

Minutes of a Meeting of Mid Sussex District Council held on 28 June 2017 from 7.00 pm to 7.42 pm.

Present: Councillors:

Bruce Forbes (Chairman)
Phillip Coote (Vice-Chairman)

Jonathan Ash-Edwards	Steven Hansford*	Norman Mockford
Andrew Barrett-Miles*	Sue Hatton	Pru Moore*
Edward Belsey	Ginny Heard*	Howard Munding
John Belsey*	Chris Hersey	Kirsty Page
Margaret Belsey	Margaret Hersey	Geoff Rawlinson
Liz Bennett*	Colin Holden	Peter Reed
Anne Boutrup	Anne Jones MBE	Robert Salisbury
Pete Bradbury*	Jim Knight*	Linda Stockwell*
Heidi Brunson	Jacqui Landriani*	Dick Sweatman*
Cherry Catharine	Andrew Lea	Mandy Thomas-Atkin
Richard Cherry*	Anthea Lea	Colin Trumble
Rod Clarke	Judy Llewellyn-Burke	Neville Walker
Ruth de Mierre	Andrew MacNaughton	Garry Wall
Tony Dorey	Bob Mainstone	Anthony Watts Williams
David Dorking	Gordon Marples	Norman Webster
Sandy Ellis	Gary Marsh	John Wilkinson
Claire Fussell*	Edward Matthews	Peter Wyan

*Absent

1. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was read by the Vice-Chairman.

2. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9

None.

3. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 10 MAY 2017

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 10 May 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA

None.

5. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS

None.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members that the deadline for submitting nominations to the Community Service Awards is Friday 30 June.

He advised Members that a full list of recent engagements is published on the website, and highlighted the 'School Council' held on 22 June. Children from 9 local schools were invited to the Council Chamber to ask questions, and were well informed and interested.

7. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER OF THE PERSONS ELECTED AS DISTRICT COUNCILLOR FOR THE WARD OF HASSOCKS ON 8 JUNE 2017

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Michelle Binks and Sue Hatton as the new Members for Hassocks.

As there were no further questions, the Chairman took Members to the recommendation to note the contents of the report which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to note the election of Councillors Michelle Binks and Sue Hatton as District Councillors for the Ward of Hassocks.

8. POLITICAL BALANCE: SECTION 15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989; THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COMMITTEES AND POLITICAL GROUPS) REGULATIONS 1990.

As there were no questions, the Chairman took Members to the recommendations outlined in the report, which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council resolved that for the remainder of the year 2017/18:

- i. the two Planning Committees each comprise 10 members consisting of 19 Conservative and one Liberal Democrat over the 2 Committees;
- ii. the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth comprises 15 members consisting of 15 Conservative;
- iii. the Scrutiny Committee for Customer Services and Service Delivery comprises 15 members consisting of 15 Conservative;
- iv. the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning comprises 15 members consisting of 14 Conservative and one Liberal Democrat;
- v. the Licensing Committee comprises 15 members consisting of 15 Conservative;
- vi. the Standards Committee comprises 6 Council members consisting of 6 Conservative (other than the Leader);
- vii. the District Planning Committee comprises 10 members drawn from the membership of the two Planning Committees consisting of 10 Conservative, but not any Cabinet Members, and
- viii. the Audit Committee comprises 7 members consisting of 7 Conservative.

9. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Leader noted that Mid Sussex Members do important work on outside bodies. He recommended Members share their work via e-mail or the MIS to inform other Members.

He noted that there are two vacancies in the report. He proposed Councillor Watts Williams be the nominated Member for Action in Rural Sussex and Councillor Anne Boutrup be the nominated Member for the Bolnore Partnership Community Trust.

As there were no further questions, the Chairman took Members to the recommendations outlined in the report, which were agreed.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to approve the nominations for representatives listed in paragraph 4 of the report and in addition to the nominations of Councillor Watts Williams to Action in Rural Sussex and Councillor Anne Boutrup to the Bolnore Partnership Community Trust.

10. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader formally welcomed the two new Members of the Council.

The Leader stated that the recent severe and tragic fire at Grenfell tower has shocked many, his thoughts and prayers go out to those affected. He thanked the emergency services and noted that the event has resonated with the public will ensure lessons will be learnt.

The Leader reported that since the fire the Council had worked promptly to comply with Government requests for information. The action taken by the Council has been summarised and sent to Members via e-mail. The Council has reviewed all council owned buildings and none fall into a category of concern. In addition, all Fire Risk Assessments have been reviewed. He stated that this Council will continue to comply fully with guidance from Government.

The Leader attended the Coast2Capital LEP Board meeting in May. He will also attend the Greater Brighton Economic Board next month. The new Chairman of the Board is Lewes District Council Leader Cllr Andy Smith. He reminded Members that the work of the Board is important for economic growth and it is essential Mid Sussex has a seat at the table.

The Leader announced that a judicial review of a decision to grant planning permission on a small parcel of Council land, at Courtmead Road, Cuckfield had been dismissed by the High Court. The eventual sale of this land will generate an important capital receipt for local investment.

11. REPORT OF CABINET MEMBERS, INCLUDING QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.1.

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth informed Members that the Council's refresh of its Economic Strategy. There is a strong appetite from businesses to being involved in the work.

The Deputy Leader had attended a recent Gatwick Diamond Economic Forum at which the economy of the area was reviewed. The Gatwick area continues to have a very high GDP, the highest in the country after the Thames Valley area.

The Deputy Leader informed Members he attended a presentation by the Managing Director of Gatwick Airport who announced there has been a significant increase in cargo volumes.

He concluded by highlighting that the Cabinet Grants Panel recently held a meeting and approved a significant amount of community and microbusiness grants totalling £150,000. He encouraged Members to highlight these schemes to local community organisations and businesses.

A Member noted that the increase in cargo is a positive development as Gatwick scores low in passenger satisfaction surveys, and asked if there is any feedback on the cargo operations at Gatwick.

The Deputy Leader replied that he did not have specific feedback relating to cargo, but Gatwick is showing increased freight volumes and expanded route network, which demonstrates increasing confidence in the service.

A Member asked whether this may lead to an expansion of night flights, to which the Deputy Leader replied that there has been no mention of this.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Service Delivery highlighted the work involved in running the recent Parliamentary General Election and that work on the Annual Canvass has begun. This year, residents are being encouraged to respond to these letters online or by text. She gave her thanks to all the election and poll staff.

97% of Contact Centre calls are being answered in a timely fashion and the Contact Centre staff continue to demonstrate high levels of professionalism. The Council is extending its use of social media to target younger residents, through the creation of an Instagram page and the holding of the Young Volunteer of the Year Awards.

The Council's effort to advertise the use of its Building Control services has meant a spike in the number of website visits and a 20% increase in visits to the 'make an appointment' page. Jan Palmer from the Wellbeing team was the recent recipient of the 'Make a Difference' Customer Service Award. The Cabinet Member reported that from the recent CenSus Joint Committee meeting Eduserve has been contracted to move more services into the cloud which will help solve longstanding issues over resilience. She highlighted the recent School Council event, and praised the school children who visited for asking relevant questions and having frank views.

A Member queried what efforts are being made by the Council to increase voter registration in the District and to provide postal votes for the District's ageing and rural communities. A Member also noted that many voters were hand delivering their postal votes to a polling station on voting day.

The Cabinet Member replied that the Council will be advertising the different ways you can vote and the Annual Canvass in the Mid Sussex Matters magazine. Furthermore, the Council has always had a high level of response and voter registration levels resulting from the Annual Canvass. Voters that choose to hand their postal vote pack in at a polling station are entitled to do so, and this is something that happens at every election and is not a cause for concern.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery announced that he stood in for the Deputy Leader at the sustainable conference in Burgess Hill. There was good attendance and issues regarding sustainable transport for an ever growing town were aired together with some possible solutions.

He thanked Cllrs Mockford and Wyan for bringing to his attention the unpleasant events concerning the Moat Pond adjacent to the Kings Centre in East Grinstead. Council officers visited the site and concluded that a combination of a heatwave and thunderstorm meant that oxygen levels had depleted in the pond. All dead fish have been removed and disposed of safely. The Council, working with its partners, installed a pump to add oxygen into the water, another pump will shortly be deployed and staff at the leisure centre will be keeping a watch on the pond.

The Cabinet Member concluded that this was a distressing situation for all those who witnessed it and that the Council is working with its partners to keep the pond healthy.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

The Cabinet Member for Community announced that the Wellbeing team has created a weight management class for those with special needs. Those involved are being encouraged to bring along a family friend or carer to aid them.

The Community Services Directory has now been updated by the Customer Services team to include a section on dementia, which is now available in an electronic format. The Wellbeing team has now provided training for over 70 nurses at a CCG event held at Ardingly Showground. The Wellbeing team also provided advice on nutrition and relaxation techniques to staff at Sussex Oakleaf in Burgess Hill on one of their staff wellbeing days.

Overall there have been 500 service interventions this year and 8 workplace interventions. The Wellbeing team will be partnering a CCG event in East Grinstead in October.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the work the Council's safeguarding officer is currently undertaking. She is updating the Safeguarding Children and Adult policy and formulating an appropriate training strategy and implementation. This work will be coming to scrutiny in due course. Furthermore, promotion of the Summer Holiday Play Day events during the school holiday period will begin shortly.

The Cabinet Member highlighted that the Armed Forces Covenant has been reviewed and some HR related policies will be coming forward for approval by Members in due course.

The 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report will be submitted to DEFRA this week.

The Cabinet Member noted that HMIC has rated Sussex Police as 'Good' for accuracy of reported crime: the only Force in the country to achieve this rating (94%) and this underlines the importance of residents reporting crime either on 101 or online.

The Cabinet Member highlighted recent collaboration between MSDC, Burgess Hill Town Council, Sussex Police, Clarion Housing and local cricket and football clubs to resolve issues regarding anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. This has led to a positive outcome with arrests being made and prosecutions being pursued.

He informed Members of an increase in anti-social behaviour and assault in the district, as well as a rise in recorded crime in Sussex. The Cabinet Member said he will raise these issues at the next Police and Crime Panel. He advised Members that these statistics must be considered in the context of a complex data recording system and a change in criteria for recording crime, for example playground fights are now recorded as assaults.

He stated the Council's ASB team continue to engage with challenging families, and he will be meeting informally with Cllr Hillier, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and will be raising these issues more formally through the Start of Life Board at WSCC.

The Cabinet Member made clear that ASB and criminal activity only involves a small number of younger residents, and it would be unfair to put a label on them. The vast majority of young people in Mid Sussex contribute positively to the society, demonstrated by the recent Young Volunteer of the Year awards.

A Member noted a one third increase in hate crime in the District, and asked whether people are being encouraged to come forward to report these crimes. The Cabinet Member replied that there has been an increase of reported hate crimes in the northern part of the District, and that hate crime training has been conducted in conjunction with West Sussex County Council.

A Member asked the Cabinet Member to provide a summary of DEFRA findings, in particular the air quality of the District.

The Cabinet Member replied that levels of Nitrous Oxide have fallen from 50 micrograms in 2012, to 34 micrograms in 2017, and the trend is likely to continue downwards and has been achieved through better car technology and improvements to traffic light timing. The use of the A2300 has been encouraged and investments will be made to widen it. Furthermore campaigns such as 'cut engine and cut pollution' and 'Travel Wise', to encourage the sharing of cars, have positively impacted. Policies DP19 and DP27 of the District Plan address air pollution.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning announced that the Council's annual target for affordable housing has been exceeded, with 168 new homes being completed compared to the target of 128. 58 of the properties are shared ownership and 110 are for rent. The properties are in a wide range of locations across the District. This is a great achievement for the Council which has provided a good range of accommodation to suit residents' needs. A further 22 units have been completed in May.

The Cabinet Member noted that the Planning department continues to exceed

targets for the determination of applications.

The Meeting was closed at 7.42 pm.

Chairman