

**Minutes of a meeting of Council
held on 13 December 2023
from 7.00 pm**

Present: R Jackson (Chairman)
J Henwood (Vice-Chair)

M Avery	J Dabell	P Lucraft
A Bashar	J Edwards	G Marsh
R Bates	D Eggleton	M Miah
J Belsey	R Eggleston	D Pascoe
M Belsey	S Ellis	A Peacock
A Bennett	A Eves	E Prescott
K Berggreen	L Farren	C Phillips
P Brown	I Gibson	A Rees
G Casella	S Hatton	J Russell
L Carvalho	S Hicks	D Sweatman
P Chapman	J Hitchcock	R Whittaker
C Cherry	T Hussain	C Wood
R Clarke	C Hobbs	G Zeidler
AM Cooke	M Kennedy	
M Cornish	P Kenny	

Absent: Councillors J Knight, J Mockford and A Platts

A Minute's Silence was held for ex-Councillor James Worsley who passed away in November.

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 Mr Desmond

The Council's Sustainable Economy Strategy make reference to the Circular Economy on page 7. This is now internationally recognised as an alternative to our current "Take, Make, Waste" economy. What specific objectives, targets and action plans is MSDC developing for the implementation of circular economy principles in order to achieve its Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions and UN Sustainable Development Goals objectives outlined in Annex 1 in the Sustainable Economy Strategy?

The following response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy and Housing:

Thank you for your question and thank you for drawing my attention to your related question to this Council in 2021. Since then, the Council has adopted a Sustainable Economy Strategy which is this Councils response to the need for effective change to

address the challenges of Climate Change, achieving net zero and economic resilience. The Sustainable Economy Strategy, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the concept of a circular economy are closely interconnected, as all aim to address global challenges and promote sustainable development (environmental, social and economic).

The Strategy sets out 14 Objectives within the three themes of People, Place and Partnerships. The actions that this Council is taking to deliver these Objectives and the Measures of Success being used are set out in the Appendices to the Strategy. To a greater or lesser extent, all of the objectives represent a holistic response to the need to reduce the Council's Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

The relationship between the Strategy's objectives and the UN Sustainable Development Goals is more nuanced as illustrated by the objectives which align with UN Goal 12. These include encouraging local business to adopt sustainable practices, ensuring that the appropriate infrastructure is in place, and reducing carbon emissions. Specific examples are the introduction of EV charging points in our car parks and our leadership in the County on food waste collection. The Strategy has recently completed its first year and progress on these objectives was reported to Scrutiny Committee Place and Environment at its meeting on 18 October.

Mr Desmond asked a supplementary question: Brighton & Hove Council together with Brighton Chamber and other stakeholders, has established Brighton & Hove Loop along with support from Caroline Lucas MP to support businesses in their transition to a circular economy. Is this an initiative that could be replicated in Mid Sussex with support of Mims Davies MP, business, Chambers of Commerce, community climate action groups such as Fairer World Lindfield and other stakeholders? If so, how could this be actioned?

The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

Question from Ms de Lande Long

Climate Emergency UK's Climate Action Scorecards offer an analysis of the achievements and gaps in relation to each UK council's performance across seven areas of council responsibility <https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/>. MSDC climate action performance up to 31 March 2023 gave an overall ranking below the national average (an incredibly low national average in some sections). The 80+ questions posed in the scoring process and comparisons with similar district councils offer inspiration and ideas for future council climate action. Is MSDC making use of this helpful information to improve its performance? Time for effective change is running out at an increasingly alarming pace.

The following response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy and Housing:

Thank you for your question. The Climate Action scorecards provide a quantitative assessment of how well individual Councils are performing in terms of their climate change actions, such as reducing carbon emissions, and adopting sustainable infrastructure and practices.

The Scorecards have been in place for two years, during that time this Council has improved its score by 12%. This means our score for 2023 is above the national average for all District Councils in England. In fact, we are above the national average for District Councils in 4 of the 7 assessment categories and our score for

Biodiversity was 60% - the 4th highest score for all the District Councils. I think this demonstrates the Council's commitment to taking climate action and that we use all available resources to achieve this.

The Council's ambitions to improve its performance are clearly set out in the Sustainable Economy Strategy which was approved by the Council in 2022. The SES includes 52 Actions and progress was reported to the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee in October 2023.

Ms De Lande Long asked a supplementary question, clarifying that the first scorecards were based on climate action plans, and the 2nd on climate action implementation. She noted that the slow progress in implementing the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement was heavily influenced by vested interests and lack of political will. The current draft of the revised District Plan offers welcome changes and additions. However, by the time it is submitted to the Planning Inspector it will be almost a year since CEUK gave MSDC a score of 19% on planning and land use, MSDC's areas of greatest potential influence on carbon emissions. In what ways will MSDC work to impact developers' decision making between now and the plan's final adoption.

The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

Question from Mr Kenward

With the licence to occupy Clair Hall held by the 'Alliance for Better Care' coming to an end on the 29th of February 2024 and any decision on the building's future seemingly a long way off. What plans do Mid Sussex District Council have for a vacant Clair Hall during any interim period whilst we wait for a decision to be made?

The following response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Revenues and Benefits

Thank you for your question. As you will know, Clair Hall has continued to be used for the vaccination programme this autumn and early winter. Our Health partners will be seeking to discuss their 2024 plans later this month.

It is currently anticipated that they will seek a continued use of Clair Hall for additional health service capacity for the residents of Haywards Heath. We look forward to continuing to support them with this for the benefit of the residents of Haywards Heath and Mid Sussex.

Mr Kenward asked a supplementary question enquiring if any continued use could be a breach of the Council's own planning rules and regulations and asked that the Cabinet Member send him the legislation or Government guidelines that allow this continued occupation.

The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

Question from Ms Wilcock - Presented in her absence.

Following the submission of the interim BOP report in June 2022, what is the Council budget for the further work since carried out by consultants and for the work from the panel of Experts and any other consultants or external advisers appointed in relation to Clair Hall, anticipated this financial year.

The following response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Revenues and Benefits

Thank you for your question. A budget of £185,000 was agreed at Cabinet in December last year. We are not anticipating any new budget provision this financial year. The work to carry out the community engagement earlier this year, the decisions to call for community proposals and for them to be assessed by an independent panel, will be delivered from this budget.

3. TO BE AGREED BY GENERAL AFFIRMATION THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2023.

The minutes of the last meeting 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.

Councillor Gibson stated that, on the advice of the Monitoring Officer, he would not take part in the debate or voting on Agenda Item 7.

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 a number of recent engagements including the West Sussex Scouts AGM, the High Sheriff's Judges Service and the STEM launch involving local schools. He also noted that the Mid Sussex District Council Civic Service took place on 10 January and was attended by the Vice Lord-Lieutenant, High Sheriff and the Chief Executive of Winston's Wish.

Councillor Gibson left the meeting at 7.19pm.

7. DISTRICT PLAN 2021-2039 - REGULATION 19.

Councillor J Belsey moved the item noting that it is the culmination of a review that commenced in 2021. He acknowledged the input from the Scrutiny Committee, the Working Group, Town and Parishes and prior consultation to bring the Plan to its current position. He confirmed that it is a Plan that allows Mid Sussex to demonstrate it can meet its housing needs, avoids speculative development and provides a positive vision for the future of the District. This was seconded by Councillor Edwards as the Chairman of the Working Group.

Members discussed the impact of the Plan on the local community, noting that there are areas of the District which will see a significant allocation of housing. Discussion was held on the need to ensure adequate infrastructure is provided. It was noted that there is a focus on modal shift, offering alternatives such as bus and cycling provision in areas of housing growth. A Member raised a point of clarification around the subject of anticipated changes to the NPPF. The Leader noted that if the Plan was

agreed, the Council would be in a position to take advantage of any changes which may arise.

The majority of Members were supportive of the revised Plan and thanked Officers for the significant work that has brought it to the Regulation 19 stage. The robust language of the new policies was commended, as was the focus on First Homes, the inclusion of the UN Sustainability Goals and policies to support and protect the environment.

It was noted the District Plan reflects more than just the annual housing need requirement, it is a suite of policies that will guide and control development within the District, securing the 5 year land supply. It will provide investment and will help build safe and sustainable communities with a commitment to Net Zero in a way that is both robust, evidence based and defensible in examination.

A recorded vote was requested and supported by 5 Members. The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations as set out in the report which were agreed with 43 in favour, 1 against and no abstentions.

	For	Against	Abstain		For	Against	Abstain
Avery, Malcolm	Y			Hatton, Sue	Y		
Bashar, Abdul	Y			Henwood, Janice	Y		
Bates, Richard	Y			Hicks, Simon	Y		
Belsey, John	Y			Hitchcock, John	Y		
Belsey, Margaret	Y			Hobbs, Chris	Y		
Bennett, Alison	Y			Hussain, Tofo	Y		
Berggreen, Kristian	Y			Jackson, Rodney	Y		
Brown, Paul	Y			Kennedy, Mike	Y		
Carvalho, Lorraine	Y			Kenny, Paul	Y		
Casella, Graham	Y			Lucraft, Paul	Y		
Chapman, Peter		Y		Marsh, Gary	Y		
Cherry, Chris	Y			Miah, Mustak	Y		
Clarke, Rod	Y			Pascoe, Duncan	Y		
Cooke, Anne	Y			Peacock, Adam	Y		
Cornish, Matthew	Y			Phillips, Chris	Y		
Dabell, John	Y			Prescott, Eric	Y		

Edwards, Jenny	Y			Rees, Alison	Y		
Eggleston, Robert	Y			Russell, Jacquie	Y		
Eggleton, David	Y			Sweatman, Dick	Y		
Ellis, Sandy	Y			Whittaker, Rex	Y		
Eves, Anne	Y			Wood, Cavan	Y		
Farren, Lee	Y			Ziedler, Geoff	Y		

RESOLVED

Council:

- (i) Considered and commented on the submission draft District Plan (attached in Appendix A) and supporting documentation including the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment, the Equalities Impact Assessment and the Community Involvement Plan (attached in Appendices C to F);
- (ii) Approved the submission draft District Plan, along with all supporting documentation, for six-weeks public consultation starting on 12 January 2024;
- (iii) Agreed that, after the conclusion of the public consultation, the submission draft District Plan, along with supporting documentation and all the representations (including those to all the supporting documentation), is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination;
- (iv) Authorised the Assistant Director Planning and Sustainable Economy, in consultation with the Leader as the appropriate Cabinet Member, to make any necessary minor typographical and factual changes to the submission draft District Plan prior to public consultation; and
- (v) Authorised the Assistant Director Planning and Sustainable Economy, in consultation with the Leader as the appropriate Cabinet Member, to suggest any necessary modifications to the submission draft District Plan during the examination process to help secure its soundness (pending further public consultation as required).

Councillor Gibson rejoined the meeting at 7.54pm

8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2024/25 TO 2026/27.

Councillor Hicks moved the item which includes the additions following the discussion at Audit Committee, which strengthen and clarify the Council's commitment to seeking investments which represent its Environmental Social and Governance aspirations. This was seconded by Councillor Cooke.

A Member commented in support of the additions.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation as set out in the report which was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council agreed:

- (i) the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2024/25 and the following two years, including the additional clarity suggested at paragraph 9 below.
- (ii) the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (MRP) as contained in Sections 4 and 2.3 respectively of the report;
- (iii) the proposed amendments to the specified and non-specified investment appendices;
- (iv) the Prudential Indicators contained within this report.

- (v) Council endorsed the Treasury Management activity for the half year to 30 September 2023 as attached in Appendix 2

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2023.

Councillor Eggleston moved the item. This was seconded by Councillor Bennett.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendation as set out in the report, taking both sets of recommendations as one. This was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

Budget Management 2023/24 – Progress report April to June 2023

Council:

- (i) Noted the current forecast outturn;
- (ii) Endorsed the variations to the Capital Programme contained in Table 3 of the Cabinet report in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3 and the Capital Strategy
- (iii) Approved the formal creation of the Specific Reserves as identified in Table 2, funded from external grant funding as detailed in paragraphs 19-21 of the Cabinet report.

Budget Management 2023/24 – Progress report July to September 2023

- (i) Noted the current forecast outturn;
- (ii) Endorsed the variations to the Capital Programme contained at Table 3 in the Cabinet report in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3 and the Capital Strategy;
- (iii) Approved the use of £2,080m for LAHF Tranche 1 and £1,252m for LAHF Tranche 2, as detailed in paragraphs 23 and 24 of the Cabinet report.

10. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT.

The Council received the Leaders report. In response to a question about his support of the District Plan he acknowledged the change in evidence and the significant benefits that the revised Plan offers to the District. A question was raised on the potential to become a shareholder of New River to encourage the redevelopment of Burgess Hill. The Leader confirmed that the Council continues to influence New River but becoming a shareholder wouldn't provide any more control. He confirmed that a

confidential briefing would be provided in the New Year, focussing on the current position and challenges.

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

The Council received the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Communications' update. She agreed to provide a written response on the current number of rough sleepers in the District and the provision for them over the holiday period.

The Council received the Cabinet Member for Finance, Revenues and Benefits' update.

The Council received the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Customer Services' update. In response to questions, he noted a Members request for Glendale to visit a site in Mount Lane to widen the path, and to increase the focus on the collection of dog waste. He agreed to provide a written response to confirm Serco's position of street cleansing in relation to the B2036.

In response to a question on the recent Ash dieback project, he confirmed that a report has been requested to look at lessons learned and how the Council plans to take future projects forward. Regarding the Centre for Outdoor Sport he agreed to make contact with the East Grinstead Sports Council as well as other Sports Councils in the area.

The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written update regarding antisocial behaviour around dog waste bins. He also confirmed that a briefing has been circulated to Members regarding the new Green Spaces contract.

The Council received the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy and Housing's update. He agreed to provide a written response to a question on Clarion's engagement with residents who wish to downsize properties. He also acknowledged a Member's concern about ongoing void properties, and welcomed any feedback Members may wish to provide for him to raise at his meeting with the Housing Association.

12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2

None.

The meeting finished at 8.40 pm

Chairman