

**Minutes of a meeting of Council
held on Wednesday, 31st October, 2018
from 7.00 pm - 8.26 pm**

Present: B Forbes (Chairman)
C Trumble (Vice-Chair)

J Ash-Edwards	G Heard	H Mundin
E Belsey	C Hersey	K Page
J Belsey	M Hersey	P Reed
M Belsey	C Holden	R Salisbury
M Binks	A Jones	L Stockwell
P Bradbury	J Knight	D Sweatman
C Catharine	J Landriani	M Thomas-Atkin
R Cherry	Andrew Lea	N Walker
R Clarke	Anthea Lea	G Wall
P Coote	J Llewellyn-Burke	N Webster
R de Mierre	A MacNaughton	R Whittaker
D Dorking	G Marples	J Wilkinson
C Fussell	G Marsh	A Watts Williams
S Hansford	E Matthews	P Wyan
S Hatton	P Moore	

Absent: Councillors A Barrett-Miles, L Bennett, A Boutrup, H Brunsdon, T Dorey, S Ellis, N Mockford and G Rawlinson

Also Present: Councillors

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.

Question from Dr Ian Gibson

The District Plan Inspector was critical of the Council for its failure to provide adequate guidance to neighbourhood plans...on the amounts of housing development they should aim to accommodate. He also said Future plans, both neighbourhood plans and the Site Allocations Plan, must take account of the numbers of new homes expected in each settlement.

The proposed methodology for the SHELAA does not set any housing targets for individual settlements or provide any role for Neighbourhood Plans in the site selection process.

Will the Council ask the Scrutiny Committee to reconsider this approach and involve Neighbourhood Plan communities?

Response from Cllr. Andrew MacNaughton, Cabinet Member for Community, Housing & Planning

Thank you for your question Dr. Gibson, because this provides me with an opportunity to reiterate what officers have already explained to you.

The District Plan does in fact set out the housing requirement for individual settlements in Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy. I can also confirm that the Inspector, in his Report into the Examination of the District Plan, acknowledged (in Para 33) that this “is a sound and helpful approach that has been evolved in consultation with parishes and neighbourhoods”.

You are confusing the role of the District Plan with that of the SHELAA. It is the role of the District Plan to provide housing targets which it does in DP6.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that the purpose of a SHELAA is to inform local planning authorities of the land available in their area. The sites identified in the SHELAA are the palette of potential housing and employment sites which are then subject to further assessment.

There are a number of stages the Council must go through in the Site Selection process. Stage 1 is to assess the sites against the District Plan strategy based on 2 criteria: connectivity to settlements and the size of the proposed site in relation to the existing housing requirement for each settlement, as set out in DP6. At its meeting on 25 September 2018 the Scrutiny Committee considered the outcome of the Stage 1 Assessment. A report outlining Stage 2 of the process will be considered by Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 21 November 2018.

I can therefore assure you that the Council is satisfied that it has followed government policy and guidance in establishing its methodology. As you will know from your attendance at various meetings I am satisfied that the development of the criteria and the approach has involved Neighbourhood Plan communities. Furthermore the policies of Neighbourhood Plans will be considered in the Stage 2 assessment. Therefore, there is no need for the Scrutiny Committee to reconsider the approach.

Supplementary question from Dr Gibson

My question arose from a vigorous debate by Parish Councils at a recent MSALC meeting. 19 of the 24 Town and Parish Councils in Mid Sussex have made, or drafted Neighbourhood Plans. The preparation of those plans has involved many thousands of unpaid hours from residents committed to their communities and hundreds of thousands of pounds of council tax spent with consultants.

The identification of suitable non-strategic or small scale sites for development is supposed to be one of the key roles of these plans. It is disappointing that Mid Sussex have chosen to take this task away from the local communities that will be affected by the decisions.

Many Councils are now commencing costly reviews of their neighbourhood plans. In order to avoid wasted effort on these reviews, will the Council publish guidance on the role of the neighbourhood plans in the future development of Mid Sussex?

Response from Cllr. Andrew McNaughton

I will give this follow up question further consideration.

The following written response has been given.

“Thank you Dr Gibson. I am fully aware of the work carried out by Towns and Parishes over the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and also of the significant level of professional and financial support provided by the Planning and other staff of Mid Sussex District Council in order to ensure that Neighbourhood Plans have been successfully ‘Made’.

Paragraph 69 of the revised NPPF (July 2018) clearly states that “neighbourhood planning groups should ... consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium sized sites suitable for housing in their area”. Therefore, allocating small sites is clearly a role which can be performed by Neighbourhood Planning groups and I can assure you that Mid Sussex District Council has never sought to say otherwise.

Equally, Neighbourhood Planning Groups may choose not to allocate sites but instead to focus on more detailed local policies. This is entirely a decision for the Neighbourhood Planning group.

Mid Sussex District Council has consistently made clear through our regular briefings with Town and Parish Councils and through individual meetings with Parishes that officers will support whichever approach Neighbourhood Planning groups wish to take.

For the purpose of preparing the District Plan, Mid Sussex District Council defined a ‘strategic site’ as one of 500+ units. Given that Mid Sussex District Council is required to prepare a Site Allocations DPD to identify sufficient sites to meet the residual housing need figure to be adopted by 2020, the Council must now look at allocating sites of a range of sizes. This approach is made clear in District Plan Policy DP4 which states that the Sites DPD will look to allocating sites of 5 or more units. The need to prepare the Sites DPD was a modification required by the Independent Planning Inspector. This does not preclude a Neighbourhood Planning group from allocating sites however they must do so within the same time frame as the Sites DPD in order that Mid Sussex can demonstrate certainty over delivery of sufficient houses to meet identified need.

Finally, given that there is clear guidance already set out in the NPPF and NPPG on neighbourhood planning, I do not consider that there is any need to publish local guidance on the role of Neighbourhood Plans in the future of development of Mid Sussex.”

3. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 26 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

In relation to the Leader's Report at item 9, Councillor Bradbury declared an interest as a West Sussex County Councillor and part of the Sussex Learning Trust.

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

None.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman provided an update on the Chairman's charity fundraising concert, which raised funds for Sullivan's Heroes. Tickets for the concert were sold out and he thanked the Democratic Services Officers involved in the organisation of the concert. He also drew Members attention to the Chairman's Civic Service on Sunday 9 December at St Leonard's Church followed by refreshments at The Crown, Turners Hill.

7. STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY

Councillor Walker proposed the report as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning, noting that the amendments have been considered by the Committee on 4 July 2018. The report was seconded by Councillor Webster who advised that the Citizens Advice Bureau had been added to the list of consultees and that the policy had to be reviewed within three years or as appropriate following the adoption of the statement of Principles Policy in 2015.

As there were no questions, the Chairman took Members to the recommendation, which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council agreed to:

Approve the policy for Gambling at Appendix 1 for implementation on the 31st January 2019.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET - 15 OCTOBER 2018

The Deputy Leader introduced the report which proposed the acquisition of another commercial property in the south of the district to generate income. The purchase price was greater than the amount detailed in the report and following proper advice and completion of due diligence it was a good investment.

The report was seconded the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance who supported the use of Council Reserves to maintain a steady and reliable income stream over the forth coming years.

In response to a Member's question, the Deputy Leader noted that the property had a lease with good covenants and the Council could consider other options for this freehold property beyond the existing tenant of the property.

In response to a Member's question on generated income, the Deputy Leader noted he could not comment as it was commercially sensitive information but this information had been included in the Exempt part of the Cabinet report.

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

RESOLVED

Council agrees:

That £2.7m of the purchase price is financed from Capital Receipts Reserve (£1.1m) and General Reserve (£1.6m).

9. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader noted that Partnership working continued to be an important part of promoting sustainable growth in the region.

He noted that the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) will agree their strategy and vision for the next five years at the meeting in January. Arun District Council has expressed a desire to join the Board which could strengthen its position within the Coast 2 Coast Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

He noted that Gatwick Diamond has their AGM this week. They represent the northern Districts and Boroughs within the LEP and together they promote major growth opportunities across the region. He advised that at the last Board meeting he had highlighted that he was the only District and Borough representative on the Board.

He confirmed that significant progress had been made with the progression of the 6th Form College provision and the deadline for formal expressions of interest in running the site was 9 November 2019.

The Leader concluded his report with the recent announcement by Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) of their wish to increase capacity by using the reserve runway. In response to Members questions, although no further details had been shared at present, he advised that many stakeholders support growth at Gatwick as part of planned investment in the region. The Chief Executive and Leader will be meeting with GAL this week to discuss the Masterplan and they will ask how Mid Sussex will be served in the consultation, and how Mid Sussex would benefit from expansion. He confirmed that the upgrading of the M23 to a smart motorway was in progress. He also advised that the LEP was working with GAL to improve the railway stations and the flow of passengers.

In response to a Member's query regarding the effectiveness of the range of organisations serving the local community, the Leader noted that the LEP is the representative of choice to liaise with the Government. The GBEB and Gatwick Diamond are part of the partnership and the work of the LEP has developed strong links with Homes England.

He noted a Members concern regarding the impact of the planned three month road closure at Borde Hill Lane for the construction of a roundabout, and will liaise with Offices involved.

A Member thanked the Leader for his participation at a recent meeting in East Grinstead which was well attended. The Leader responded that Councillors must take every opportunity to engage with local residents.

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

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

The Deputy Leader began by advising that he will be attending a meeting of the Steering Group for the Burgess Hill Growth project to review sustainable transport and improvements to the A2300. He reported that deliverability was critical and it was important to keep the project on track for completion by 2021.

He drew Members attention to the vigorous lobbying of the Rt. Hon Sir Nicholas Soames MP to secure a temporary Post Office in the Co-op, Haywards Heath whilst the Royal Mail identifies a viable permanent location.

He welcomed the approval of the redevelopment of offices in Perrymount Road to create Haywards Park; this is part of the developer's aspiration to bring high grade offices to Haywards Heath.

He noted that he had attended the launch of East Grinstead Jobs Club along with Councillors Sweatman, Webster and Whittaker. Churches and community organisations are supporting residents to find work and secure better employment. He noted that it is important to employ residents in the region with the potential creation of hundreds of new jobs in the area.

He confirmed that funding had been secured from the Business Rates Pool to match private funding to improve shop frontages. Specific areas have been identified, with London Road, East Grinstead being the first area to be upgraded.

The Deputy Leader concluded his report with the financial implications of the Chancellor's budget; he advised that the two year reduction in Business Rates would mainly assist smaller businesses and independent retailers.

In response to a Member's question on traffic management in the north of the district, the Deputy Leader noted that a key part of sustainable transport was connectivity and the reliance on private vehicles. Homes England would have to demonstrate sustainable transport in their application for the Northern Arc.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

The Cabinet Member noted that six months into the year, the forecast revenue outturn position for 2018/19 shows the Council is performing as originally planned and financial planning for 2019/20 was underway. She noted that confirmation of the demise of the negative Revenue Support Grant has not been received, which reinforces the importance of obtaining independent reliable income streams.

She noted the additional funding announced in the Chancellor's budget and whilst these are outside the remit of the Council they do affect the residents of Mid Sussex. She advised that the announced improvements in the overall funding guidelines may provide optimism for overall funding for local government in the next spending period. However, there could still be a shortfall in local government funding which would need to be addressed in the Council's financial planning.

The Cabinet Member concluded by reminding Members that the Council aims to remain financially independent and the current robust position leaves the Council well placed to meet the challenges ahead.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Customer Services

The Cabinet Member noted that the Legal Team had again achieved the Lexcel quality standard, which has been held for ten years. Another Trainee Solicitor has now qualified and will work on property and planning matters.

She confirmed that the Land Charges Team have retained over 70% of the local search market and income targets continue to be met in a relatively quiet housing market.

She noted that with 2.5 weeks remaining on the Electoral Canvass the total return was currently 98% (a digital return of 65% and paper return of 35%).

The Cabinet Member concluded her report by advising Members that Mid Sussex has been selected by the Cabinet Office to participate in a Voter ID pilot in the May 2019 elections. A number of models are being piloted and Mid Sussex has been selected to trial a "technology enabled poll card model". The Cabinet Office has rigorously tested and approved the technology to be used and the Democratic Services team is comprehensively planning for the successful delivery of the pilot here in Mid Sussex. A paper will be presented to Council in January.

In response to questions from Members, the Cabinet Member noted that the technology for the Voter ID Pilot would link into the Electoral Register and there would be no change to how postal votes are administered. The pilot is cost neutral to the Council with all pilot expenditure to be funded by the Cabinet Office.

A robust Communications Plan is in place to ensure the public are informed of the identification required in order to vote.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member noted that the Serco employee, recently injured in an accident, was making good progress and was being fully supported by Serco.

He noted that the trial for the British Heart Foundation has concluded with 13 tonnes of recycling in the recent phase, making an overall total collected 47 tonnes.

The Cabinet Member noted that 3.34 tonnes of rubbish was picked from the A23 in a joint exercise with Highways England, the total collected was 10 tonnes lower than last year.

He confirmed a joint bid is underway with East Grinstead Town Council to achieve a 3rd Green Flag in the district.

The Cabinet Member noted that four incidents of fly tipping resulted in the removal of 21 tonnes of rubbish, including asbestos resulting in additional costs incurred to hire specialist contractors. He thanked the Councillors who reported the fly tipping and confirmed that the Council does prosecute when evidence is found to identify those responsible. He noted that it was too early to advise if fly tipping would increase because of a recent change in commercial charges at the amenity sites.

In response to a Member's question on the addition of cashless payments for the car parking machines, the Cabinet Member advised that contactless payments were introduced in answer to public requests and a levy of 4p per transaction is charged for those paying by phone.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

The Cabinet Member noted that the project to replace and upgrade CCTV was on target to be completed by the end of the year. An additional five cameras will be operational by April 2019 including one in Clair Park. In response to a Members question he noted that the temporary camera in St Johns Park will be linked to Sussex Police headquarters. He confirmed that he was receiving regular updates from the Police on the antisocial behaviour in Burgess Hill. The resolution needed careful management due to the personal circumstances of those involved.

He noted that the Community Safety Task and Finish Group are developing a number of projects which focus on youth and public spaces and these include safeguard training in schools to ensure consistency and compliance.

He confirmed that Sussex Police had completed a social media campaign about safe recreational spaces in response to reported antisocial behaviour in parks. Sussex Police hope to reach a wider audience and improve effectiveness of their social media campaigns by linking Parish Councils. In response to a Members question he noted that 20 Police School Officers are in place to provide counselling for pupils who were victims of bullying.

He advised that East Grinstead Town Council is trialling a scheme where venues and businesses are listed as safe places for people to go if they feel anxious or need support. If successful it could be rolled out across the district.

He noted that Remembrance Beacon funding has been awarded to seven towns and parishes and a six foot Tommy silhouette has been installed by the main doors to the Mid Sussex District Council offices.

The Cabinet Member noted several wellbeing events had been held, and he would be speaking at a South East Social Prescribing Conference later this month. He noted that the GP Wellbeing project was working successfully with local practices.

To conclude his report the Cabinet Member noted that he had met with representatives of the Citizens Advice Bureau who are launching a new client focused website with improved information. He noted the change of name to Citizens Advice in West Sussex - North South East. Last year they assisted over 41,000 people.

In response to a Members question on the CAB providing a better service and allocating more time to people, he noted that the contract ends in April 2019 and no new agreement had been reached with West Sussex County Council. He confirmed that the CAB had been trained on Universal Credit and they were signposting ex-armed forces personnel to a range of services. He noted that the CAB were holding additional sessions in other locations including Burgess Hill Library and no further changes would be made until funding had been finalised.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

The Cabinet Member advised that this year 17% of planning appeals had been

allowed, which had reduced from 36% in 2017.

He advised that the Council had received a challenge to the five year land supply on a revised planning application in Horsted Keynes. The process will take six months and the Council had recruited the services of a barrister.

He noted that Clarion Housing Group has started the tendering process for three sites in Mid Sussex, and he continues to lobby for more rented units in new schemes.

The Cabinet Member noted that the Guinness Partnership are working with a contractor to obtain a fixed price for Blackwell Farm Road, a consented site, and hope to progress the scheme once executive approval is received from the Board.

With regard to alternative temporary accommodation, the Cabinet Member confirmed that a project group are progressing on the purchase of 3 units and offers have been made on more properties. Following a successful recruitment, the Temporary Accommodation Housing Management Officer will start work this month.

11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2

None.

The meeting finished at 8.26 pm

Chairman