

Minutes of a Meeting of Mid Sussex District Council held on 20 June 2018 from 7.00 pm to 7.59 pm.

Present:

Councillors:

Bruce Forbes (Chairman)

Colin Trumble (Vice-Chairman)

Jonathan Ash-Edwards
Andrew Barrett-Miles*
Edward Belsey*
John Belsey
Margaret Belsey
Liz Bennett
Michelle Binks
Anne Boutrup*
Pete Bradbury
Heidi Brunsdon*
Cherry Catharine
Richard Cherry*
Rod Clarke
Phillip Coote
Ruth de Mierre
Tony Dorey*
David Dorking*
Sandy Ellis
Claire Fussell

Steven Hansford
Sue Hatton
Ginny Heard*
Chris Hersey
Margaret Hersey
Colin Holden
Anne Jones MBE*
Jim Knight
Jacqui Landriani
Andrew Lea
Anthea Lea
Judy Llewellyn-Burke
Andrew MacNaughton
Gordon Marples
Gary Marsh*
Edward Matthews
Norman Mockford
Pru Moore*
Howard Munding

Kirsty Page*
Geoff Rawlinson
Peter Reed
Robert Salisbury
Linda Stockwell
Dick Sweatman*
Mandy Thomas-Atkin
Neville Walker
Garry Wall
Anthony Watts Williams
Norman Webster
Rex Whittaker*
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 25 APRIL AND 9 MAY 2018

The minutes of the meetings of Council held on 25 April and 9 May 2018 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 Andrew Lea declared a personal interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council when posing a question to the Leader under item 9. Councillor Ash-Edwards declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Sussex Learning Trust and a National Leader of School Governance in relation to the same discussion under item 9.

Councillor Pete Bradbury declared a personal interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council when posing a question to the Deputy Leader under item 10.

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

None.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reminded Members of a fundraising Antiques talk being held on Saturday 23 June in Turners Hill in support of his chosen charity, and also encouraged Members to submit their nominations for the Chairman's Community Service Awards by 30 June. He drew Members attention to the recent successful meeting of the Schools Council which was hosted by Mid Sussex District Council and involved a number of Primary Schools within Haywards Heath and Lindfield.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET – 8 MAY 2018

Deputy Leader, Councillor Ash-Edwards introduced the report noting that the Outturn report presented to Cabinet was an annual report indicating a positive financial position to end the year. He specifically noted the recommendation to transfer £13m to three specific reserves. To utilise these funds, approval will be sought through the proper channels on a case by case basis, supported by the relevant reports and business cases. The report was seconded by Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, Councillor Judy Llewellyn-Burke.

As there were no questions, the Chairman took Members to the recommendations, clarifying that the report should ask the Council (not Cabinet) to agree the items listed. The recommendations were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Council agrees:

- (i) that grant income as set out in paragraph 15 to 17 of the Cabinet report be transferred to Specific Reserve;
- (ii) that grant income as set out in paragraph 18-19 of the Cabinet report be transferred to General Reserve;
- (iii) that balance of interest totalling £344,000 as set out in paragraph 23 of the Cabinet report is transferred to the General Reserve;
- (iv) that Dividend income totalling £29,590 as set out in paragraph 26 of the Cabinet report is transferred to the General Reserve
- (v) that the 2018/19 capital programme be increased by £2,045,000 as a result of slippage of some 2017/18 capital projects as detailed in Table 3 of the Cabinet report.

- (vi) that the revenue underspending in 2017/18 be transferred to Reserves as follows:
 - a) £50,000 be transferred to Reserves as set out in Table 1 of the Cabinet report;
 - b) £300,000 be transferred to Specific Reserves as set out in Table 2 of the Cabinet report;
 - c) £6,000 balance to be transferred to General Reserve
- (vii) that £13m be transferred from General Reserve to Specific Reserve as set out in para 27 -35 of the Cabinet report
- (viii) That £15,229 be transferred to General Reserve as detailed in Appendix C General Reserve Table note 5 of the Cabinet report.

8. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2018/19

The Leader of the Council introduced the tabled report which sets out the Members nominated to represent the Council on Outside Bodies. He urged Members to share their work in these areas, either by email to colleagues, or a report to feature in the Member Information Service bulletins. The recommendation was seconded by Councillor MacNaughton.

The Leader drew Members attention to the representative of the South Downs National Park Authority, noting that the Authority had grown significantly since its inception. He thanked Councillor Gary Marsh for his valued input which has played a part in moving the Park forward and confirmed that Councillor Watts-Williams will take up the position as representative from July, aligning with the Park's wish to have representatives from Wards within the Park boundary. Councillor Watts Williams reiterated his thanks to Councillor Marsh for his significant contribution over past years.

In response to a Member's query, the Leader confirmed that former Councillor Edward King would remain as representative of the James Bradford Alms Houses for the coming year.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendation which was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Council approved the nominations to outside bodies listed in paragraph 4 of the report.

9. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader drew Members attention to the formal launch of the Economic Development Strategy which is taking place on Thursday 21 June with the Rt. Hon. Sir Nicholas Soames MP and local businesses, in order to engage with key stakeholders on the ambitions the Council has for the District.

He confirmed that from July he begins the Chairmanship of the Greater Brighton Economic Board and will continue to promote Mid Sussex as part of the greater

economic region. He had recently also chaired the Coast to Capital Joint Committee meeting where after much debate, the Strategic Economic Plan was agreed. It will now go to the Board, and be presented to Government before the summer recess.

A Member asked for confirmation that the Council was committed to providing post-16 education at the site of the former 6th form collage in Haywards Heath. In response, the Leader noted that despite the Council having no role in delivering education, a significant amount of work by this Council had gone into promoting others to bring forward solutions. He thanked the Officer team, led by the Chief Executive, for the work carried out in engaging with the Government on this issue and noted that a business case has now been submitted to the Rt. Hon Anne Milton MP. The Council will continue to be part of the work to safeguard post-16 education in the District.

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

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

The Deputy Leader welcomed the new Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, and thanked the Head of Resources and finance team for their support over the past 9 years as portfolio holder for finance. He also thanked Members for their contributions to the financial strategy over these years and asked that they continue their support to the new Cabinet Member.

He referenced his recent chairing of the Burgess Hill Member Steering Group which focuses on the Burgess Hill Growth Area and sustainable transport package secured with LEP funding. He highlighted the importance of infrastructure work being completed on time to support the Burgess Hill growth and noted the A2300 corridor improvements which are underway with a business case being submitted by WSCC to the Department of Transport, and construction thereafter starting shortly. In response to a Members query, he confirmed that all public transport providers will be kept informed of works taking place, and noted that the Council strives to minimise disruption through the planning stages, with construction management plans.

He confirmed that the site for the new Lidl store is due to be handed over to Lidl next week for construction to begin. Completion is aimed for early 2019. The Queens Walk development in East Grinstead is also making progress with a 2019 completion expected.

He reiterated the Leader's comments regarding the launch of the new Economic Development Strategy which will convey the scale of ambition the Council has and the opportunities it aims to provide for residents. He also noted that regarding the Sustainability Strategy, there is good progress with the plastic reduction plan which aims to significantly reduce the use of single use plastics within the Council.

With reference to recent grants awarded by the Council, he confirmed over £330,000 had been awarded to a range of projects at a meeting yesterday. This includes Anscombe Woods, the relocation of users at the Martlets Hall, Micro Business Grants and capital and revenue projects across the District.

He confirmed that the Cabinet recently approved to dispose of the former Council depot in Bolnore Road, and has secured a 50% affordable housing. Work is also beginning on the Mount Noddy Pavilion as a result of £250,000 Council investment. An extension and remodelling will take place, with an expected completion in Spring

2019.

A Member expressed disappointment regarding the sale by West Sussex County Council of the Court Meadow Site in Cuckfield for housing rather than employment. The Deputy Leader recognised that authorities have to consider best value and make their own decisions. The call for sites work being carried out will include sites for both uses.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

The Cabinet Member congratulated the Deputy Leader for his steadfast work over the past 9 years, resulting in the robust financial position that the Council now enjoys. She thanked the Cabinet Members, Members and Officers for their support as she takes on her new role and looks forward to continuing the Deputy Leader's good work to make the Council financially independent and ensure that services perform well for the people of Mid Sussex.

She drew Member's attention to the recent agreement to alter performance indicators relating to benefits processing. Performance will now focus on accuracy rather than speed of processing benefit applications to ensure that they are right-first-time for residents. In response to a Member's question, she confirmed that there is every confidence that the Council will not experience the issues seen in other local authorities with the roll out of Universal Credit. The Benefits team have a new and highly qualified Business Unit Leader to ensure it is rolled out successfully to residents.

She noted that the Performance Outturn for 2017/18 had been discussed at the recent Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Resources and Economic Growth. The Outturn report not only continues to be good, but is an improvement on the previous year and will be presented to Cabinet on 9 July. She also commented that the Auditors were in the building last week. Members are encouraged to read the Unaudited Accounts which are available to view on the Council's website.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Customer Services

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the new Mid Sussex District Council website has been live for 6 weeks and positive trends have been seen with more accurate searches and a slight drop in the number of calls to the Contact Centre. The accessibility has also been assessed and is significantly above the Government benchmark. The next edition of Mid Sussex Matters will land with residents in July and will have a redesign courtesy of Sublime, a new local company producing the edition.

The Cabinet Member urged Members to attend the next Member Training session which will focus on Universal Credit. She also encouraged Members to utilise the modules available through the Learning Pool and confirmed that a new essential course on GDPR has been made available today.

She also confirmed that the Annual Canvas in Electoral Services will commence in July and hoped that the return rate proves to be as successful as last year.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member was not present at the meeting.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

The Cabinet Member noted that there is a welcome decrease in crime figures for May 2018 when compared to May 2017. This equates to a decrease of 38 reported crimes. He reiterated that Sussex Police work to a Threat, Harm and Risk deployment strategy so it is vital that accurate crime statistics direct them to focus resources appropriately. The Police and Crime Commissioner has promoted the reporting of Child Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Abuse so whilst numbers are up, this may be due to more accurate reporting. He noted that whilst we do not have direct control over policing, the Chief Executive, Business Unit Leader and the Cabinet Member have met with the new Divisional Commander for West Sussex and the new local Mid Sussex Commander on separate occasions and they are well aware of the needs of Mid Sussex, including the rapid growth of Burgess Hill in future years.

Regarding Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's), he noted that the budget has been substantially increased to an excess on £1.2m as part of the programme to keep vulnerable people out of hospital and facilitate early discharge from hospital. He confirmed that since 1 April 2018, the Council has approved 50 DFG's, completed 12, and paid out nearly £70,000. He confirmed that the DFG funding was a direct budget from West Sussex County Council from Central Government Funding.

He hoped that the public health and social care funding will be addressed by the Government in the Green Paper to be published in the Autumn and then in the budget in November.

Regarding Environmental Health, he confirmed that 85% of food business have achieved a top rating of 5. Two business have scored 0 and officers are following up regularly and will take enforcement action if no improvement is shown.

He also echoed the Chairman and Deputy Leader's comments regarding the encouraging morning spent with the members of the Schools Councils from Haywards Heath and Lindfield, where they discussed democracy, debating and designing a community building.

In response to a Member's question on the progress of the CCTV installation and in particular St John's Park, he has had assurance from Sussex Police that the project to bring a large area of local authorities into a single system will be complete by April 2019. The Town Council has requested an extra camera at St John's Park and this will be provided by Sussex Police. The District Council has taken on 50% of the costs to ensure this is carried out as soon as possible.

A Member congratulated the Cabinet Member for his reports which demonstrate the direct impact that the work of the Council has on resident's lives.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

The Cabinet Member highlighted the low levels of appeals allowed, following the adoption of the District Plan. So far this year, 10 appeals have been decided of which 9 were dismissed.

He confirmed that there were very few responses to the consultation for the Infrastructure and Contributions, Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Documents. Officers will be incorporating the relevant comments.

He noted that on Wednesday 27th June the Scrutiny Committee for Community Housing and Planning will be considering a report on Temporary Accommodation, and all Members are welcome to attend.

13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2

None.

The Meeting was closed at 7.59 pm.

Chairman