

**Minutes of a meeting of Council
held on 07 December 2022
from 7.00 pm**

Present: M Belsey (Chairman)
P Coote (Vice-Chair)

K Adams	B Dempsey	Andrew Lea
G Allen	S Ellis	Anthea Lea
J Ash-Edwards	R Eggleston	G Marsh
R Bates	A Eves	C Phillips
J Belsey	B Forbes	M Pulfer
A Bennett	I Gibson	S Smith
P Brown	S Hatton	A Sparasci
R Cartwright	S Hicks	D Sweatman
P Chapman	S Hillier	C Trumble
R Clarke	T Hussain	N Walker
M Cornish	R Jackson	R Webb
R Cromie	J Knight	N Webster
R de Mierre	C Laband	R Whittaker

Absent: Councillors L Bennett, A Boutrup, P Bradbury, H Brunsdon, E Coe-Gunnell White, J Dabell, J Edwards, L Gibbs, J Henwood, J Mockford, A Peacock, R Salisbury and L Stockwell

The Council held a one-minute silence in remembrance of Edward Belsey, and another in remembrance of Pru Moore. The Leader of the Council paid tribute to both, commending their significant public service.

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 Ms de Lande Long (read by the Chairman in her absence).

At the Council meeting on November 2, Councillor Hillier referred to the work being done by the Sussex Local Nature Partnership on what will be needed for local nature recovery in this District. How quickly will this work be factored in to planning agreements with regard to the potential development areas that are outlined in the Draft District Plan? How will the Council ensure that the opportunity for preserving or creating essential wildlife corridors is not missed in relation to these sites?

The following response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Net Zero

Thank you for your question. I agree with you that local nature recovery is important, and we must take a holistic approach. There are many aspects which are key to delivering nature recovery such as agreeing management and protection as part of determining planning applications and agreeing appropriate strategies for the management of any Council owned land which forms part of the network. The emerging draft District Plan sets out a range of new and updated policies to help us achieve improvements to biodiversity. New policies include a requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain and the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure including local nature recovery networks.

The weight we can give to emerging planning policies when considering planning applications is set out in legislation. Unfortunately, in the early stages of plan making only limited weight can be given to these policies but as the plan nears adoption, this begins to improve. At this stage of our plan making, we can only encourage developers to take these new policy requirements into account. However, once the new District Plan is adopted, all planning applications will be assessed against the updated policies – this would also include any site allocated in the Site Allocations DPD applying for permission after the District Plan is adopted.

Furthermore, as you know the Council has agreed a Sustainable Economy Strategy which sets a programme over the next three years to achieve our vision to balance social well-being, environmental protection, and sustainable economic growth. This Strategy sets out Mid Sussex District Council's commitment to "improve, manage and promote biodiversity and nature recovery" and there are a range of actions identified to help deliver this which go beyond the policies in the District Plan such as the commitment to refresh the Council's management Plans for our Countryside Sites to ensure that they deliver maximum benefit in terms of biodiversity and environmental impact.

Work on obtaining and mapping habitat data across the district is currently in progress and involves obtaining information from a wide range of sources such as the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and from ecology studies. This work is being informed by best practice which is shared between the partner authorities within the Sussex Nature Partnership, of which Mid Sussex is a member. Once the data has been collated and mapped, it will inform a nature recovery network for Mid Sussex which itself will inform an emerging Local Nature Recovery strategy for Sussex, and which will include existing and potential wildlife corridors.

So, work on the Recovery Strategy will progress through the early part of 2023, with the intention to inform the next iteration of the District Plan Review (at the Regulation 19 stage).

Finally, and I am proud to say, the draft District Plan proposes Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% on all sites (in line with the requirements set out within the Environment Act) However, we will be seeking 20% on the three proposed 'significant sites' (West of Burgess Hill, Sayers Common and Crabbet Park).

I hope that this answers your question and gives you comfort that this authority is committed to, and on top of, its environmental obligations.

3. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2022.

The Chairman noted an update provided by a Member on the fact that he left the previous meeting.

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 2 November 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. 39 Members voted in favour, with 2 abstentions.

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

Councillor Hillier declared an interest as a West Sussex County Councillor in relation to items mentioned in his Cabinet Member Report.

Councillor Webster declared an interest as an employee with the NHS in relation to items mentioned in his Cabinet Member Report.

Councillor Gibson declared an interest as a West Sussex County Councillor in relation to his questions during the Leaders Report.

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

None.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chairman highlighted two Chairman's events which took place in November and December.

7. REVIEW OF MEMBER'S ALLOWANCES FOR 2023/24.

Neil Gershon, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, introduced the report, highlighting that the primary recommendation is an increase of the basic allowance to £5700, keeping it within the average compared with other Local Authorities in the area.

Councillor Ash-Edwards moved the item with the recommendations as set out below. This was seconded by Councillor Webster.

That Council:

1. Thanks the Independent Remuneration Panel for its work and recommendations;
2. Agrees that the scheme of members' allowances for the new Council term should be decided following the work of the Constitution Review Group, so that any constitutional changes can be reflected in the scheme of members' allowances;
3. Agrees that the Independent Remuneration Panel's report should be considered at the first available Council meeting after a decision has been made on the Constitution Review;

4. Agrees the principle that the overall budget for members' allowances should not increase at the current time.

Discussion was held on the mechanism for reviewing the allowances following the Constitution review.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations as set out above which were approved with 40 in favour and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED

The Council:

1. Thanked the Independent Remuneration Panel for its work and recommendations;
2. Agreed that the scheme of members' allowances for the new Council term should be decided following the work of the Constitution Review Group, so that any constitutional changes can be reflected in the scheme of members' allowances;
3. Agreed that the Independent Remuneration Panel's report should be considered at the first available Council meeting after a decision has been made on the Constitution Review;
4. Agreed the principle that the overall budget for members' allowances should not increase at the current time.

8. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023-24.

Councillor Ash-Edwards moved the item, noting that it is a formal report received in December each year to set the taxbase ahead of the budget setting process. The item was seconded by Councillor J Belsey.

There were no Members wishing to speak. The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations as set out in the report, which were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council agreed that pursuant to the Assistant Director Corporate Resources' report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2003, the amounts calculated by Mid Sussex District Council as its tax base for the whole area for the year 2023/24 shall be £64,664.1 and for each parish area for the year 2023/24 shall be:

Albourne	316.2
Ansty & Staplefield	1,416.5
Ardingly	763.0
Ashurst Wood	770.4
Balcombe	872.3
Bolney	664.4
Burgess Hill	12,623.9
Cuckfield	1,690.9
East Grinstead	11,836.9
Fulking	143.3
Hassocks	3,678.9

Haywards Heath	12,474.0
Horsted Keynes	720.0
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common	3,281.3
Lindfield	2,848.9
Lindfield Rural	1,674.6
Newtimber	44.6
Poynings	131.8
Pyecombe	141.0
Slaugham	1,781.4
Turners Hill	664.4
Twineham	159.1
West Hoathly	961.7
Worth	5,004.6

9. STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY.

Councillor Anthea Lea moved the item, noting that Councillors are required to review the policy every 3 years. This review has been endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Leisure and Parking in September 2022, and has been out to public consultation. The item was seconded by Councillor Webster.

There were no Members wishing to speak. The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation as set out in the report, which was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council approved the Statement of Principles (Gambling Act) Policy at Appendix 1 for implementation on 1st January 2023.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2022.

Councillor Ash-Edwards moved the item, noting that current inflationary picture is having a significant effect on the Council's budget. This has been helped slightly by the positive impact from improved treasury management income but may not be the case going forward. The item was seconded by Councillor J Belsey.

There were no Members wishing to speak. The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations as set out in the report which were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council approved:

- (i) that £11,510 received from DLUHC in respect of Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme grant be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 27 of the Cabinet report;
- (ii) that £82,500 received from the Home Office in respect of Dispersal of Asylum Seekers grant be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 28 of the Cabinet report;
- (iii) that £5,200 received from DLUHC in respect of new burdens grant for Temporary Pavement Licencing. be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 29 of the Cabinet report;

- (iv) that £280,465 received from UK Health Security Agency in respect of Track and Trace Self Isolation Administration grant be transferred to Specific Reserves as detailed in paragraph 30 of the Cabinet report;
- (v) that £61,542 received from DLUHC for New Burdens Council Tax Rebate scheme be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 31 of the Cabinet report;
- (vi) the variations to the Capital Programme contained in Table 4 of the Cabinet report in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3;
- (vii) to approve the use of the projected increase of £1,194,000 for Treasury Management income to finance the revenue budget, reducing the projected revenue overspend year end position to £41,000.

11. APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER.

The Chairman welcomed Rachel Jarvis, Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer, and Kevin Toogood, Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services. Kevin Toogood left the meeting at 7.39pm prior to consideration on this item.

Councillor Ash-Edwards moved the item noting that it seeks to confirm Kevin Toogood as Monitoring Officer from 16th January 2023. The item was seconded by Councillor Webster.

There were no Members wishing to speak. The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation as set out in the report, which was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council agreed the designation of Kevin Toogood as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 16th January 2023

Kevin Toogood returned to the meeting at 7.42pm

12. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT

The Council received the Leader's update. In response to a few questions on the Government's proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), he acknowledged the need to strike the right balance on any decisions made, engage with Towns and Parishes, and have an evidence-based approach on how to proceed following the Government's NPPF consultation and the Council's consultation on the District Plan Review. Regarding target numbers he reiterated that the Council will need to explore the evidence base for the targets to determine the numbers required for the district, acknowledging the importance of ensuring appropriate affordable housing numbers. He also confirmed that it is not possible to split the Policy and Site Allocation elements at a Regulation 19 review as a complete plan must be presented.

With regards to questions related to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, he confirmed that details will be provided in the Member Information Service Bulletin. Regarding the bid for the Levelling Up Fund, he noted that a decision was still anticipated prior to the end of 2022.

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

The Council received the Deputy Leader's update.

The Council received the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Net Zero's update. In response to questions from Members, the Cabinet Member acknowledged the importance of continuing to provide public information in a format accessible to those without computer access. He also confirmed that Officers are providing support to local communities who wish to have help developing local economic development initiatives. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written report in response to a question related to the Science Park and the potential to bid for a catapult centre.

The Council received the Cabinet Member for Community's update. In response to a query regarding the NHS Integrated Care Board, he confirmed that he has attended several meetings with senior members of the Board and would like to arrange for them to provide an introductory session for Members in coming months.

The Council received the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Parking's update. In response to a Member's query, the Cabinet Member confirmed that she would be happy to be the Council's representative at the Active Haywards Heath meetings. Discussion was also held around electronic car charging points, why some may not yet be operational, and the rationale for the location of on-street chargers.

The Cabinet Member for Planning had sent apologies for the meeting and therefore no report was presented under this item.

The Council received the Cabinet Member for Housing and Customer Services' update.

In response to several Members' questions regarding Clarion Housing, the Cabinet Member requested that Members provide feedback via email ahead of a meeting scheduled with the housing provider. She also agreed to share further information on the Streetlink App. In response to a query regarding the publicity of Warm Hubs, the Cabinet Member confirmed that these will be publicised where known about, and encouraged Members share details of any hubs that they become aware of. Clarification was also given on the deadline for applications for community grant funding.

14. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2

Councillor Eves and Councillor Alison Bennett withdrew their questions.

The meeting finished at 8.50 pm

Chairman