

**Minutes of a meeting of Council  
held on Wednesday, 27th January, 2021  
from 6.00 pm - 8.11 pm**

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

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

**Absent:** Councillors A Boutrup, H Brunsdon, B Dempsey, A Sparasci  
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.

The Chairman held a minute's silence in acknowledgment of Holocaust Memorial Day.

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

The following question was received from Ms Rowan:

Could the Council please explain how they will take action to 'drive a green recovery from Covid' (as declared in the revised Corporate Plan Sept 2020) and how they plan to use the £85,000 (reduced from the original £100,000 it seems?) allocated to sustainability and climate change.

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

Thank you for your question.

The Corporate Plan commits to developing a Sustainable Economic Strategy which will set the strategic direction for a green recovery by bringing together the Council's sustainability and economic development work. The preparation and adoption of this Strategy will be a priority for 2021. This work will be supported by Scrutiny and a cross party Member working group.

To be clear the £100,000 reserve for sustainability has not been reduced and remains in place to be used to support the development and delivery of the Sustainable Economic Strategy. It should also be noted that to date the Council has been successful in securing other funds for its delivery of sustainable projects. Details of this work will be reported to members and the wider public in a report to Scrutiny on 10th March 2021.

This is in addition to the annual revenue budget of £85,000 which is used to fund the operational delivery of the Council's work in this area. For example, the Sustainability officer and community-based initiatives.

Ms Rowan asked a supplementary question noting Cllr Belsey's comments that there will be further reports that the public will be able to see. She asked where they will be available for her to follow up further?

Cllr. Belsey will reply to Ms. Rowan's supplementary question in writing.

The following question was received from Mr Kenward:

Concerning comments in last weeks Mid Sussex Times where Councillor Ash-Edwards was quoted as follows, 'The future of Clair Hall will be considered further when the NHS no longer need the site.' Can council give an assurance that with at least four months until the NHS consider their options and, bearing in mind the High Court ruling, that the consideration and consultation will take place expeditiously before this time to ensure a smooth transition back into community use? And would council use this time to welcome the help offered by campaigners to discuss the retention and improvement of Clair Hall?

Response from the Leader

Thank you for your question. I would like to take this opportunity to note there is no time limit for the NHS to use Clair Hall as a vaccination centre. It is likely that they may need it longer than the licence which is currently set to expire in May. The overriding priority for the Council is the pandemic and its impact on the community and economy in Mid Sussex. The Council will comply with the consent order.

Mr Kenward asked a supplementary question asking if the Leader can confirm that the Council will adhere to the conditions of the High Court order (bearing in mind that a 'Letter Before Action' was issued a few hours ago) and do relevant considerations within 6 months and no later than 12 months.

Cllr. Ash Edwards will reply to Mr Kenward's supplementary question in writing.

The following question was received from Mr Bright:

We made representation on 21st December that MSDC had failed to carry out a proper consultation as required by SCI duties but received no response.

The consultation timing (near Christmas, Covid-19) and use of only a non-user-friendly website disenfranchised a large proportion of our community; taken with other issues, the consultation is incomplete.

Will MSDC defer Masterplan decisions beyond March, and thereby seek to regain community trust and cooperation, by resuming the consultation once lockdown has finished, to permit more conventional viewing of these professionally prepared plans, with explanations and interactions at public exhibitions, to be more inclusive.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, Councillor MacNaughton

Thank you for your question.

Your representation was received and registered. The Council does not respond as a matter of course to representations. Representations made to the Haywards Heath Masterplan were reported to Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth for their consideration on the 20th of January.

The consultation was run in accordance with best practice and in line with both the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the Community Involvement Plan. It was run for 6 weeks which is two weeks longer than is required by legislation. The government has been clear that COVID 19 should not stop planning consultations.

The consultation was publicised on the Council's social media feed, in the Mid Sussex Times and in the Council's Mid Sussex Matters, which is delivered to all households.

Although you consider that the consultation arrangements were not user friendly, the online interactive map was viewed over 7,500 times and over 240 people responded with over 400 comments on the Masterplan. I was very pleased with the number of responses to the Masterplan as it was higher than other similar consultations. Recently, just over 40 people, made 230 comments, on the draft District Wide Design Guide consultation.

I am satisfied that the consultation was robust and no further consultation on the Masterplan is required.

I want to take this opportunity to clarify any misunderstanding about the role of a Masterplan. The Plan sets out planning principles to guide future development. Decisions about development on these sites would be for the landowners and dependent on the nature of the development maybe be subject to specific consultation.

Mr Bright asked a supplementary question. He asked that taken with other things such as the decision to demolish Clair Hall made in September and the decision to change the name of Clair Hall to Perrymount Hall which was confusing; these two statutory problems along with court decision will the Council please reconsider doing proper consultation with residents to regain their trust.

Cllr. MacNaughton will reply to Mr Kenward's supplementary question in writing.

**4. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2020.**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 9 December 2020 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.**

Regarding discussions under item 11, Councillor Bradbury declared an interest as a West Sussex County Councillor.

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

None.

**7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Chairman noted that films of the Applauds Awards are now available to view on the Council's YouTube channel. He also noted a recent meeting with the High Sheriff of West Sussex to discuss loneliness among residents, and the difficulties faced by West Sussex Police during the pandemic. A subsequent letter has been sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner thanking the Police for all they are doing during this difficult time.

**8. LGBCE ELECTORAL REVIEW OF MSDC: COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION.**

The Leader moved the item noting it has been 20 years since the last electoral review of the District. The first stage is to consider the appropriate number of Councillors from 2023 and make a submission to the Boundary Commission for them to consider. Members received a briefing on this in the autumn of 2020 and the draft submission recommending no less than 48 Councillors has been subject to consultation with Group Leaders. The Boundary Commission will commence a public consultation in March where the public, political groups and others can put forward submissions for Warding patterns. The Commission will decide based on several criteria including the number of members required to carry out statutory functions, service committees, their role in the community and the forecast population figures up to 2027. This solely relates to District boundaries and is independent of a Parliamentary boundary review. The item was seconded by Councillor Webster who reiterated that political parties and individuals can make comments directly to the Commission during the consultation phase.

Discussion was held on the anomalies in numbers where some areas forecast an increase in housing but a decrease in the number of electors. This is due to competing electoral trends where the number of voters per household is going down for various reasons, unrelated to the number of houses being built and having a greater impact than the number of houses becoming available. The Leader also noted that the recommended number of Councillors is heavily dependent on Warding patterns meeting the criteria from the Commission, so there may be slight variations. The housing projection figures have been provided by planning policy officers who have looked at forecasts for housing development and population change to profile

development. The outcome is consistent with similar Local Authorities who have a similar population size and housing projections.

Members discussed the timing of the response to the Commission compared with the timing of the Governance Review. The Leader noted that the two reviews are following separate timescales and it was important to respond to the Boundary Commission so that they can have a baseline from which to start their considerations. If the Governance Review results in changes to governance structures, this will be reported to the Commission, to factor into their decision.

Discussion was held on whether the submission offers a well evidenced case for reaching a recommendation of 48 Members. The Leader clarified that the submission is based on consideration of Mid Sussex's circumstances and the report makes clear how the conclusion has been made. He also clarified that housing figures up to 2027 are used at the request of the Commission. It was noted that a comparison to County Councillors is also not possible as boundary reviews of each Authority are carried out entirely separately.

Councillor Brown tabled an amendment to the recommendations, seeking to refer the report to the Scrutiny Committee and seeking evidence for alternative Council size submissions. This was seconded by Councillor Eves who urged that the submission be considered after the results of the Governance Review are published.

The Leader clarified that the time scale of the review is set by the Boundary Commission to conclude the process in order to have effect for the 2023 local elections. He noted that the aim of the review is to ensure electoral equity across all wards and by delaying the review would further delay that electoral equity. It is important for the Council's views to be heard by the Commission, who may proceed without a submission if the deadline is not met.

A Member confirmed he would write to the Leader with his concerns on the report and the Chairman requested that another Member put forward any further questions in writing.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the proposed amendment. There were 30 votes against, 13 in favour and 4 abstentions, therefore the amendment was not carried.

The Chairman then took Members to the recommendations as contained in the original report which was approved with 38 in favour, 7 against and 2 abstentions.

## **RESOLVED**

That Council:

- i. approves the Council Size proposal for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission (England) by 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021, so that the Commission can begin the Electoral Review of Mid Sussex District Council.
- ii. delegates authority to the Head of Regulatory Services to make minor amendments, e.g, those that are necessary as an accepted outcome of our forthcoming Governance Review or based upon Commission requirement.

## **9. REVIEW OF POLLING SCHEME 2021.**

Councillor Webster moved the item, noting that the Council has been working for some time to ensure a Covid-safe electoral process for the 2021 elections. Some additional polling places were required following Covid risk assessments. It was noted that it is the sole responsibility of the Returning Officer to agree the situation of polling places. The report presented is an annual report for the Council to agree the sites that fall outside of wards. The item was seconded by Councillor Llewellyn-Burke.

The Chairman took Members to a vote on the recommendations contained in the report which were approved unanimously.

## **RESOLVED**

That polling places for all polling districts be defined as the entire District Council ward in which the polling district is situated, with the following exceptions:

- a) Polling Place for Polling District BCF in Herontye Ward be designated as East Court, College Lane, East Grinstead.
- b) Polling Place for Polling District BAC in Ashurst Wood Ward be designated as East Court, College Lane, East Grinstead.
- c) Polling Place for Polling for Polling Districts BFA and BFD in Imberhorne Ward be designated as Trinity Methodist Church, Lindfield Road, East Grinstead.
- d) Polling Place for Polling District KFB in Victoria Ward be designated as St. Wilfrids Parish Hall, Station Road, Burgess Hill.
- e) Polling Place for Polling District FCB in High Weald Ward be designated as Lindfield Evangelical Free Church, Chaloner Close, Lindfield.
- f) Polling Place for Polling District HAB in Haywards Heath Franklands Ward be designated as Haywards Heath Baptist Church, Sussex Road, Haywards Heath.
- g) Polling Place for Polling District KEE in Dunstall Ward be designated as St Edward the Confessor Church Hall, Burgess Hill.
- h) Polling Place for Polling District IE in Cuckfield Ward be designated as Ashenground Community Centre, Vale Road, Haywards Heath.

## **10. TO RECEIVE THE LEADER'S REPORT.**

The Leader noted that the Council last met on 9 December around the time that Covid rates were accelerating rapidly, leading to the current National lockdown. He confirmed that the high infection rates led to the death of 42 Mid Sussex residents between 9 December and 15 January, meaning that 230 residents have died since the pandemic began. He offered his deepest condolences to the families and highlighted the crucial importance of following restrictions. He highlighted the good progress of the vaccination programme, with over 200,000 people vaccinated across Sussex, and he thanked the NHS and all volunteers involved.

He also noted the effect of the pandemic on the local economy and highlighted that the Council is working tirelessly to administer the multitude of grants available to businesses, with payments being made quickly following application. The Council has also used discretion to uplift the maximum amount which can be granted for the January lockdown to provide additional support for businesses. The Leader recently chaired a meeting with over 200 businesses to discuss grants and asked all Members to encourage people to take advantage of what is available.

The Leader confirmed that the Council's own financial position remains adversely affected with a deficit of approximately £2m forecast for this year. He noted that it was not a sustainable position for the Council to rely on its reserves to support this.

He concluded by noting that Gatwick Airport intends to resume work on bringing its standby runway into permanent use. In response to a Member's question on election campaigning, he urged all parties to abide by the current lockdown rules regarding remaining at home unless you have a relevant exemption, noting that the distribution of campaign material was not considered an exemption at this time.

## **11. REPORT OF CABINET MEMBERS, INCLUDING QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.1.**

The Deputy Leader noted that the Burgess Hill Place and Connectivity programme was proceeding at pace, as is the Northern Arc development. Homes England submitted a planning application regarding S106 obligations on 14 January and published a community newsletter detailing 4 items of note. This includes work commencing between Freeks Lane and Isaac Lane to reduce traffic in Maple Drive, the widening of Isaacs Lane, the forthcoming appointment of a contractor for the school and the fact that that the affordable housing numbers will be above target.

Regarding the Place and Connectivity Programme the Deputy Leader highlighted progression with connections in the Sheddingdean area. More consultation is required for the sustainable transport network across Burgess Hill but the Full Fibre work is progressing well in that area. The Council is awaiting an update from New River Retail on how they will progress in Burgess Hill and the Deputy Leader noted a delay to the work to demolish the library as more asbestos has been found in a recent survey. The delay is estimated to be around 4 weeks, and this will not affect other workstreams in the Burgess Hill Growth Area.

In response to Member's questions, the Deputy Leader acknowledged the unfortunate timing clash with the Council meeting and the Northern Arc briefing and agreed that if enough Members express an interest, she will arrange for a separate briefing to be provided. In reference to the greenways between Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath, 9 routes were under consideration but one has been unfortunately discounted due to prohibitive costs and a lack of support from East Sussex County Council on maintenance.

### **Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

The Cabinet Member provided an update from a recent meeting of GATCOM, noting that their headcount is reduced from around 3,300 a year ago to 1,800 with only 600 needed to service current operations. As the South Terminal remains closed it has been offered along with car parks and staff, to Central Government as a vaccination centre and they are already in discussions with the NHS. Work to the rail station continue and platforms should open in May 22 with the project completed in 2023. In response to a Member's question on the night flights consultation he confirmed that the Council will be providing a response, and he acknowledged a Member's comment about the timing of bringing the reserve runway into action at a time when the airport was so quiet.

Regarding the Council's parking department, he has approved a decision to replace three out of five of the parking enforcement vehicles with electric models, and a 4th will follow when its lease contract ends in 2022. Whilst the cost of leasing is

considerably higher, it is estimated that when fuel costs etc are taken into consideration there may be a small saving of around £500 per vehicle per annum. He noted that parking income and town centre footfall remains affected by the current lockdown but that larger villages continue to thrive.

Regarding economic development the Cabinet Member noted that the partnership with the three business associations continues to be dynamic and productive as evidenced by the increase in applications for the Micro Business Grants. This partly reflects the current times but also shows the Council's effective reach into the business community. He noted that work on the Haywards Heath prospective Business Improvement District has been temporarily halted until the lockdown has eased and permits proper engagement with business owners. Separately, a survey of 2,000 businesses has proceeded and officers will be assessing the responses from the start of February.

#### Cabinet Member for Customer Services

The Cabinet Member noted that the Council has been working to issue over £48m grants in this financial year. The website has been updated to make it easy for businesses to establish which grants they can apply for and she urged Members to encourage businesses to apply for the January 2021 grants as the take-up has been relatively low so far.

She noted the Customer Service team continue to assist a high number of residents and people can make an appointment to visit the Council Offices in a safe manner if they wish to. A new telephony system has also enabled queries to be managed effectively by staff working remotely.

The Cabinet Member also noted that the Full Fibre programme is on target with over 40km dug and ducting commencing, with an aim to be completed by June.

#### Cabinet Member for Environment and Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member thanked Council Staff and SERCO for their hard work in ensuring waste collections continued over Christmas and during the pandemic. He noted that the electrical items recycling has had a larger take-up than expected and acknowledged some Member's concerns that the containers fill up before collecting the last items from the end of streets. The container size is at the maximum possible, but he agreed to investigate what else can be done to assist. He noted that the amount of recycling was measured and agreed to provide further information on what work is being done to ensure that these items do not end up in landfill. He also noted that demand remains high for garden waste collection and there are enough spaces available if residents would like to subscribe.

The Cabinet Member noted that the Leisure Centres remain closed and the financial performance of Places Leisure is closely monitored. The Council has applied for the National Leisure Recovery Fund and should know by the end February if the bid is successful. Groundwork continues on walking and cycling plans for East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and the connectivity programme in Burgess Hill.

#### Cabinet Member for Community

The Cabinet Member noted that the Mid Sussex Partnership Board recently met and

provided an update on the meeting content. The Early Intervention Family Support project has worked with caseloads of 12 vulnerable families and in most cases a positive outcome was achieved. The West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People has proposed the redesign of the early help programme to provide a targeted offer to children. This focusses on the reduction of expenditure on buildings (often utilised by other services), to provide the funds more directly to people. He acknowledged Member's concerns about closing centres and the difficulties that could be faced by people trying to access services when they do not have adequate transport. He also acknowledged a Member's comment that buildings can be equally important to mental health as people like a space to meet and socialise. He noted that this proposal will go to consultation. The intention is to better target the children's budget and this improvement of services has been endorsed by the Commissioner and experts working with West Sussex County Council as it will bring the County Council in line with other similar and successful providers. Any queries from concerned residents should be directed to their County Councillor.

A briefing paper on Covid's impacts on young people and presentations by Haywards Heath College, the YMCA, Sussex Oakleaf and a new youth mentoring programme called Mentivity to be launched by Mid Sussex District Council was also discussed at the meeting.

In reference to his portfolio, the Cabinet Member noted that half term approaches and Officers are working on providing activities for young people including a 'Get Active' trail in St John's park, Victoria Park and Mount Noddy park. There will also be short dance videos available online concluding with a performance at the end of the week.

In response to questions from members, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that the pandemic has forced businesses and organisations to look at alternative ways provide services, citing the change to children's services as a potential way to bring services directly to people. He also noted that outdoor exercise is critically important to mental health and endorsed the Mid Sussex Marathon.

#### Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth

The Cabinet Member noted that the Site Allocations DPD was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 16 December and the Council is awaiting hearing dates which are anticipated for late March. The Inspector is confirmed as Mr Luke Flemming and further correspondence is expected from him in coming weeks. On 8 January 2021 the Council called for sites again as part of the review of the District Plan in 2023. The call is open until midnight on 19 February 2021. Landowner, developers and site promoters are invited to put forward sites to be considered through the forthcoming updates to the strategic housing and economic land availability assessment (SHELAA). The SHELAA will be a crucial part of the evidence base for the District Plan Review. He also noted that the Haywards Heath Masterplan has been reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee and will be presented to Council in March 2021.

He confirmed that the current total of affordable housing delivered is 183 units and the right-to-build task force is looking at opportunities for new forms of housing delivery including self, community build and community land trusts. He confirmed that the Council will support any Community Land Trust applications, the purpose of which is to provide social housing in perpetuity. A Community Land Trust is currently

active in Slaugham.

He also confirmed that the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) has been triggered, to help homeless people off the streets and all except one have been assisted.

**12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2.**

None.

The meeting finished at 8.11 pm

Chairman