

Minutes of a Meeting of Mid Sussex District Council held on 29 March 2017 from 7.00 pm to 8.17 pm.

Present: Councillors:

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

Jonathan Ash-Edwards
Andrew Barrett-Miles
Edward Belsey
John Belsey
Margaret Belsey
Liz Bennett*
Anne Boutrup
Pete Bradbury
Heidi Brunson*
Kevin Burke*
Cherry Catharine
Richard Cherry
Rod Clarke
Phillip Coote
Ruth de Mierre
Tony Dorey
David Dorking*

Sandy Ellis
Steven Hansford
Ginny Heard
Chris Hersey
Margaret Hersey
Colin Holden
Anne Jones MBE
Jim Knight
Jacqui Landriani
Andrew Lea
Anthea Lea
Andrew MacNaughton
Bob Mainstone*
Gordon Marples
Gary Marsh
Peter Martin*

Edward Matthews
Norman Mockford
Pru Moore
Howard Muddin
Kirsty Page
Geoff Rawlinson*
Robert Salisbury
Linda Stockwell
Dick Sweatman*
Mandy Thomas-Atkin
Colin Trumble*
Neville Walker
Garry Wall
Anthony Watts Williams*
Norman Webster
John Wilkinson
Peter Wyan

*Absent

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

None.

3. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 1 MARCH 2017

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 1 March 2017 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

None.

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

None.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed Members that a full list of his recent engagements has been published on the Council website. He highlighted his recent attendance at the Young Enterprise awards held in Burgess Hill.

He reminded Members that the Chairman's Choral Evensong will take place this Sunday 2 April at St Swithun's Church, East Grinstead.

7. AMENDMENT TO THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY TO INCORPORATE A FIXED PENALTY POINT SCHEME

Tom Clark, Solicitor to the Council, introduced the report. He clarified to Members that paragraph 14 of the report outlines that penalty points can be increased if an appeal is unsuccessful to discourage every driver from appealing.

Councillor Walker proposed that Council formally introduce the Scheme. Councillor Webster seconded the motion.

After debate by Members, it was confirmed that drivers in neighbouring districts will be reported to their relevant licensing authority by MSDC and that the Licensing Sub-Committee A will look at each individual case on its own. Any major infringement can also be addressed with reference to national legislation.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to approve the introduction of Penalty Points Scheme and incorporate the scheme into the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy at Appendix 1 with effect from the 1st May 2017.

8. REVIEW OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME

Councillor Walker proposed Council approve the report. Councillor MacNaughton seconded the motion.

A Member noted that the provisions to help Armed Forces Community personnel are a positive development.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to approve the revised Housing Allocation Scheme at Appendix 1 to take effect from April 2017.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2017/2018 to 2019/20

Councillor Belsey proposed Council agree the recommendations in the report. He advised Members that Capital Finance Receipts have been affected by the purchase of the Orchards and will be repaid over 2-3 years.

Councillor Ash-Edwards seconded the motion and praised the work of the Audit Committee, commenting that the Council has now moved to being a borrower and a lender.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to agree:

- (i) the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2017/18 and the following two years;
- (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 Prudential Indicators contained within the report.

10. MSDC PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017/18

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Service delivery proposed Council formally agree the Pay Policy Statement. She advised that this is a statutory requirement and added that it now reflects the introduction of apprenticeships and the changes in management team.

The Leader of the Council seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to agree the Pay Policy at Appendix A, to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act.

11. CONSTITUTIONAL REPORT TO COUNCIL ON 29th MARCH 2017

Tom Clark, Solicitor to the Council, introduced the report. He advised Members that recommendation 3.a will come into effect from the May 2017 Annual Council.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery proposed Council formally adopt the recommendations in the report.

A Member raised concern that paragraphs 2.4 and 4.6 were not included in the main recommendations. He stated this proposal is unrealistic and wanted to know the definition of a large scale commercial application.

The Member also queried why the report does not mention that proposals 2.4 and 4.6 had been discussed and agreed by the Constitutional Working Group at their recent meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery advised that large scale commercial applications do not include applications such as the Orchards, which would still go to a Planning Committee. Furthermore, this was debated at a subsequent Constitutional Working Group meeting, not at the meeting to which the report related.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery concluded that the reason for this change is to streamline the Council's planning process, and reassured Members that any applications which are contentious will still go to a Planning Committee.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged there is confusion over the communication of the recommendations in the report, and proposed that recommendations 2.4 and 4.6 be withdrawn from debate and brought back at a later date.

Councillor Forbes seconded the motion, which was agreed unanimously by Members.

RESOLVED

Council formally adopt recommendations a, b and c outlined in the report with the exclusion of paragraphs 2.4 and 4.6.

12. THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Councillor Bradbury proposed Council note the report. He thanked the previous Independent persons Gerard Irwin and Sir Roger Sands for their work and welcomed Dr David Horne and Anthony Cox to the Committee.

Councillor Marples seconded the motion and praised the work of the Committee and the role of Parish colleagues.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to note the contents of the report.

13. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader informed Members that he has been asked to re-join as the Chair of the Coast2Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for a one year tenure starting in May. He noted this reflects well on MSDC and the Gatwick Diamond as the LEP is instrumental in securing regional growth funds in Burgess Hill.

He noted that the District Plan remains in examination but he would like to comment on it in the wider context. Significant work has been undertaken since the shocking and incredulous housing number passed down by the Planning Inspector.

He thanked the Council officers, MPs and Members who are focused and determined to argue against this increase. He stated that the political strength of the Council has shone through and the Council will hold its nerve against the increase.

He concluded that the Council has gone to great lengths to communicate to Town and Parish Councils through holding briefings, ensuring challenges are faced collectively.

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

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Growth informed Members he has been consulting on changes to charges announced in the Budget Review, which include provisions for discretionary sums which can be deployed locally.

He was pleased to announce that the redevelopment of the Haywards Heath railway station quarter will be completed when the new Waitrose store opens tomorrow, which will be a catalyst for further investment. He reminded Members that large schemes are long and complex and the prize is always worth the wait.

He highlighted the government's recent Green Paper on the industrial strategy. There has been a co-ordinated response to ensure the south-east would not be overlooked to maintain sustainable growth.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Service Delivery reported that the West Sussex County Council Elections will be held on 4 May, combined with two District Council by-elections and one Haywards Heath Town Council by-election. She informed Members that the latest edition of Mid Sussex Matters has been delivered to 72,000 households and a bumper number of entries to the competition have been received – proving it is well-read.

The recipient for the Council's Make A Difference customer service award was Nigel Cannon and his team for their ability to change Council Chamber setups at short notice during the recent District Plan public inquiry.

She noted that the redesign of the CenSus website has received a positive response. The pressure on the contact centre has reduced, which in turn has led to key performance indicators being met. She advised Members that Horsham District Council will formally leave the CenSus partnership on 1 October 2018.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery announced that the phase 1 clearing of Clair Park is completed with the clearing of brambles and painting of benches.

The upcoming Mid Sussex Marathon has seen a 16% increase in entries on the previous year.

He informed Council that David Harper, Business Unit leader for Waste and Outdoor Services, is retiring after 36 ½ years with the Council, and thanked him for his work.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

The Cabinet Member for Community highlighted the recent intervention work with the Mid Sussex Older People's Council (MSOPC) in which people who are living in the coldest homes and who are most vulnerable, are targeted with initiatives such as the installation of secondary glazing and insulation/draft proofing.

Furthermore, a grant from British Gas has been awarded to help train frontline workers who visit homes. He highlighted that this multi-agency approach uncovers other issues that may go unnoticed, such as hoarding and mental health problems.

He also highlighted the roll-out of defibrillators in the district and the dramatic increase they have in the survival rate of casualties.

In response to a question regarding training in the use of defibrillators, the Cabinet Member explained that training issues have been raised but defibrillators are easy to use and it is impossible to injure a patient, and it is better to work on building the public's confidence in using the devices.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning announced that Julian Till, the Council's Housing Needs Manager is retiring after 29 years' service and thanked him for his hard work promoting the needs of the homeless in the District. He welcomed the new Divisional Leader for Planning and Economy, Sally Blomfield to the Council.

He highlighted that 167 affordable homes will have been completed by the end of this month, which is above the Council's target of 128.

The Cabinet Member referred to his recent attendance at the Affinity Sutton regional scrutiny meeting at which a pilot was reviewed which provides tenants with payment incentives for returning properties in a better condition.

He informed Members that the Pondtail Woods site has been sold with an enforcement notice pursued by the Forestry Commission which gives the new owner 6 months to clear and replant the site. He stated this is a good outcome for residents and the Council will continue to monitor the condition of the site.

The Meeting was closed at 8.17 pm.

Chairman