

**Minutes of a Meeting of Mid Sussex District Council
held on 20 July 2016 from 7.00 pm to 8.36 pm.**

Present: Councillors:

Peter Reed (Chairman)
Bruce Forbes (Vice-Chairman)

John Allen*	David Dorking*	Peter Martin*
Jonathan Ash-Edwards	Sandy Ellis	Edward Matthews*
Andrew Barrett-Miles	Steven Hansford	Norman Mockford
Edward Belsey	Ginny Heard	Pru Moore
John Belsey	Chris Hersey	Howard Munding
Margaret Belsey*	Margaret Hersey	Kirsty Page
Liz Bennett*	Colin Holden	Geoff Rawlinson*
Anne Boutrup	Anne Jones MBE	Robert Salisbury*
Pete Bradbury	Chris King	Linda Stockwell
Heidi Brunsdon*	Jim Knight	Dick Sweatman
Kevin Burke	Jacqui Landriani*	Mandy Thomas-Atkin
Cherry Catharine	Andrew Lea	Colin Trumble
Richard Cherry	Anthea Lea	Neville Walker
Rod Clarke	Andrew MacNaughton	Garry Wall
Phillip Coote	Bob Mainstone	Anthony Watts Williams
Ruth de Mierre	Gordon Marples	Norman Webster
Tony Dorey	Gary Marsh*	John Wilkinson
		Peter Wyan

*Absent

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

None.

17. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 29 JUNE 2016.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 29 June 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

None.

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

The Chairman announced that there was one item to be taken as urgent business.

The Leader informed the Council that Councillor Pru Moore had resigned as Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability. He offered his sincere thanks on a personal level, on behalf of Members and the whole community of Mid-Sussex for her years of hard work, tenacity and determination.

He further stated that the Portfolio was in good order and that Councillor Moore left a strong legacy.

He concluded by stating there will now be a proper and robust process to identify a replacement and in the interim, in accordance with the Constitution, he will take on the responsibilities of the portfolio.

20. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chairman confirmed that his announcements including his engagements had been published on the website. He encouraged all Members to nominate individuals for the Community Service Awards which will be presented at the Garden Party on the 25th September. All nominees' forms should be sent to Lucinda Joyce. He also reminded Members of the Planning tour on 22nd September 2016.

21. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2016 – 2021.

The chairman invited Councillor Mandy Thomas-Atkin to introduce the report as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community. She confirmed that the Homelessness Strategy 2016-2021 had been discussed at length by the committee.

The key focus of the strategy was to prevent homelessness wherever possible, by tackling homelessness amongst specific vulnerable groups, engaging with landlords to maximise access to private rented sector accommodation and through minimising the use of temporary accommodation where possible.

It was important that the Council adopts this strategy and takes proactive action. Officers are well versed in the challenges in reducing homelessness and the difficulties of the housing sector. The Council will keep working to deliver affordable housing which is very challenging in this area.

The debate at the scrutiny committee was robust and thanks should be given to Julian Till and his team. She then moved as recommended and this was seconded by Councillor Norman Webster.

A Member stated that the report was comprehensive; however, she sought clarification as to what the recovery rate was for the Deposit Guarantee Scheme.

The portfolio holder for Health and Communities stated that this was a specific budget and it was classed as a paper bond to recipients. Rent in advance is paid direct to the landlord but is a loan to the tenant. The scheme recovery rate is 97% over the life of the scheme (since 1991) and recovery over the last 5 year period is at 71%.

Deposit Guarantees are a paper bond and there is only a cost when a landlord claims against that bond. Any outstanding debt is taken into account when assessing the priority given to an applicant on our housing register and the cost to the Council is minimal.

Another Member enquired whether families with children were treated as a priority.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Communities confirmed that priority was given to those with children or who were pregnant and those that are vulnerable. The

Council is also able to allocate if all else fails.

A further Member asked whether Affinity Sutton respected and adhered to the Armed Forces Covenant. The portfolio Holder for Health and Community confirmed that this was the case.

A further Member noted Appendix 1 and commended Officers for the report. Temporary and rented affordable housing is limited and the most common reason for homelessness was the loss of private rented properties. Of the four objectives in the strategy there is reliance in the private sector for two of them. The Member was pleased to hear rented accommodation was being looked at; however, it was interesting to note it was not part of this strategy.

The portfolio holder for Health and Community stated that he would pass comments onto the team. With regard to the private rented sector, the Local Housing Allowance is frozen until March 2020, and this Council is lobbying Central Government and is working innovatively with neighbouring councils as well as investing itself in affordable housing.

A Member thanked the portfolio holder for his responses and stated that she hoped the Council could start to build homes again. She noted that the price of private rent is a cause of homelessness equating to 45% of homelessness. She urged that the Council use their contacts with Central Government to lobby them to allow the Council to build houses directly once again. Finally she asked if we were aware of how many families go to school locally but don't live within the Mid Sussex area.

The portfolio holder stated that he would be happy for this information to be sought and published in the Member Information Service at a later date. He further stated that the report highlights the risks and opportunities. This Council is a proactive and responsive Council and as such he commended the report to Council.

This was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Council adopt the Homelessness Strategy 2016-21.

22. PROPOSED DELEGATED POWERS FOR THE MICROCHIPPING OF DOGS (England) REGULATIONS 2015

The Solicitor to the Council, Tom Clark informed Members that this item was a legal requirement. As such the Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to:

- a) Adopt the new power placed on local authorities under The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015, made under section 12 of The Animal Welfare Act 2006
- b) Authorise the appropriate Head of Service and other appropriate officers who are determined by the Head of Service, to exercise all of the Council's powers under these Regulations.

23. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 11 JULY 2016.

These were agreed.

24. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT.

The Leader of the Council started by explaining the strategic areas of work the Council was involved in. He emphasised that they had the potential to benefit Mid Sussex and its communities. The Greater Brighton Economic Board supported the Council's Local Growth Fund bids to the C2C Local Enterprise Partnership which could see £33 million investment in Burgess Hill. Putting bids together was demanding and he hoped the Government would support the Council's bids, though the outcome is unlikely before the Autumn Statement.

The Three Southern Counties (3SC) devolution work has been reenergised. Central to the bid is the single concept of investment into the areas infrastructure in order to protect prosperity. The bid envisages local and central Government working together to address the infrastructure deficit. All the Leaders in the 3SC area were to write to the Secretary of State in support of the bid.

The Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership is looking at planning and housing delivery and it is important that the Council influences this workstream. The Leader stated that he had been invited to Chair the group.

The Leader explained that he would be attending a West Sussex Partnership meeting for which the Council had set aside a budget of £50,000 to help the most vulnerable people in the community. The partnership has a direct impact on people in the community and therefore is a very important partnership.

A Member asked what plans were in place to influence public opinion to address "nimbyism".

The Leader responded by stating that much work had already taken place on this issue, officers organised trips around the District for Members to see what works well. The Americas development was award winning for example. The Council could however do better with further explaining and advertising. Public opinion had moved away from "do we need housing" towards "what type of housing do we need" and this had been a positive achievement.

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Property & Economic Development, the Leader reminded Members of the forthcoming Open for Business event which would have a digital theme.

Finally the Leader of the Council provided a brief update for the Leisure and Sustainability Portfolio. He reported that Mid Sussex Playdays were this year being themed around Carnival to coincide with the Rio Olympics.

He also mentioned that the County Council was changing the opening hours at the Household Waste Recycling Centres within the District but that the impact would be minimal. He looked forward to the response of County Councillors to these changes.

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

Report of Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member stated that Local Government Finance was undergoing significant restructuring. Business Rate retention was currently being consulted upon by Central Government. It is clear that Business Rate Retention would not result in additional income and Central Government believe there is £12 billion of excess money compared to Revenue Grant. As such Central Government is seeking to transfer £12 billion of separate grants and burdens onto Local Government nationally. It would however mean that councils would benefit from growth in the business rate base, reminding us of the link between economic growth and Council finances in the future.

He also reported that the commercial property fund the Council has invested in is performing well and has not seen any turbulence associated with Brexit to date.

Investment in digital technologies to support the services provided by the Customer Contact Centre was outlined. The Investment has resulted in a demonstrable improvement to customer service.

Finally, Councillor Ash Edwards reported that the process for preparing the Service Plans and Budgets for 2017/18 would start in earnest in September. He explained that this year the work would include Member input into refreshing the Council's organisational priorities.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Planning

The Cabinet Member stated that the parish- briefing on the District Plan had been well attended with predominantly positive feedback. The Annual Planning Tour was scheduled for 22nd September and he hoped Members would support it. He also reported that the First Quarter Key Performance Indicators had all been exceeded and he thanked the Planning Committees for their work.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Community

The Cabinet Member in response to questions raised by other Members confirmed that he had not received any reports of an increase in hate crime since the Referendum. Mid Sussex was the safest place in the whole of West Sussex and second safest in the whole of Sussex.

Councillor Webster reported that Community tension is a standard item at Joint Action Group meetings. He said that it was important for hate crime to be reported and this could be done using the 101 service or if an emergency by dialling 999.

The Portfolio Holder reported that all three towns in Mid Sussex were to become Dementia Friendly with Haywards Heath hosting a Day to Remember on the 2nd July. East Grinstead was in the process of being set up and this would allow for a possible Dementia Friendly Alliance to be created.

The Council's post responsible for safeguarding had been filled recently.

Finally Councillor Webster thanked Members for their attendance of the recent Licensing Training.

A Member stated that she would ask that the Council to encourage East Grinstead to become a Dementia Friendly Town. The Cabinet Member confirmed that this would be the case.

A further Member highlighted that he was aware that there were two further foodbanks being set up within the District and he suggested that it might be good if a Member were to be appointed to the Management Committee of one of these.

The Cabinet Member welcomed the suggestion and said this was something the Council could investigate.

14. TO NOTE THE PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE: (a) SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LEADER AND SERVICE DELIVERY, HELD ON 15 JUNE 2016.

The minutes were noted.

15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCUEDRE RULE 10.2.

None.

The Meeting was closed at 20:06 pm

Chairman