

**Minutes of a meeting of Council
held on Wednesday, 3rd March, 2021
from 6.00 pm - 7.15 pm**

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

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

Absent: Councillors A Boutrup, P Bradbury, H Brunsdon, Andrew Lea 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 question was received from Mr Brooks:

As the UK takes the Presidency of the G7 and we head towards COP26, PM Boris Johnson has announced an ambitious Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. The Environment Bill is passing through Parliament and, building on the world leading pledge to meet net-zero emission by 2050, Johnson has set a target of a 68% fall in emissions by 2030. Does the council have its own clear 'roadmap' in line

with this? And what plans are there to show direction and leadership at a local level to support community engagement?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery, Councillor J Belsey

Thank you for your question.

The Council has had a Sustainability Strategy in place since 2018. This strategy sets out the leadership role the Council has in encouraging and enabling sustainable initiatives and developments. Importantly it also sets out the Council's own contribution to sustainability.

However, we recognise that we can go further particularly in post Covid recovery but also in the light of the emerging Environment Bill which we hope will receive Royal Assent in Autumn this year.

You will hopefully be aware that our current Corporate Plan commits to the development of a new Sustainable Economy Strategy. This will bring together two strategies that need refreshing in the light of the pandemic but that are also critical to our Covid recovery. This will provide a clear roadmap to the delivery of the full potential of our District without compromising the needs of our future communities and of course it will take account of new and emerging legislative requirements including those set out in last year's Environment Bill which is currently working its way through the Parliamentary process. I am sure all members and residents will welcome that the Bill is intended to provide a legal framework for environmental governance as well as making provision for specific improvements of the environment, including measures on waste and resource efficiency, air quality, water, nature, biodiversity and conservation.

Your question is timely in that the first steps towards the development of this new Council strategy will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for Leader Finance and Performance next week.

Mr Brooks was unable to pose a supplementary question due to experiencing technical difficulties during the virtual meeting.

4. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2021.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

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.

None.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2021.

The Deputy Leader moved the item, noting that the recommendations are made against a projected net overspend of £1.93m at end of this financial year. She summarised the recommendations, drawing attention to the variations to the Capital Programme which include £1.4m to purchase 5 properties for temporary accommodation, the upgrading of the property management system, playground improvements at Scaynes Hill and St Johns Park and Hurst Farm development costs. She noted that revenue projects included in the report are the 'About the Place' public art project and electronic access gates to John Pears recreation ground tennis courts. The final recommendation is regarding the debt in respect of Horsham District Council's £115,000 contribution to the Census Partnership. The recommendations were seconded by the Leader.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations which were approved with 46 in favour.

RESOLVED

That Council approve:

(i) that £500,000 be transferred to a Leisure Covid Support Reserve from General Reserve as detailed in paragraph 19 of the Cabinet report;

(ii) that £38,170 grant income relating to Rough Sleepers Initiative be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 32 of the Cabinet report;

(iii) that £76,500 grant income relating to New Burdens funding to cover the cost of administering the new Business grants in respect of Covid be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 33 of the Cabinet report;

(iv) that £48,631 grant income relating to Local Authority Compliance and Enforcement grant be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 34 of the Cabinet report;

(v) that £9,663 grant income relating to New Burdens funding for Housing Benefit Accuracy Award Initiative and Severe Disability Premium Gateway Initiative be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 35 of the Cabinet report;

(vi) that £75,000 grant income relating to support in respect of Covid-19 preventative interventions delivered by Environmental Health teams be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 36 of the Cabinet report;

(vii) that £61,418 grant income in respect of Journey to Work funding, to fund work being undertaken by the Employment Projects Co-ordinator be transferred to the Revenues and Benefits New Burdens Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 37 of the Cabinet report;

(viii) that £26,026 grant income to Implement the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme be transferred to the Revenues and Benefits New Burdens Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 38 of the Cabinet report;

(ix) the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 48 of the Cabinet report in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3;

(x) that prior year debtors in respect of Horsham District Council's Contribution to the Census Partnership be written off as detailed in Appendix A of the Cabinet report.

9. CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2021/22.

The Leader moved the item, noting that Members had received an updated report which corrects Council Tax figures for the year ahead. He noted that Members last met in person a year ago to debate the Corporate Plan and had asked about scenario planning in the face of the impending pandemic. The Leader's reply at the time noted the Council's ability to be agile in its response and this year has proven this to be the case.

He noted that over the last year, the Council has worked to an unprecedented scale in establishing new services such as the business grants programme and support for vulnerable and shielding residents, as well as continuing existing services with rising demand. It has also had to respond to an ever-changing landscape as Leisure Centres and the local economy closed and reopened as multiple lockdowns were imposed. He acknowledged the cost of the pandemic both to the country and the Council and noted that the current year will result in over £2m deficit which will need to be funded from reserves, even after the support received from Government has been utilised.

The Leader confirmed that a balanced budget is presented, but only as a result of windfall income from business rates retention and the Council's finances are not on a sustainable footing over the medium term and the Council's reserves will reach a perilous position within the next four years. Regrettably therefore, a 2.9% increase to the District Council's share of Council Tax is necessary next year but the Council Tax Support Scheme means that those residents on the lowest incomes are supported with the cost of this bill.

The Leader drew Members attention to the clear priorities contained in the Corporate Plan which include supporting the economic recovery, with work being done alongside Mimms Davis M.P. and the Department of Work and Pensions at Haywards Heath College, and the rollout of the Council's infrastructure programme including the Northern Arc and gigabit speed full fibre. Other key priorities include ensuring that the Council has an environmentally friendly recovery by developing a Sustainable Economy Strategy, continuing to help vulnerable people in the communities and the critical task of beginning to rebuild the Council's finances after the impact of the pandemic

The Deputy Leader seconded the item reiterating the need to build towards the future even if it is uncertain.

Several Members congratulated Officers on the work involved to present a balanced budget in difficult circumstances.

A Member queried what plans are in place to respond to the call on reserves over years 2-5 of the budget, particularly regarding the proposed Science and Technology Park and ways to bring manufacturing back into the District. The Leader acknowledged that it was hard to know at this stage the true effect of the deficit, but he expected improvements to be evident once the Government restrictions begin to

lift. The Council will continue to provide services as efficiently as possible and seek to diversify its income base as quickly and sustainably as possible. He noted that the District is well located with a talented and skilled population and the key is to encourage and develop this potential.

A Member noted that some areas had to take a back seat over the past year but looked forward to the progression of the sustainability agenda. A query was raised on whether the Council would apply for a Cultural Recovery Grant for Clair Hall or any other venue in the District, following the Government's recent announcement in the Budget. The Leader acknowledged that full details of the fund have not yet been publicised, but the Council would consider it carefully and make a bid if it is appropriate and the criteria are met.

Councillor Hicks proposed an amendment to the recommendations drawing Member's attention to potential disparities within Council Tax which he stated were unfair. This was seconded by Councillor Jackson who highlighted that the aim was to have fairness in the scheme with those that can afford to pay more doing so. The proposed amendment is detailed below:

'To add a further recommendation 3.1.2 that at a time when many of our residents are facing static or falling incomes it is particularly important that we are able to demonstrate fairness in how the burden of paying for local services is shared. That the Council recognises that council tax is out of date, and often arbitrary and regressive, the burden of which unfairly falls on Mid Sussex households with limited incomes. Consequently, increases in council tax, together with other authorities' precepts, will fall disproportionately on those least able to pay.

The Council notes that any change to the current council tax bands and charging structure needs to be sanctioned by Parliament.

The Council therefore agrees that:
The Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting that the current council tax bands and charging structures in England be reviewed, as a matter of urgency, so they better reflect people's ability to pay the tax.'

The Leader noted that any reform of Council Tax could mean that Mid Sussex residents would pay more, and that policy amendment is for Government and not for the Council. He reiterated that the Council Tax Support Scheme does insulate people on the lowest level by providing an uplift of £150 for those least able to pay.

A Member noted that the Council Tax Band system could not be reformed without looking at the Social Care budget too. It was also noted that this proposed amendment was not raised at the recent Scrutiny Committee where a full debate of the Corporate Plan and Budget took place.

A Member expressed concern that over the last 4 years the Council's budget has increased along with the budget of the PCC (Police & Crime Commissioner) and County Council which resulted in unsustainable Council Tax pressure on certain residents within the District. A Member also noted that Council Tax reform is not related to political difference, noting that there is a group of Conservative MPs within the Government's Property Reform Group committed to reforming property duties.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the amendment which was lost with 16 in favour and 28 against.

The Chairman then took Members to a vote on the recommendations contained in the report. A recorded vote was taken, and the recommendations approved with 46 in favour and 2 abstentions.

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

RESOLVED

Council agrees:

3.1 Corporate Plan and Budget 2021/22

3.1.1 That the Corporate Plan and Budget for 2021/22 set out in this report be approved;

3.2 Mid Sussex District Council Budget 2021/22

3.2.1 Revenue Spending and MSDC council tax levels for 2021/22:

(a) That Revenue Spending summarised below (see Section 2 for details) is approved:

	£'000
Service Net Expenditure	17,617
Balance Unallocated	20
	<hr/>
Council Net Expenditure	17,637
	<hr/>
Revenue Spending	17,637
	<hr/> <hr/>

- (b) That with respect to pensions, the employer's contribution rate should be 21.4% for 2021/22
- (c) That the Mid Sussex District Council element of the Council Tax be increased by 2.9% to £175.41, with no requirement to hold a local referendum in accordance with the Act.

3.2.2 Capital Programme 2021/22 (see Section 3 for details):

- (a) That the Capital Programme for 2021/22 (as set out in Section 3) is approved.

3.2.3 Usable Reserves and other balances

- (a) That the estimates for cash balances (see Section 4 for details) are noted.

3.2.4 Financial Strategy & Medium-Term Financial Plan:

- (a) That the summary Medium Term Financial Plan to 2024/25 (see Section 5 for details) is noted.

3.2.5 Collection Fund:

- (a) That the estimated surplus on the Collection Fund for Council Tax totalling £1,288,000 for the year ended 31 March 2021, of which the Mid Sussex District Council share is £167,430 (see Section 6 for details) is noted.
- (b) That the estimated deficit on the Collection Fund for Business Rates totalling £20,503,000 for the year ended 31 March 2021, of which the Mid Sussex District Council share is £8,632,556 (see Section 6 for details) is noted.

3.3 Council Taxes for The Mid Sussex Area:

3.3.1 It be noted that at its meeting held on 9th December 2020 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2021/22:

- (a) 62,223.8 being the amount calculated, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012, as its council tax base for the year; and
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as set out in Table 3 Section 7 of this report.

3.3.2 £10,914,679 being the amount calculated as the Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish Precepts).

3.3.3 That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Section 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by The Localism Act 2011):

- (a) £68,037,040 being the aggregate of the amounts, which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils;
- (b) £52,452,000 being the aggregate of the amounts, which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;
- (c) £15,585,040 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.3.3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.3.3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year;
- (d) £250.47 being the amount at 3.3.3(c) above, all divided by the amount at 3.3.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
- (e) £4,670,361 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see Section 7 for details);
- (f) £175.41 being the amount at 3.3.3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3.3.3(e) above by the amount at 3.3.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;
- (g) Part of the Council's area

Parish area	band A £	band B £	band C £	band D £	band E £	band F £	band G £	band H £
Albourne	149.23	174.10	198.97	223.84	273.58	323.32	373.07	447.68
Ansty & Staplefield	166.01	193.67	221.34	249.01	304.35	359.68	415.02	498.02
Ardingly	194.86	227.34	259.81	292.29	357.24	422.20	487.15	584.58
Ashurst Wood	178.91	208.72	238.54	268.36	328.00	387.63	447.27	536.72
Balcombe	176.58	206.01	235.44	264.87	323.73	382.59	441.45	529.74
Bolney	156.22	182.26	208.29	234.33	286.40	338.48	390.55	468.66
Burgess Hill	167.15	195.01	222.87	250.73	306.45	362.17	417.88	501.46
Cuckfield	209.47	244.38	279.29	314.20	384.02	453.84	523.67	628.40
East Grinstead	175.68	204.96	234.24	263.52	322.08	380.64	439.20	527.04
Fulking	160.42	187.16	213.89	240.63	294.10	347.58	401.05	481.26
Hassocks	173.40	202.30	231.20	260.10	317.90	375.70	433.50	520.20
Haywards Heath	154.18	179.88	205.57	231.27	282.66	334.06	385.45	462.54
Horsted Keynes	168.31	196.37	224.42	252.47	308.57	364.68	420.78	504.94
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common	173.35	202.25	231.14	260.03	317.81	375.60	433.38	520.06
Lindfield	157.19	183.39	209.59	235.79	288.19	340.59	392.98	471.58
Lindfield Rural	144.51	168.59	192.68	216.76	264.93	313.10	361.27	433.52
Newtimber	120.67	140.79	160.90	181.01	221.23	261.46	301.68	362.02
Poynings	151.79	177.08	202.38	227.68	278.28	328.87	379.47	455.36
Pyecombe	179.36	209.25	239.15	269.04	328.83	388.61	448.40	538.08
Slaugham	167.79	195.75	223.72	251.68	307.61	363.54	419.47	503.36
Turners Hill	201.28	234.83	268.37	301.92	369.01	436.11	503.20	603.84
Twineham	156.78	182.91	209.04	235.17	287.43	339.69	391.95	470.34
West Hoathly	170.19	198.56	226.92	255.29	312.02	368.75	425.48	510.58
Worth	157.77	184.07	210.36	236.66	289.25	341.84	394.43	473.32

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at as set out in Table 3 Section 7 of this report by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

3.3.4 That it be noted that for the year 2021/22, West Sussex County Council have stated the following amounts in precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:

Valuation band	£	Valuation band	£
band A	1,007.04	band E	1,846.24
band B	1,174.88	band F	2,181.92
band C	1,342.72	band G	2,517.60
band D	1,510.56	band H	3,021.12

3.3.5 That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner have stated the following amounts in precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation band	£	Valuation band	£
band A	143.27	band E	262.67
band B	167.15	band F	310.43
band C	191.03	band G	358.18
band D	214.91	band H	429.82

3.3.6 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts as at 3.3.3(g), 3.3.4 and 3.3.5 above, the Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Parish area	band A	band B	band C	band D	band E	band F	band G	band H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Albourne	1,299.54	1,516.13	1,732.72	1,949.31	2,382.49	2,815.67	3,248.85	3,898.62
Ansty & Staplefield	1,316.32	1,535.70	1,755.09	1,974.48	2,413.26	2,852.03	3,290.80	3,948.96
Ardingly	1,345.17	1,569.37	1,793.56	2,017.76	2,466.15	2,914.55	3,362.93	4,035.52
Ashurst Wood	1,329.22	1,550.75	1,772.29	1,993.83	2,436.91	2,879.98	3,323.05	3,987.66
Balcombe	1,326.89	1,548.04	1,769.19	1,990.34	2,432.64	2,874.94	3,317.23	3,980.68
Bolney	1,306.53	1,524.29	1,742.04	1,959.80	2,395.31	2,830.83	3,266.33	3,919.60
Burgess Hill	1,317.46	1,537.04	1,756.62	1,976.20	2,415.36	2,854.52	3,293.66	3,952.40
Cuckfield	1,359.78	1,586.41	1,813.04	2,039.67	2,492.93	2,946.19	3,399.45	4,079.34
East Grinstead	1,325.99	1,546.99	1,767.99	1,988.99	2,430.99	2,872.99	3,314.98	3,977.98
Fulking	1,310.73	1,529.19	1,747.64	1,966.10	2,403.01	2,839.93	3,276.83	3,932.20
Hassocks	1,323.71	1,544.33	1,764.95	1,985.57	2,426.81	2,868.05	3,309.28	3,971.14
Haywards Heath	1,304.49	1,521.91	1,739.32	1,956.74	2,391.57	2,826.41	3,261.23	3,913.48
Horsted Keynes	1,318.62	1,538.40	1,758.17	1,977.94	2,417.48	2,857.03	3,296.56	3,955.88
Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common	1,323.66	1,544.28	1,764.89	1,985.50	2,426.72	2,867.95	3,309.16	3,971.00
Lindfield	1,307.50	1,525.42	1,743.34	1,961.26	2,397.10	2,832.94	3,268.76	3,922.52
Lindfield Rural	1,294.82	1,510.62	1,726.43	1,942.23	2,373.84	2,805.45	3,237.05	3,884.46
Newtimber	1,270.98	1,482.82	1,694.65	1,906.48	2,330.14	2,753.81	3,177.46	3,812.96
Poynings	1,302.10	1,519.11	1,736.13	1,953.15	2,387.19	2,821.22	3,255.25	3,906.30
Pyecombe	1,329.67	1,551.28	1,772.90	1,994.51	2,437.74	2,880.96	3,324.18	3,989.02
Slaugham	1,318.10	1,537.78	1,757.47	1,977.15	2,416.52	2,855.89	3,295.25	3,954.30
Turners Hill	1,351.59	1,576.86	1,802.12	2,027.39	2,477.92	2,928.46	3,378.98	4,054.78
Twineham	1,307.09	1,524.94	1,742.79	1,960.64	2,396.34	2,832.04	3,267.73	3,921.28
West Hoathly	1,320.50	1,540.59	1,760.67	1,980.76	2,420.93	2,861.10	3,301.26	3,961.52
Worth	1,308.08	1,526.10	1,744.11	1,962.13	2,398.16	2,834.19	3,270.21	3,924.26

The meeting finished at 7.15 pm

Chairman