

Minutes of a Meeting of Mid Sussex District Council held on 1 November 2017 from 7.00 pm to 8.02 pm.

Present: Councillors:

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

Jonathan Ash-Edwards
Andrew Barrett-Miles*
Edward Belsey
John Belsey
Margaret Belsey
Liz Bennett*
Michelle Binks
Anne Boutrup*
Pete Bradbury
Heidi Brunsdon*
Cherry Catharine
Richard Cherry
Rod Clarke
Ruth de Mierre
Tony Dorey
David Dorking
Sandy Ellis
Claire Fussell

Steven Hansford*
Sue Hatton
Ginny Heard*
Chris Hersey
Margaret Hersey
Colin Holden
Anne Jones MBE
Jim Knight
Jacqui Landriani
Andrew Lea*
Anthea Lea*
Judy Llewellyn-Burke
Andrew MacNaughton
Gordon Marples
Gary Marsh*
Edward Matthews

Norman Mockford
Pru Moore
Howard Mundin*
Kirsty Page
Geoff Rawlinson
Peter Reed
Robert Salisbury*
Linda Stockwell
Dick Sweatman
Mandy Thomas-Atkin
Colin Trumble
Neville Walker
Garry Wall
Anthony Watts Williams*
Norman Webster
Rex Whittaker
John Wilkinson
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

For transparency, Councillor Coote declared that he is the District Council's representative for Age UK West Sussex.

Question from Ms Hilary Sharpe-Smith

Following the shock decision by Age UK West Sussex to end its tenancy, will the Council confirm its commitment to the continued provision of services at The Cherry Tree Centre, Burgess Hill by taking over the running of the centre, supported by volunteers, and will councillors also give assurances that its funding will remain in place, rather than following Age UK West Sussex elsewhere?

Response from Cllr Norman Webster, Cabinet Member for Community

The Council has a three year funding agreement (2016-19) with Age UK West Sussex to provide services to tackle social isolation for older people (aged 50+ years living independently) in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and the surrounding parishes.

The funding agreement does not require Age UK West Sussex to deliver this Service from specific venues but they are required to offer a range of activities, services, information, lunches and transport to ensure the programme is welcoming and accessible to everyone.

Membership at the Cherry Tree has been declining and Age UK does not consider it to be in a good location so their Board of Trustees decided to pursue an alternative way of delivering activities in community venues, which has worked successfully in other areas.

We fully understand the concerns of residents and will be urging Age UK to carry out further research and an in depth consultation with local stakeholders and centre users before reaching a final conclusion about how Services should be delivered in future.

We will not accept a reduction in Services for older people and will work with Age UK to ensure they develop a sustainable plan for the future. The Council is fully committed to delivering a Service for older people in and around Burgess Hill which meets the needs of residents.

Supplementary question by Ms Hilary Sharpe-Smith

There is a presentation being held by Age UK at The Cherry Tree tomorrow (2 November). However it requires membership cards to enter and take part in the discussion. Please could you confirm if there will be a representative from the Council in attendance?

Response from Cllr Norman Webster, Cabinet Member for Community

It is important that the meeting is taking place tomorrow, to enable face to face discussion without the press involved at this stage, in order for everyone to come to a mutually beneficial agreement. Officers at Mid Sussex District Council have met with yourselves and Age UK and that dialogue will continue but it may be best for the meeting to take place without the Council present tomorrow. I welcome any feedback from yourselves and Age UK following the meeting and can then assess if my attendance is required at future meetings to represent the Council. As mentioned in my earlier response, the Council is very supportive of the principle of delivering our contracted services to the older residents of Burgess Hill and the surrounding areas.

At the conclusion of the question, the Chairman invited Ms Hilary Sharpe-Smith to move to the public gallery should she wish to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

3. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2017

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27 September 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 confirmed that details of his recent engagements are available online. He reminded Members that his Civic Service will be held on 3 December 2017 at 6pm at St Leonards Church, Turners Hill.

7. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER OF THE PERSON ELECTED AS DISTRICT COUNCILLOR TO THE WARD OF EAST GRINSTEAD IMBERHORNE ON 26 OCTOBER 2017.

The Chairman introduced the tabled report which confirmed the election of Rex Whittaker as District Councillor to the Ward of East Grinstead Imberhorne. He welcomed Councillor Whittaker to his first meeting of the Council which was acknowledged by the rest of the Members.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation. This was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Council resolved to note the election of Councillor Rex Whittaker as District Councillor for the Ward of East Grinstead Imberhorne.

8. EXTENSION OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD

The Leader of the Council recommended approval of the report, highlighting that the current partnership had been in existence since 2014 with a common aim of securing investment in the area. He noted that with a combined ambition to further the economy of the region, it was a sensible decision to welcome Crawley Borough Council to join the partnership, noting that the economy of Crawley (part of the Gatwick Diamond Economic Region) is substantially larger and will help provide greater weight to the arguments put forward to Central Government and stakeholders to invest in the region. However, the Leader also mentioned that he believed in order for the Partnership to be even more effective membership should also be widened to other authorities like Horsham District Council and East and West Sussex County Councils. The report was seconded by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth.

Following discussion concerning the fact that Crawley Borough Council is a Labour controlled authority, the Leader confirmed that all political partners within the organisation will play an active role in looking to the benefits of the area.

A Member queried the significant number of groups that Mid Sussex is now a member of, how they interact and what benefits they bring. The Leader highlighted the £30m investment in Burgess Hill as an example of the benefits of engaging with Government at the highest level in conjunction with these groups.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Council approved the membership of Crawley Borough Council to the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

9. TO RECEIVE THE LEADERS REPORT

The Leader noted a number of recent and forthcoming meetings. On 28 and 29 September the Greater Brighton Economic Board held a charrette to engage with senior Civil Servants and highlight where the Government can do more to support the local area. The Chief Executive presented on housing issues and pressures in the region, highlighting the importance of infrastructure being delivered in a timely way.

On 23 October, the Rt. Hon. Matt Hancock M.P., Minister for Digital attended a meeting at the Council regarding digital connectivity across the District. The meeting was facilitated by the Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Soames M.P. and was received favourably by the Minister.

On 20 October senior Members and Officers met with senior officials from the Education and Skills Agency with regard to the ex-Central Sussex College site on Harlands Road again facilitated by Rt. Hon Sir Nicholas Soames MP. A proposal for a future use of the building for the development of a Community 6th Form College was presented to Officials. The proposal has been developed by WSCC and the LEP. He noted that this Council has no powers or responsibility for education but has an important facilitating role on this issue which is of great concern to local people. In response to a Member's query on publicity surrounding the Council's involvement, the Leader said he would seek to ensure that the Council was included in a joint press release in partnership with the key stakeholders at the appropriate time.

In the interests of transparency, Councillor Pete Bradbury declared a personal interest as he is a trustee of Sussex Learning Trust, and a West Sussex County Councillor. He reiterated the Leader's comments that it is right for Mid Sussex to be part of discussions to find an acceptable solution. In his position as County Councillor he also intends to write to the Leader of West Sussex County Council about the matter. The Deputy Leader also declared a personal interest as he is Chairman of the Sussex Learning Trust and Chair of the Governors of Warden Park.

10 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 confirmed that the Council has submitted an expression of interest to take part in the West Sussex County Council's 2018/19 pilot of 100% business rate retention as it has the potential to release funds for infrastructure across the County.

He also noted that work is continuing to develop the new Economic Strategy. The

working group has led the work and set out the ambitions for how we support and facilitate economic growth. He confirmed that the proposed strategy and action plan will be submitted to the scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth in the new year.

He also noted that implementation is underway of the discretionary rate relief for businesses impacted by the revaluation. Discretionary funding of £650,000 over a four year period is targeted at small local companies, and is applied automatically to bills to reduce a complex application process. The discount in the current financial year will cancel out approximately 50% of increases that businesses would otherwise have seen.

The Deputy Leader also congratulated the Haywards Heath Town Team, including Councillor Ruth de Mierre on the Mid Sussex STEM Challenge that they are running providing the opportunity for secondary schools in the area to get involved with real life STEM projects.

He also noted that at the Cabinet Grants Panel meeting on 31 October, the Panel approved the release of Section 106 funds towards two medical facilities in Northlands Wood and Lindfield, demonstrating a commitment to facilitate infrastructure delivery.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Customer Services.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services thanked the Returning Officer and the elections team for the smooth running of two recent by-elections for Haywards Heath Town Council and East Grinstead Imberhorne Town and District Council. She confirmed that the Annual Voter Registration canvass is due to be completed on 17 November and currently has a 90% response rate with digital responses at 66% and paper copy returns at 34%.

She confirmed that the new Mid Sussex website preparation is scheduled to go live in January 2018 with special emphasis on improving pages that residents use most often. 70 Mid Sussex residents are currently testing and providing feedback on their experiences.

Congratulations were given to the Customer Services team who received 7,500 calls in October where the average waiting time was just 19 seconds. Congratulations were also given to the Legal department who have again received the LEXCEL quality accreditation from the Law Society.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services also reminded Members that training on Social Media will take place on 28 November 2017.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

The Cabinet member for Service Delivery was unwell and unable to attend the Council meeting.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

The Cabinet Member for Community confirmed that with regard to the Sussex Police

CCTV renewal programme, the purchase option has been agreed for Mid Sussex with Burgess Hill. He thanked all 3 Town Councils for their respective financial support of the renewal program.

He noted that the Patient Transport Services were discussed at a recent Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee at West Sussex County Council. The transition of the Patient Transport Services from Coperforma to South Central Ambulance Services (SCAS) went smoothly with any issues being resolved jointly between SCAS and the acute trusts. However, a higher than expected number of calls was problematic. Overall the transition went well and complaint levels are low at 5 or 6 verses 24,000 patient journeys per month.

He noted that due to financial and service demand challenges, CCGs are reviewing services they commission. This is being done under the banner of Clinically Effective Commissioning and is led by the STP Clinical Forum to focus on standardising funding policies to ensure NICE guidance compliance.

A list of 150 procedures were considered for review, but this was reduced to about 55 that account for £50m - £55m of spending each year. Inconsistency of treatment existed in different areas, which is problematic, especially when GPs moved between locations, however he noted that shared policies will help avoid this. GPs also need better knowledge of policies and understand the rationale behind them so all workshops will involve patients and be chaired by GPs and GP engagement events will take place in each locality.

The Cabinet Member noted that the NHS pressures highlight the importance of the Council's proactive Wellbeing Programme which supports residents and workers to lead more healthy lifestyles. He noted that there will very obviously be a reduction in future health costs where people are proactively managing their own health and he confirmed that the Wellbeing Team are developing reporting and storytelling models to ensure the longer-term value of their efforts is well understood by funding partners.

He also confirmed at the Air Quality Management group have met to discuss response from Government regarding the annual air quality report submitted earlier in the year. Subject to deterioration in future readings the group will meet again in May/June 2018 or if readings do not deteriorate the group will meet as usual in a years' time.

A Member noted the excellent work carried out by the Wellbeing team and asked if the Council could use its strong financial base to allow the wellbeing team to support the diminishing services in the District, referencing the earlier question from the public regarding Age UK. In response, the Cabinet Member acknowledged the benefit of partnership working between the Parish, District and County Councils and reiterated his earlier comments that the Council is committed to delivering its contracted responsibilities within the money available. He acknowledged another Member's concern that organisations currently seek to move away from fixed community centres without giving thought to transport needs of elderly residents and he implored the Member to raise her concerns with West Sussex Age UK and through her position as a West Sussex County Councillor.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning noted that the SHELAA call for sites 2017 ended on Monday 30 October and 150 submissions have been received of

which 40% were new sites. However, any sites coming forward after the 30 October will be included. The Scrutiny Committee for Community Housing and Planning on 14 November will be asked to set up a working group to consider the submissions.

He noted that to date there have been 100 responses to the District Plan Main Modifications Consultation, of which 96 relate to Hassocks. This consultation ends on 13 November.

14. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2

None.

The Meeting was closed at 8.02 pm.

Chairman