

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Mid Sussex District
Council Cabinet held on Monday, 17 September 2016
from 4.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.**

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Andrew MacNaughton, Gary Marsh, Garry Wall (Leader) and Norman Webster.

Also present: Councillors: Pete Bradbury, Rod Clarke, Ginny Heard and Chris Hersey.

Officers: Kathryn Hall, Tom Clark, Judy Holmes, Peter Stuart, Simon Hughes, Tim Cusack and Craig Marshall.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jonathan Ash-Edwards declared a personal interest as a Haywards Heath Town Councillor in item 5, Acceptance of the recommendations contained in the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan Examination Report and item 9, The Orchards Shopping Centre.

2. APOLOGIES

None.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

Garry Wall, Leader of the Council, proposed that the Cabinet take items 7, 8 and 9 in open session first, and then items 7a, 8a and 9a in closed session, this was agreed unanimously.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE HAYWARDS HEATH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION REPORT

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive, introduced the report. She informed Cabinet that this was the 14th Neighbourhood Plan in Mid Sussex District to pass to the examination phase. It would be an important contribution to housing numbers in the district as it included 600 new homes.

She noted there were two significant proposed modifications to the plan as set out by the Examiner, which Haywards Heath Town Council have accepted. She directed Cabinet's attention to paragraph 10 as set out in page 10 of the report, in which the Examiner recommends a reduction in the housing capacity at Beech Hurst Gardens from 24 to 15 units. This was because further work was required to support the potential replacement of the green space at Beech Hurst Gardens to culminate in the delivery of the full 24 units. The Council will progress this work as a matter of priority in order to secure the full 24 which need affordable units.

The second proposed modification is the inclusion of Birchen Lane into the Built up Area Boundary (BUAB).

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning informed Cabinet that in paragraph 6.1.1 there is an error in the report which states BHNP (Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan) and should say HHNP (Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan).

He then praised the Plan stating it would be a good contribution to housing numbers in the district.

He directed Cabinet's attention to the Examiner's comments from paragraph 6.9.32 of the report. He stated he accepted the Examiner's comments regarding the net loss of open space in the Beech Hurst Gardens proposals. He reminded Members that as a responsible District Council, Mid Sussex will work to replace the green space in order to achieve the 24 units of affordable housing for which there is high demand in Haywards Heath.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth told Members he was pleased that the Neighbourhood Plan was at this stage and that the, Town Council's officers and advisors have worked hard to develop the Plan. He reiterated the plan does not just include new housing, but includes a new park, allotments, a cemetery, and the possibility of a new school.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth acknowledged the Examiner's recommendations relating to Bolnore Road, but supported the Leader's comments about the importance of affordable housing.

The Leader noted that the Council is under pressure to deliver affordable housing, and this plan identifies where housing can be accommodated. He then moved to the recommendations which were agreed and noted unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet formally accepts the modifications to the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan as set out in Appendix 2 of this report.

6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2016/17

Tim Cusack, Business Unit Leader for Performance and Partnerships introduced the report. He summarised that 29 out of 49 indicators had met their target, which is an improvement from 24 indicators the same time in the previous year.

He stated that this is a positive development that was achieved even with increased demand in Council services. He told Members that several services had improved from 'significant underperformance' to 'on or exceeding target'.

He informed Cabinet that the Scrutiny Committee for Leader and Service Delivery had made comments on customer service targets not being met. He reminded the Committee that many queries were being solved at first contact.

He stated that the Scrutiny Committee noted it's concern regarding homelessness and the numbers in temporary accommodation, the importance of the Wellbeing

Service and expressed concern about its future funding from West Sussex County Council.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth stated that this report was very positive. It is reassuring for colleagues who sit on the Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the performance so closely. This demonstrates the Council's scrutiny process is proactive and works.

The Cabinet Member for Community noted issues in relation to the Environmental Health team.

The Leader concluded that the issues and challenges District Councils face have not diminished over time, and the report demonstrates that through the scrutiny process the Council is not complacent and is performing well.

He then moved Cabinet to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

To note the Council's performance in the first Quarter of the year and identify any areas where further reporting or information is required.

7. BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2016/17 – PROGRESS REPORT – APRIL TO AUGUST 2016

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Resources, introduced the report. He stated that there were five key items to draw to Cabinet's attention.

1. In paragraph 2 of the report there is an £80,000 underspend which is broadly balanced for half way through the year.
2. Paragraph 25 of the report details a new project for the resurfacing of Queens Crescent Car Park, Burgess Hill.
3. Page 95 of the report details Capital Project Variations.
4. Paragraph 29 of the report details a change in the procurement approach in relation to a project to build a property to resell.
5. Paragraphs 32 and 33 of the report details the Treasury Management Interest for 2016/17. He clarified that the average rate of interest has reduced because rates are being reduced, loans are maturing and the Council is not getting the same rates hitherto.

The Deputy Leader noted that he is pleased that the Garden Waste service is expected to deliver additional gross income, as this will improve the Council's financial position. He also praised the Council's proposal to resurface the Queens Crescent car park in Burgess Hill.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery welcomed the increase in car parking numbers.

The Leader concluded that this report was very reassuring and that the projects proposed are sensible improvements and investments which will generate an income for the Council. He concluded that the management of the Council's finances remains strong.

The Leader then took Cabinet to the recommendations in the report which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees to recommend to the Council for approval:

- (i) That £5,850 grant income be transferred to a Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 20.
- (ii) That £41,641 grant income relating to Individual Electoral Registration funding in 2017/17 be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 21.
- (iii) The variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 27 in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B4, and the variation to the Procurement Code outlined in paragraph 29.

To note:

- (iv) The remainder of the report.

8. WOODSIDE PAVILION, BOLNORE VILLAGE; PROPOSED CAR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report; he summarised that the surface originally built has not performed well enough and is not doing justice to the centre.

The Deputy Leader said that the pavilion had made a huge contribution to Bolnore village and it was essential that the Council ensures it performs well. He stated that the District Council was working closely with the Bolnore Community Partnership and he was looking forward to the outcome of these improvements.

The Leader endorsed the comments made by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth. He stated this demonstrates the Council's commitment to open spaces. The Leader gave special mention to former Councillor Tim Farmer who campaigned for open spaces, and has been honoured with the naming of the recreation ground nearby.

The Leader then took Cabinet to the recommendations in the report which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet agrees that the capital programme be amended to include a project to resurface the Woodside Pavilion Car Park.

9. THE ORCHARDS SHOPPING CENTRE

Peter Stuart, Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report and explained the background to the proposed acquisition.

The Deputy Leader noted that it was an important asset in the District, and Provided a good opportunity to purchase an income generating asset for the benefit of the Council's services.

He explained that the Council's ambition to be financially independent could only be achieved if resources are used better and that if the District Council controls the land holding, this gives the Council more control in promoting economic growth in the area.

He concluded that many Council's across the country are looking at how they can use their position to play a bigger role in economic growth in their area by acquiring assets.

The Cabinet Member for Community emphasised that the purchase of the centre represented a good long term investment opportunity.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning told Members that it was an exciting opportunity. He also emphasised that the District Council should clarify to the public that major changes to the centre were unlikely to happen in the near future.

The Leader agreed that this was an exciting opportunity for the Council. He reminded the Committee that as recently as 2008/09 there was much financial uncertainty and funding from central government decreased substantially. Therefore, for the Council to be financially independent and resolute it has to be innovative and look to the future.

The Leader then took Cabinet to the recommendations in the report which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet recommends to:

- (i) Indicate its support in acquiring the centre through the bidding process;
- (ii) Ask Council to agree any such purchase at its next meeting, with full particulars and financial forecasts included.

10. The Leader proposed that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt items on the agenda and this was seconded by the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery. This was agreed.

RESOLVED

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with Section 1100A of the Local Government Act 1972, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

The Leader brought the meeting back into open session on the completion of exempt business noting the recommendations of items 7, 8 and 9 were approved and closed the meeting at 5:00pm.

Chairman.