

**Minutes of a meeting of Council
held on Wednesday, 24th June, 2020
from 6.00 pm - 8.43 pm**

Present: C Trumble (Chairman)
M Belsey (Vice-Chair)

G Allen	J Dabell	Andrew Lea
J Ash-Edwards	R de Mierre	Anthea Lea
R Bates	B Dempsey	J Llewellyn-Burke
J Belsey	S Ellis	A MacNaughton
A Bennett	R Eggleston	A Peacock
L Bennett	A Eves	M Pulfer
A Boutrup	L Gibbs	R Salisbury
P Bradbury	I Gibson	S Smith
P Brown	S Hatton	A Sparasci
H Brunsdon	J Henwood	L Stockwell
R Cartwright	S Hicks	D Sweatman
P Chapman	S Hillier	N Walker
R Clarke	T Hussain	R Webb
P Coote	R Jackson	N Webster
M Cornish	J Knight	R Whittaker
R Cromie	C Laband	

Absent: Councillors E Coe-Gunnell White, G Marsh, J Mockford and C Phillips

1. ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETING EXPLANATION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and took a roll call of Members present. The Head of Regulatory Services provided a virtual meeting explanation.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was read by the Vice-Chairman.

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

The following question was received from Chris Bridge:

Burgess Hill and surrounding areas are totally underserved or in some cases abandoned in terms of public Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure. FOI requests show, after MSDC did not supply Cyprus Road's chargers with power for all of 2019, there has been a staggering 387% increase in usage over the previous reported period. Would MSDC provide a comprehensive update, including a timetable of dates, on the fabled 26 new fast chargers proposed to be installed across the district

by last year, (and the proposed Rapid charger at The Triangle), in a project that has lain dormant for more than 18 months.

Response from Cabinet Member Cllr J Belsey – Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery

As you know this Council has no duty to provide Electric Vehicle Charging Points. It chooses to do so to support our sustainability objectives. This is why this Council has worked hard to progress a comprehensive procurement exercise to deliver these that will serve this Council and its partners across the District in the future.

The planned new chargers you refer to are one part of our comprehensive commitment and action. Our planning policy strongly supports charge points in new homes. This has already had a significant impact. All new homes in the Northern Arc development in Burgess Hill will have access to Electric Vehicle Charge Points. That is 3,500 homes.

The 26 new chargers are a project that, far from lying dormant, has and continues to have considerable MSDC officer time and effort devoted to it.

We are working alongside councils across West Sussex and the legal procurement documentation will be fully drafted by the end of this month. Following this, the OJEU notice will be published in July with the new contractor programmed to be in place later this year.

May I also respectfully remind Mr Bridge, that in the current global pandemic, this Council and its officers have (and will continue to have) very significant additional duties and responsibilities.

Mr Bridge asked a supplementary question seeking clarification on whether the Cyprus Road and Hazelgrove Road chargers will be additional new chargers or replacement of the existing ones. The Cabinet Member agreed to confirm in writing to Mr Bridge.

4. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 4 MARCH 2020.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 4 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

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

With respect to item 10 of the agenda, Councillor Hatton declared an interest as a Member of Hassocks Parish Council.

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

None.

7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked the Vice Chairman and Councillor Anthea Lea for leading the previous Council meeting in his absence.

He acknowledged the impact that the Covid 19 pandemic has had on the District and led a minute silence to recognise those who have suffered loss during this time. He also paid tribute to all the first responders and many individuals who have contributed so much to the national and local effort.

8. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS STRATEGY 2020-2025.

Councillor MacNaughton moved the item. The item was seconded by Councillor Walker who confirmed that it was reviewed and unanimously supported by the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth on 22 January 2020.

Discussion was held on the length of time people require temporary accommodation, and the individuals whom the Council are legally required to house. Discussion was also held on the options available to encourage landlords to make properties available, and the turnaround times for Housing Association void properties. It was noted that during the pandemic, Clarion has provided extra assistance by making void properties available for use as temporary accommodation.

Members also discussed the assistance provided to the Armed Forces Community and refuge provision. In terms of the number of people known to have no recourse to public funds, it was noted that the Council works closely with organisations such as Citizens Advice, Turning Tides, the YMCA and refugee organisations in order to contact as many vulnerable individuals as possible. The Cabinet Member indicated that he was not aware of any individuals approaching the Council in this category.

In light of the Government's recent announcement to provide more funding to address homelessness, the Cabinet Member for Housing confirmed that the Council will be entitled to funding and Officers are working on securing this.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was approved.

RESOLVED

Council adopted the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

9. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION REVIEW AND THE CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

Councillor MacNaughton moved the item and provided updates to some figures contained in the report. Page.64 paragraph 8 should indicate a saving of £80,000 not £62,000, and £160,000 not £125,00. The report was seconded by the Deputy Leader who acknowledged the benefits of the £4.2m investment to help the homeless stay within their communities in such a difficult time.

Discussion focussed on the growing demand for temporary accommodation and the options available to the Council to address this, including purchasing properties, the mix of property types and lease options available, and support required from Homes England to provide Social Housing as soon as possible. It was also noted that a number of grants were available alongside the Government's Flexible Homeless Support Grant in order to provide intensive housing support to the most vulnerable residents in the District.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED

Council agreed to:

(i) provide additional resources of £4.2 m as a specific reserve to acquire temporary accommodation in order to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Homelessness Legislation.

(ii) initially make £1.4m available to purchase 5 properties. The additional funds reserved to be accessed in stages as funds become available.

10. MAKING OF THE HASSOCKS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

Councillor MacNaughton moved the item and this was seconded by Councillor Walker.

The Ward Members for Hassocks thanked Hassocks Parish Council for its work over many years to get to this point.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED

Council noted the outcome of the Hassocks Referendum; and agreed to formally 'make' the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for the Parish of Hassocks.

11. RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS TO STANDARDS MATTERS.

Councillor Bradbury proposed the item as Chairman of the Standards Committee. He thanked Tony Cox who was stepping down. The item was seconded by Councillor Webster who highlighted the move to three Independent Members to be in line with proposals by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was agreed.

RESOLVED

Council agreed to appoint three Independent Persons to the Standards Committee (Dr David Horne, Wendy Swinton Eagle and Paul Cummins) for a "four" year term from 24th July 2020 to 30 April 2024.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 1 JUNE 2020.

The Deputy Leader proposed the item, and took Members through the recommendations, correcting a date error in the report which should read 25 September 2019, not 2020. The report was seconded by the Leader who noted that the Council's current financial position has been significantly affected by the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED

Council approved:

(i) that grant income as set out in paragraph 12 of the Cabinet report be transferred to General Reserve;

(ii) that grant income as set out in paragraph 13 to 18 of the Cabinet report be transferred to Specific Reserves;

(iii) that requests totalling £38,000 be transferred to Specific Reserves as set out in Table 1 of the Cabinet report;

(iv) that £50,000 be transferred to the Community Development Fund Specific Reserve from General Reserve as detailed in paragraph 20 of the Cabinet report;

(v) that balance of interest totalling £334,691 as set out in paragraph 21 of the Cabinet report is transferred to the General Reserve;

(vi) that Dividend income totalling £16,962 as set out in paragraph 24 of the Cabinet report is transferred to the General Reserve;

(vii) that the 2020/21 capital programme be increased by £1,291,000 as a result of slippage of some 2019/20 capital projects as detailed in Table 2 of the Cabinet report;

(viii) that the revenue overspend in 2020/21, totalling £10,000, be met from General Reserve.

13. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader expressed condolences to all residents who have been affected by the Covid 19 pandemic and thanked the Council's staff and contractors for the way they have responded to the challenges it poses.

He noted that the pandemic has had a profound effect on the Council and officers continue to work hard to meet the unprecedented demand for support from both residents and the local economy.

He confirmed that despite the Council setting a robust and sustainable budget in March, as a result of the pandemic, a £4.3m deficit is forecast this year. A revised Corporate Plan will be presented to Council in September and decisions will be needed to reprioritise and amend existing plans. The review will include measures to build resilience in case of a second spike of infections and the increasing demand for people accessing services and extra support and benefits.

He noted that the single biggest impact to Council finances is the Government mandated closure of Leisure Centres and despite £1.5m support received from the Government so far, it is critical that further support is forthcoming. He noted that regardless of when the Government confirm that leisure centres can reopen, it will be some time before they will actually open, due to costs involved, and preparations needed to ensure they can safely and sustainably operate. When they do open, they will necessarily run at lower capacity. In answer to a Member's question on prioritising the pool reopening, he confirmed that officers are modelling options to

understand what may be possible and costs involved and noted that the Government still required pools to remain closed.

A Member posed questions to the Leader regarding the demolition of the Martlets Hall. The Leader confirmed that he had provided the Councillor with this information on two occasions already and that a report to Cabinet is likely in early July. He confirmed that decisions on Council assets are for this Council to make and reiterated that the Covid 19 response needs to take priority over all Council work. With regard to discussion on increasing footfall in Burgess Hill, he noted that the town centre regeneration is a private sector project and not a capital project for the Council and therefore the timing of the redevelopment lies with New River REIT.

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

Report of the Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader noted that the year-end performance report was discussed at Cabinet in June. It was agreed that the performance indicators will need to be reviewed to reflect the impact of the pandemic.

She noted that lease renewals continue at the Orchards Shopping Centre which is a positive indicator for the local economy, and that activity continues with the Place and Connectivity consultation which concludes on 25 June.

Discussion was held on the impact of the pandemic on funds available for the Place and Connectivity project, measurements of footfall in the town centres and the greenways in Haywards Heath.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

The Cabinet Member thanked the three Business Associations for the way their part-time administrators have reacted to the pandemic, providing a conduit between their members and the public sector. He also thanked the Council's Officers for their work with local businesses.

He noted that parking charges ceased in March to meet the higher demand for residents parking. Charges have now resumed with the caveat that parking is still free for NHS workers. Income data should be available in July and indications show that a shortfall of approximately £1m is expected.

He confirmed that measures have been put in place to ensure the highstreets can reopen safely and thanked the Town and Parish Councils in this regard. He also noted that the Economic Strategy will be reviewed in due course to take account of the effect of the pandemic and the Council is working with local economic bodies to ensure their priorities reflect the dynamics within the District.

Discussion was held on the licence offered to McDonalds to use the car park in Burgess Hill, to assist the police in addressing the impact of cars visiting the restaurant.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Customer Services

The Cabinet Member highlighted the work being carried out by Officers to meet the increased demand for services during recent months. She noted that Mid Sussex

Matters will be delivered to residents in July, the Full Fibre project is on target to commence in the summer and the Burgess Hill project is currently out to tender and includes a call for apprentices.

She agreed to look into whether virtual Committee meetings could be live-streamed on Facebook as well as YouTube.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member confirmed that all waste collection and street cleaning services are operational and thanked Serco and ID Verde for maintaining their services during such a difficult time.

He noted that parks in the District are open, with the main town parks having increased signage to keep residents safe. Increased litter picks have been put in place. The consultation on Masterplans in four parks has resumed and work will be implemented on a phased basis as S106 funding becomes available. As the Government has confirmed that playgrounds and outdoor gyms can now reopen from 4 July the Council has begun risk assessing these, whilst awaiting further Government guidance. A communications plan will be put in place to ensure residents are informed of reopening information. He also reiterated the Leader's comments that when other facilities such as indoor gyms and indoor play areas can reopen, they will be significantly changed due to the high costs involved.

Further discussion was held on the electric car charging points within the District.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Community.

The Cabinet Member thanked Members for their engagement in training sessions to successfully conduct virtual meetings.

He noted the increased support that has been provided to support the shielded residents within the District. He confirmed that requests to the Environmental Health services has increased and will continue to do so regarding licensing and food hygiene inspections as pubs and bars reopen.

He noted that the pandemic has impacted on the ability to deliver traditional wellbeing services with no face to face interventions, but three additional services have been introduced in the last quarter of 2019/20 regarding alcohol support, health checks and stopping smoking. VE Day celebrations were also impacted but virtual celebrations were met with positive engagement.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

The Cabinet Member confirmed that a Flexible Homeless Support Grant and New Burdens Homeless Reduction Grant received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will continue to fund the work mentioned in the reports presented to this Council meeting, along with any funds available from the recent Government provision to address homelessness.

He noted that the pandemic has had an impact on the number of social houses being built. To address Member's concerns, he confirmed that the Council is committed to holding Developers to account in meeting their social housing provisions in any

applications that come forward. He also confirmed that Officers continue to carry out the required site visits.

15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2

None.

The meeting finished at 8.43 pm

Chairman