
- Planning Committee – 4 October 2023
- Policy Development Panel – 11 October 2023
- Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel – 11 October 2023
- Licensing Committee – 1 November 2023

58. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan.

DECISION:

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

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**59. SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP
SUB-REGIONAL STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Corporate which sought approval for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership Sub-regional Strategy.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which included the full Sub-regional Strategy at Appendix A, and the Sub-regional Strategy consultation findings at Appendix B.

DECISION:

That following consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 7 November 2023:

- a) The Sub-regional Strategy at Appendix A be approved; and
- b) That the Sub-regional Strategy becomes a line of inquiry in the Partnership's Annual Scrutiny.

60. REVISION TO TRAVEL AND EXPENSES POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Corporate which proposed changes to the Travel and Expenses Policy.

The Portfolio Holder – Corporate and Communications introduced the report, and the Travel and Expenses Policy was included at Appendix A. It was highlighted that within the table at section 4.1 of the policy document, a passenger rate of 5p for 'over 999cc' vehicles had been omitted – this was to be added as it was aimed at encouraging drivers to take passengers with them.

The following points were raised:

- Appendix A stated that there was a duty to undertake a driving licence check on an annual basis – should confirmation of insurance for business use and a valid MOT also be included?
 - Officers confirmed that there was a process in place to check all of these requirements for pool cars and officers' own cars.
- With regard to the various green initiatives coming forward, what was the rationale in having the same amount for fuel expense for both petrol and electric cars? How did this tie into the Council's aim to be more 'green' in the future? Could a tiered system be incorporated as part of a strategy going

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forward?

- Officers commented that the cost per mile covered more than the electricity fuelling the car. It was also clarified that the rates for mileage within the policy were recommended HMRC rates, which included electric vehicles. The lower rates picked up electric vehicles. With regard to 'green' issues, HMRC provided greater tax relief for those electing for salary sacrifice for an electric vehicle. Also, the scheme employed by the organisation provided incentives for those that accessed and took green vehicles.

DECISION:

- a) That the Travel and Expenses Policy at Appendix A be approved; and
- b) That the revised Travel and Expenses Policy be implemented in line with the phased approach set out at section 1.7 of the report.

61. MID TERM TREASURY REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development (S151 Officer) which provided members with an update on Treasury Management performance and activity, to ensure best practice was maintained.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation, UKSPF and Levelling up introduced the report, which included the Mid Term Treasury Management Update at Appendix A.

The following points were raised:

- Section 9 of the Mid Term Treasury Management update referred to the CCLA Money Market Fund – how frequently was this interest paid? It was believed that this could be paid monthly.
 - The Portfolio Holder would provide a response to this in due course.

DECISION:

That the Mid Term Treasury Report 2023/24 at Appendix A be received and approved, as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

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62. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer) which requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 be received.

The Chairmen of both scrutiny panels were invited to speak:

- The Chairman of the Performance Monitoring Panel commented that joint scrutiny of issues across the Partnership had put an extra burden on some members, which may prove difficult to fulfil throughout the year, dependent on much joint scrutiny work was required. He also stated that following the District Election, there was a steep learning curve for newly elected members and it had taken some time for them to be involved in scrutiny however, many were now becoming involved.
- The Chairman of the Policy Development Panel echoed these sentiments. He commented that the Partnership was still evolving, and it was important to understand how each of the authorities operated. The Policy Development Panel was part of the process in achieving alignment of policies across all three authorities, and the policy registers were currently in good shape.

DECISION:

That the South Holland District Council Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report be received.

63. GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer) which requested that the Governance and Audit Annual Report 2022/23 be received.

The Chairmen of the Governance and Audit Committee for 2022/23 was invited to speak.

- She commented that the report highlighted the importance of the work of the Governance and Audit Committee. As always, internal audit work had been undertaken last year, and the Committee had been very proactive in following actions through. The Committee had been committed and she was happy to be handing it over in a strong position to a strong chairman.

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DECISION:

That the South Holland District Council Governance and Audit Annual Report be received.

64. COMMITTEE SEAT ALLOCATION REVIEW

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer) which asked that, in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the allocation of committee seats to political groups be confirmed.

The Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer) introduced the report, which included at Append A details of revised seat allocation.

DECISION:

That the allocation of seats, as detailed at Appendix A to be report, be approved.

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

The following proposed committee changes, and appointments to Outside Bodies were reported to Council:

- Councillor Scalese to replace Councillor Whitbourn as a member of the Performance Monitoring Panel;
- Councillor Gibson to replace Councillor Sheard as a member of the Policy Development Panel;
- The vacancy on the Governance and Audit Committee to be filled by Councillor Sheard;
- Councillor Scalese to replace Councillor Geaney as representative on the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire, and that Councillor Geaney be appointed as replacement member to the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire

DECISION:

That the following appointments be approved:

- Councillor Scalese to replace Councillor Whitbourn as a member of the Performance Monitoring Panel;
- Councillor Gibson to replace Councillor Sheard as a member

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of the Policy Development Panel;

- The vacancy on the Governance and Audit Committee to be filled by Councillor Sheard;
- Councillor Scalese to replace Councillor Geaney as representative on the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire, and that Councillor Geaney be appointed as replacement member to the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire

66. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.35 pm)

(End of minutes)