

**Minutes of a meeting of Council
held on Wednesday, 30th September, 2020
from 6.00 pm - 8.54 pm**

Present: C Trumble (Chairman)
M Belsey (Vice-Chair)

G Allen	J Dabell	Andrew Lea
J Ash-Edwards	R de Mierre	Anthea Lea
R Bates	B Dempsey	J Llewellyn-Burke
J Belsey	S Ellis	A MacNaughton
A Bennett	R Eggleston	G Marsh
L Bennett	A Eves	A Peacock
A Boutrup	L Gibbs	C Phillips
P Bradbury	I Gibson	M Pulfer
P Brown	S Hatton	R Salisbury
H Brunsdon	J Henwood	S Smith
R Cartwright	S Hicks	A Sparasci
P Chapman	S Hillier	L Stockwell
R Clarke	T Hussain	D Sweatman
E Coe-	R Jackson	R Webb
Gunnell White	J Knight	N Webster
M Cornish	C Laband	R Whittaker
R Cromie		

Absent: Councillors P Coote, J Mockford and N Walker

1. ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETING EXPLANATION.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. A roll call of Members present was taken. The Head of Regulatory Services provided a virtual meeting explanation.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was read by the Vice-Chairman.

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

The following questions were received:

Question from Lou Kiwanuka:

What are Mid Sussex council doing to support the economic devastation caused to events businesses and freelancers within the district.

Our sector has not been able to work since March 2020 and has been left out of government schemes which have targeted industries that have been forced to shut.

Response from Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Cllr. Stephen Hillier

Thank you for your question.

We do recognise that live events play a crucial role in local life in Mid-Sussex and help to make Mid-Sussex the special, unique place it is, but it is true that sadly multiple aspects of our vibrant events and exhibition industries have been significantly impacted by the coronavirus outbreak.

You will be aware that in response to the Covid-19 pandemic the Government created a number of grants, and to-date this Council has distributed nearly £26.4m to support 2,062 businesses from the Small Business and Hospitality Grants Funds and the entire £1.463million Discretionary Fund has been awarded to 287 local businesses through the Discretionary Grant.

Unfortunately, many small events businesses and freelancers have not been able to access these grants, mostly because they are targeted at business rates payers which often precludes smaller home-based companies such as are often found in the events industry, and some applicants simply missed deadlines. However, the Council has been working to provide support to those who were unable to receive Government aid, not least by commissioning 13 local small businesses to run events like our Playdays online.

Nationally the government has provided £330bn worth of government backed and guaranteed loans as well as a Bounce Back loan scheme to help small businesses access loans of up to £50,000, and there is the Self-employment Income Support Scheme.

In relation to the national context I did write to our MP on your behalf and have already had a response which I shall shortly forward to you. In it Mims Davies refers to the Secretary of State-led Cultural Renewal Taskforce and one of its offshoots, the Entertainment and Events Working Group.

In addition, the community grants programme has supported the repurposing of the Hurst Festival to a Virtual platform using local companies in the events and media industry. Also, the Council's Safety Advisory group has provided advice, support and guidance to local event organisers on changing government guidance.

Finally, and very importantly, you will see in this agenda today that the Council has put its money where its mouth is by allocating £300,000 out of its own revenues to a Covid-19 Recovery Fund for local businesses. The Council will explore what support can be provided to the events sector along with other similarly blighted sectors.

Ms Kiwanuka posed a supplementary question asking that the events sector is considered within the bracket of 'hospitality' when Covid-19 Recovery funds are allocated. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

Question from Brian Kilkelly:

Issue: Resourcing of the Mid Sussex District Council Sustainability Strategy 2018 – 2023: Milton Keynes Council uses Section 106 agreements to require housing developers to provide them with £200 per tonne of first year emissions from each new house. If applied to the Northern Arc development, Mid Sussex DC could raise £700,000. This could be used to boost our Sustainability resources, bring in the services of external experts, and support energy efficiency measures across Mid Sussex. Would council consider such an approach in lieu of powers to mandate that all new homes be zero carbon?

Response from Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning – Cllr Andrew MacNaughton:

Thank you for your question.

The Council secures S106 contributions in line with the Development Infrastructure and Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was adopted in July 2018. This document sets out requirements to support sustainability measures, including sustainable transport; sustainable urban drainage, water efficiency; and green infrastructure. It does not include a requirement to provide £200 per tonne of first year emissions from each new house.

However, I understand that the monies are not used in the manner suggested by the questioner. The law is clear that S106 monies can only be secured where they meet a number of statutory tests including where the obligation is necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms and, in this context, it is unusual for monies to be collected to pay for staffing resources or consultants.

Amendments to Supplementary Planning Documents would have to follow due process. Due to the likely implications on development viability, changes to planning obligations would have to be supported by a viability study. Given that the government is proposing considerable changes to the planning system, including to developer contributions, through its White Paper “Planning for the Future” I do not think it would be a sensible use of resources to make changes to the Supplementary Planning Document at this time.

No supplementary question was posed by Mr Kilkelly.

Question from Deanna Nicholson:

Cabinet’s decision to permanently close Clair Hall was sprung on the local community with virtually no notice, yet within days over 4500 people signed a petition calling for the decision to be reversed. Local residents are demanding to see that Council will resolve to deliver on the ambitious aspirations outlined in the last MSDC meeting. Will Council now commit to a full public consultation on the provision of a modern and purpose-built community, theatre and arts space for the Haywards Heath area, and give details of the expected timeline for the Clair Hall replacement to be operational?

Response from Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery – Cllr John Belsey

At its meeting on 14th September 2020, Cabinet agreed to commission work to develop a business case for the inclusion of a modern community facility as part of the future regeneration of this site or other sites in the town centre. This will include assessment of need and current provision which of course will involve discussion with key stakeholders.

The Cabinet’s decision has been called-in and will be discussed at a Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13th October 2020.

Ms Nicholson posed a supplementary question seeking a commitment by the Council to provide a suitable replacement facility. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

Question from Lance Milton:

Having engaged with most of the current users of Clair Hall, over half of us can find no suitable alternative venue locally. This is not simply restricted to the five local

theatre groups at risk, but the majority of other users including the vital blood donors. Haywards Heath college theatre, described by the council as uncomfortable and without elderly or disabled access, is totally unsuitable and unavailable during term time. So what are the suitable alternative interim provisions, for local groups and professional tour bookings, to saving Clair Hall until it's upgraded or replaced for better?

Response from Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery – Cllr John Belsey

5% of hirers in 2019/20 required specialist theatre facilities.

Only 8% of bookings involved over 200 attendees, and the vast majority (74%) were for fewer than 50 attendees. In addition it is worth noting that due to the restrictions of Covid many of the events which would involve those professional touring companies but also for local groups are not able to go ahead at this time and as things stand it is not clear when such events may be able to go ahead again due to legal restrictions and social distancing guidelines which of course give rise to viability concerns. There are over 20 community buildings (church halls, community centres, and sports pavilions) within a one mile radius of the hall, as well as 9 educational facilities. Officers will work with users of Clair Hall to understand their needs and to support them to relocate.

The Cabinet's decision has been called-in and will be discussed at a Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13th October 2020.

Mr Milton posed a supplementary question requesting a list of suitable alternative venues as mentioned above and any interim measures available for those who cannot relocate. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

Question from James Stibbs:

I have booked Clair Hall for a theatrical production in the recent past but I have also failed to secure a follow-up booking because the hall was booked up months in advance for Friday and Saturday nights. I would like to ask how many community and arts groups views were formally solicited before the decision to close Clair Hall was made and what percentage of them supported the closure?

Response from Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery – Cllr John Belsey

Places Leisure kept a record of booking enquiries that could not be accommodated for a variety of reasons.

There were 47 such instances in 2019/20, encompassing a range of uses, including a number of one-off birthday party booking requests, fairs and meetings, as well as some longer-term recurring bookings for children's nurseries, pilates classes, etc. Places Leisure have always worked to maximise hall usage and have therefore consistently sought to accommodate booking requests wherever possible by offering alternative dates, times and locations if a specific slot is not available.

The Cabinet's decision has been called-in and will be discussed at a Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13th October 2020.

Mr Stibbs posed a supplementary question asking when the Council began to plan the closure of the hall. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

4. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 19 AUGUST 2020.

The Chairman noted that the final page of the minutes under item 11 will be amended to read that 'Therefore the Chairman announced that the recommendations were agreed'. With that correction, the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 19 August were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

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

None.

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

None.

7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman acknowledged the recent murder of Police Sergeant Matiu Ratana, and expressed sincere condolences to all at East Grinstead Rugby Club, where Mat was Head Coach. A letter has also been sent to the Rugby Club.

The Chairman confirmed with Members how he intends for the Council meeting to be conducted, and noted that his recent engagements are available to view on the Council's website.

8. REVISED CORPORATE PLAN 2020/21.

The Leader moved the item, noting the unprecedented effect that the Covid19 pandemic has had on the Council and the District. In acknowledging the impact on the Council's finances, he noted that the overriding emphasis of the revised Corporate Plan is on refocusing the Council's activities on recovery and continued support for the effects of the crisis on Mid Sussex's communities. In moving the item he drew Members attention to some specific areas of the plan including economic recovery, the Council's support to the community response to the pandemic and the need to provide effective and responses services. He also noted the proposed governance review commissioned to ensure that governance is appropriate, efficient and value for money. In closing, he thanked the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Finance and Performance who considered the revised Corporate Plan at a meeting in August.

Councillor Knight seconded the item noting that there had been robust, comprehensive debate at both the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet where it was voted for unanimously.

Members welcomed the revised plan and discussed the ways in which the Council is committed to supporting economic recovery, with plans such as the Burgess Hill Growth Programme and the Haywards Heath Master Plan.

Discussion was held on the support that the Government has provided to Councils, and the proposed merging of the Sustainability and Economic Strategy. A Member queried why the specific reserve for environment and sustainability was not referenced in the document and hoped that sustainability will be at the forefront of the next budget on 2021. A Member also sought to ensure that the Sustainability Action Plan is delivered, with details provided to a future Scrutiny Committee. The Leader confirmed that during the pandemic, the Government has provided financial support to the Council and to local businesses. He also noted that the specific sustainability reserve agreed earlier in the year is unaffected and the merge of the economic and sustainability strategy will allow the Council to focus on green recovery and support to the economy.

A Member sought clarity on the wording in relation to the Council's commitment to respond to requests from developers for amendment to S106 agreements. It was clarified that responses will be proactive and timely, and requests will be scrutinised to ensure they are in the interest of residents and facilitates developments that the Council has permitted. It was also clarified that this was a Government request to local Councils.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations which were approved. For: 33, Against: 4. 13 Members abstained.

RESOLVED

Council considered and agreed:

- (i) The Recovery Plans outlined in Appendices A to C;
- (ii) The advice and suggested changes to the Council's financial strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) outlined in Appendix D, specifically the use of reserves and revenue savings to help deal with the impact of the crisis and asks officers to review the level of these aspects and report to the 2021/22 Corporate Plan and Budget process
- (iii) The proposed Governance Review (Appendix E) and its overarching principles;
- (iv) The advice about the Council's Corporate Priority Projects (CCPs) in Appendix F; and
- (v) The performance of the Council during the first quarter of this year (Appendix G) and proposed changes to performance indicators as outlined in Appendix H.

The Chairman confirmed a change of order in which item 9 and 10 of the agenda will be covered.

9. PROPOSED TOILET PROVISION ON LINDFIELD COMMON.

The Leader moved the item noting that it was a long-standing aspiration of the Parish Council and residents of Lindfield to improve the facilities on the common. The District Council is the landowner of the site but the cost of the work will be met by the Parish Council. Councillor Andrew Lea seconded the item and Members supported the proposals.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED

That Council agreed:

- a. The District Council, as manager of the Common under the Scheme of Management, approve and consent to the works detailed in the planning permission issued by the Local Planning Authority under reference DM/19/0071 and to the installation of two grit bins; two noticeboards; and a lamp post in various locations on the Common as detailed on the plan;
- b. The District Council, as owner of the Common, supports the Parish Council's application to the Planning Inspectorate in respect of the proposed works and to advise the Planning Inspectorate accordingly;
- c. Subject to (b) above the District Council, as owner of the Common, agree, in principle, to the grant of a long lease of the areas of land at Lindfield Common to the Parish Council to accommodate the proposed works as detailed in the planning permission issued by the Local Planning Authority under reference DM/19/0071 and this report, subject to a report to the District Council's Cabinet on the detailed terms of the lease and subject to compliance with the requirements of Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972;
- d. The Head of Regulatory Services and Solicitor to the Council be authorised to make further representations to the Planning Inspectorate as required in line with the District Council's decision in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council.

10. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2020/21.

Councillor Webster moved the item, with amended recommendations relating to the timings of meetings. He proposed that Council and the Standards Committee be held at 6pm, all Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committees at 5pm, District Planning Committee at 2pm, and the Planning Committee and all other meetings at 4pm. The exception to this is the Special Scrutiny Committee for Community, Customer Services and Service Delivery which has been agreed for 4pm on 13 October 2020.

He acknowledged this was a compromise to accommodate the conflicting calls on Councillors time, and the significant impact to Officers in facilitating meetings in a virtual format. He noted that the programme is in place pending a governance review during which a further equalities impact assessment will take place. The Deputy Leader seconded the amended recommendations, thanking Members for their agreement on the proposed changes.

A Member noted that the date for the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth has been rescheduled to 22 October.

The Chairman took Members to the recommendations as amended by Councillor Webster which were approved. For: 49, Against: 1.

RESOLVED

That Council agreed:

1) The Programme (Appendix 1) be approved with timings of meetings amended to the following:

Council and the Standards Committee to be held at 6pm
Scrutiny and Audit Committees to be held at 5pm
District Planning Committee to be held 2pm

Planning Committee and all other meetings to be held at 4pm.

The exception being the Special Scrutiny Committee for Community, Customer Services and Service Delivery at 4pm on 13 October 2020.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2020.

The Deputy Leader moved the item which summarises the budget management position from April to July 2020, and the demolition of the Burgess Hill Library. This was seconded by the Leader.

A Member welcomed the progress on the demolition of the Library.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations which were approved. For: 50.

RESOLVED

BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2020/21 – PROGRESS REPORT APRIL TO JULY 2020

That Council approve:

- (i) that £504 grant income relating to New Burdens funding to meet costs of implementing Local Allowance changes be transferred to General Reserve as detailed in paragraphs 33 of the Cabinet report;
- (ii) that £11,630 grant income relating to Rough Sleepers Initiative be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 34 of the Cabinet report;
- (iii) that £40,000 grant income relating to Neighbourhood Planning be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 35 of the Cabinet report;
- (iv) that £45,000 grant income from the Business Rates Pool received in respect of Journey to Work funding be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 36 of the Cabinet report;
- (v) that £10,870 grant income relating to the costs of the move to Individual Electoral Registration be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 37 of the Cabinet report;
- (vi) that £46,230 grant income relating to the Planning Performance Agreement be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 38 of the Cabinet report;
- (vii) that Specific Reserves be re-designated as detailed in paragraphs 39 to 44 of the Cabinet report;
- (viii) that Specific Reserves totalling £1,850,959 be transferred to General Reserve as detailed in paragraph 29 and Appendix B of the Cabinet report;
- (ix) the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 52 of the Cabinet report in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule.

DEMOLITION OF BURGESS HILL LIBRARY

That Council approve:

- (1) the Capital Programme be amended in the sum set out within the Cabinet report, to be financed from the Capital Receipts Reserve.

12. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader confirmed that Haywards Heath College opened to students this month. The college will share a Principal with Worthing College and have a dedicated Vice-

Principal on site. He noted that the Council had played a central role in creating the new college and wished it every success for the future.

The Leader commented on two major incidents in 2020 relating to an unacceptable lack of water provision for residents in the District. As well as writing to the Chief Executive of South East Water following the incident in August, he met last week with Mims Davies M.P. and the Chief Executive to follow up. South East Water acknowledge failings and have 89 actions to address from the August issue alone. Agreement was made on the need for greater local liaison regarding bottled water stations and the need for engagement with the Environment Agency to impose hosepipe bans if needed.

Members sought assurance that there will be a sufficient water supply to meet all residents needs in light of new developments proposed to be built, and a potentially dry winter. It was also requested that emergency water provision be timely to the most vulnerable. The Leader noted that South East Water have a legal obligation to provide water and therefore it is important they play a more active part in the planning process and consultation stages of new developments. Members also discussed the possibility of South East Water being invited to a Scrutiny Committee to provide further information on their long-term strategy and a Member agreed to share information he has requested from them on proposed infrastructure developments.

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

Report of the Deputy Leader

The Deputy Leader confirmed that the Council will shortly be submitting the sales fees and charges income loss for the first 4 months of the year to the Government. The net figure when reimbursed by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government will assist with the Council's income.

The Cabinet Member noted that the Place and Connectivity Programme in Burgess Hill is producing tangible results, and thanked the external sources including Coast to Capital who are funding this work. She drew Member's attention to recent improvements at Wivelsfield Station, and that a package of work is being instigated to boost sustainable transport and better link businesses, residents and retail to support the sustainable growth of the town. Further information on the Place and Connectivity Programme can be found online at www.burgesshill.net.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the 31% of residents currently on furlough, although there is no data yet available on how they will be affected by the end of the Government's furlough scheme.

He confirmed a new footfall measuring scheme in place on high streets within the District to provide the Government with information in order to secure funding where needed. Current measurements indicate that footfall is steadily increasing, and in some places such as Cuckfield it is higher than pre-Covid pandemic numbers. He agreed that villages as well as towns are being monitored in terms of economic growth requirements. In response to a question on the impact Brexit will have on the District, he noted that the Council will take it's lead through local economic

partnerships such as Coast to Capital, and will focus on what the Council can do locally to make a difference to residents.

He agreed to provide a written response on the percentage of those on furlough in June compared to September.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member provided an update on the Leisure Centres since the decision to reopen in September. He confirmed that reopening is on track, commending the work of Places Leisure employees to reach this stage. The final position for September is to be provided in due course and there is close liaison between the Council and Places Leisure. There are indications that attendance targets look positive, and the reopening has been well received by residents. In response to a Member's question he confirmed that Covid19 related costs involved in cleaning play areas within the District remain prohibitive to reopening them all, and so the current position will remain unless there are special circumstances involved.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Community

The Cabinet Member noted that the Wellbeing Team continue to deliver courses and support to residents with Covid19 related needs. He recently chaired an Emergency Planning meeting where major support groups are ensuring they are ready to respond to any increase in demand during the winter months

He noted activities planned for Silver Sunday on 4 October, celebrating older people within the District, and highlighted that a full analysis of grants provided by the Cabinet Grants Panel over 5 years is expected when the new strategy is presented at the next meeting.

A Member noted that the human and financial cost of fighting Covid19 is huge and asked for confirmation that the Council will do all it can to minimise that cost. In response the Cabinet Member noted the significant impact of the pandemic on all elements of society, paying tribute to local communities and the voluntary sector who have responded. He agreed that the Council must remain focused on delivering core services and work closely with partners to beat the challenges.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth

The Cabinet Member noted that the Council working with Turning Tides and Worthing Homes submitted a bid to The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and has been awarded £38,170 which will be used to meet the costs of winter pressures and start up costs helping rough sleepers into private accommodation. He also noted that there have been 58 affordable housing completions this year and thanked Clarion Housing for their assistance during the pandemic in providing properties to be used as ad-hoc temporary accommodation for those in need.

He confirmed that the Council's technical response to the current planning system has been submitted to Government and work is continuing on the response to the planning white paper due at the end of October. In response to a Member's question on the Council's infrastructure funding statement on s106 and CIL due in December, he confirmed it will just be on S106 agreements and he agreed to provide a further update in writing.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Customer Service

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Full Fibre Programme has begun in Burgess Hill and all residents affected have been contacted. She confirmed that Mid Sussex Matters will be delivered to residents in November and that a large number of Mid Sussex Applauds Awards nominations have been received. She acknowledged the large number of business grants, and exceptional hardship monies that have been awarded and the test and trace support payment scheme which began on 28th September for those required to self-isolate and meet the benefit linked eligibility criteria.

14. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

MOTION A: MODERN SLAVERY

Councillor Webster proposed the motion. He noted that the Council is part of the anti-slavery network and that regular training is provided, along with initiatives to ensure the Council's supply chain meets requirements. The motion was seconded by Councillor Marsh noting that it enables the Council to have direct influence, take action and work with partners to take a robust approach to modern slavery.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the motion which was agreed. For: 49, 1 Member abstained or failed to record a vote.

RESOLVED

Mid Sussex District Council resolves to:

- Adopt a County wide Modern Slavery Pledge for this year's Anti-Slavery Day on the 18th October 2020.
- Work proactively with national and local government, law enforcement agencies, business, the community and voluntary sector, faith bodies and our local communities to:
 - Demonstrate strong leadership for anti-slavery initiatives;
 - Raise awareness amongst our staff, associates and the people we service on a daily basis;
 - Train our staff to recognise and respond appropriately to potential signs of slavery;
 - Share intelligence and information to help detect slavery and ensure it cannot take root;
 - Support victims and survivors in our communities;
 - Remove slave-based labour from our supply chains;
 - Contribute to building a prosperous and slavery-free economy.

MOTION B: GOVERNMENT PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

Councillor Hicks formally proposed the motion (amended from that published). Councillor Bradbury agreed to second it. The Head of Regulatory Services read the motion for the benefit of Members and the public.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Hicks noted the Council's concern with the Government's proposals, which appear counter-productive, and potentially disregard local housing needs in favour of a national target. In seconding the motion, Councillor Bradbury noted that the Council is not against a reform of the planning system and welcomes elements such as the building on brownfield sites and

biodiversity, however he felt that any changes need to recognise the work of establishing a District Plan which is a better indication of local housing need.

Member's discussed the need to ensure affordable housing is integrated within new developments. Comment was also made on the need for the current planning system to better take into consideration the views of residents.

The Chairman took Members to the motion as agreed which was approved. For: 48

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- a. The Government's consultations on changes to the current planning system and the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper, and welcomes the focus on building on brownfield sites, better energy efficiency standards and the requirement to enhance biodiversity. The Council also welcomes the simplification, modernisation and digitisation of the planning process and the proposal to apply the new Infrastructure Levy to permitted development, but believes that planning should be kept local with public participation at its heart with sufficient funding for local infrastructure that flows to the infrastructure provider.
- b. That the vast majority of planning applications are given the go ahead by local authority planning committees, with permission granted to around 9 out of 10 applications.
- c. That research by the Local Government Association has said that there are existing planning permissions for more than one million homes that have not yet been started.
- d. That the LGA has also raised concerns that the proposed algorithm that will set housing targets will see a disproportionate increase in the South and in rural areas of England.
- e. That on 7th September in the House of Commons, Andrew Griffith, MP for Arundel and South Downs described how the algorithm ignores areas of land that are prohibited from development such as National Parks and AONBs, forcing unrealistic amounts of development to be concentrated in the remaining unprotected land, citing Mid Sussex as a district that is especially vulnerable in this respect.
- f. The proposals include restructuring of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and scrapping site specific S106 contributions to be replaced by a charge on development value above a certain threshold with a nationally set one size fits all rate called the Infrastructure Levy.
- g. That the proposals seek to temporarily only allow local Councils to seek affordable housing on developments over 40-50 units, thereby having a detrimental impact on the supply of affordable and social housing.

The Council calls for an urgent review of the housing allocation methodology which would significantly increase housing numbers in Mid Sussex. The Council expresses concern that the methodology concentrates housing numbers in market towns,

suburbs and rural areas, which already have an infrastructure deficit, and away from larger towns and cities which have better infrastructure.

The Council welcomes the response that the Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning has submitted to the 'Changes to the Current Planning System' consultation, which opposes in particular the proposed standard methodology for assessing housing numbers and the proposed lifting of the small sites threshold below which affordable housing would no longer be provided.

The Council notes that the Cabinet Member for Housing & Planning will make a further response on behalf of the Council to the 'Planning for the Future' consultation.

MOTION C: REFUGEES

Councillor Dempsey proposed the motion. The motion was seconded by Councillor Gibbs who noted it was a reaffirmation of a sentiment that resonates with all.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth noted the Council, like all those nationally works with Central Government to resettle and support refugees.

The Chairman took Members to the vote on the motion which was agreed. For: 21, 27 Members abstained, so the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED

Mid Sussex District Council:

1. Notes that the issue of refugees and people seeking asylum currently has a raised media profile in the UK.
2. Acknowledges that the issue of asylum and international migration is a highly complex issue without simple solutions.
3. Recognises that the UK has a proud tradition of providing sanctuary to refugees who have been displaced by conflict and persecution.
4. Affirms Mid Sussex's pride in having refugees living as part of our communities in the District.
5. Emphasises that, notwithstanding differing views, anyone engaged in discourse on this issue has a responsibility to treat the people involved with dignity, compassion and respect.

15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2

None.

The meeting finished at 8.54 pm

Chairman