

Public Document Pack

FULL COUNCIL

22 JULY 2015

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Bruce Dowling in the Chair), Councillors Rogers, Batsford, Cartwright, Charlesworth, Chowney, Clark, Cooke, Davies, Hodges, Howard, Poole, Pragnell, Roberts, Sabetian, Scott, Sinden, Street, Turner, Webb, Westley, Wincott, Beaver, Lee, Fitzgerald, Beaney, Atkins and Edwards

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Forward and Charman

1. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2015

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 20 May 2015 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared their interest in the minutes indicated: -

Councillor	Committee	Minute	Interest
Hodges	Full Council, 22 July 2015	7 – Co-location of ESCC Register Office in Hastings Town Hall and creation of civic facilities within Aquila House	Prejudicial – Member of East Sussex County Council
Pragnell	Full Council, 22 July 2015	7 – Co-location of ESCC Register Office in Hastings Town Hall and creation of civic facilities within Aquila House	Prejudicial – Member of East Sussex County Council
Pragnell	Cabinet, 6 July 2015	7 – Reducing Health Inequalities	Personal – Chair of the East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care Community Safety Scrutiny Committee
Scott	Full Council, 22 July 2015	7 – Co-location of ESCC Register Office in Hastings Town Hall and creation of civic facilities within Aquila House	Prejudicial – Member of East Sussex County Council
Webb	Full Council, 22 July 2015	7 – Co-location of ESCC Register Office in Hastings Town Hall and creation of civic facilities within Aquila House	Prejudicial – Member of East Sussex County Council
Webb	Cabinet, 6 July 2015	7 – Reducing Health Inequalities	Personal – Member of the East Sussex

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			County Council Health and Wellbeing Board and Vice Chair of Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Westley	Full Council, 22 July 2015	7 – Co-location of ESCC Register Office in Hastings Town Hall and creation of civic facilities within Aquila House	Personal – she is employed by East Sussex County Council
Wincott	Full Council, 22 July 2015	7 – Co-location of ESCC Register Office in Hastings Town Hall and creation of civic facilities within Aquila House	Prejudicial – Member of East Sussex County Council

3. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS UNDER RULE 12

Questions to the Leader, Deputy Leader and other Lead Members were asked and answered in accordance with rule 12.1 as follows: -

Questioner and Councillor	Subject	Reply Given By Councillor
Atkins	<u>Planning Department</u> residents were disappointed when planning permission for the recent link road extension was withdrawn. Can the Lead Member confirm if the action plan of improvements for the planning department, recommended by Cabinet, has been agreed and implemented? Councillor Poole replied that this matter fell within Councillor Forward's portfolio of responsibilities. A written response to the question would be circulated to members.	Poole
Beaney	<u>Alexandra Park Boating Lake</u> a number of residents would like to see the boating lake in Alexandra Park returned to use, is this still possible now that the new islands have been installed? Councillor Davies replied that it was still possible to use the boating lake for its original purpose, but as yet no one had come forward with a proposition to hire boats or pedalos on the lake. He commented that the park remained one of the town's most popular attractions, achieving an 80% approval rating amongst residents. A consultation was	Davies

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	currently ongoing regarding a potential cycle route within the park.	
Beaver	<p><u>Minimum Wage</u> will the Leader of the Council join with me in welcoming the Government's proposed increase in the minimum wage as a benefit for local residents?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney responded that we would not welcome the proposed increase in the minimum wage, as it was offset by reductions to working tax credit and child tax credit so many households would not see their overall income increase.</p>	Chowney
Edwards	<p><u>Social Lettings Agency</u> with five landlords joining the scheme in the first quarter, what are the prospects of this number increasing over the coming months?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney replied that the council had anticipated that initial take-up of the scheme by landlords would be slow. However, he was confident that an increasing number of landlords would register with the agency over the coming months as the benefits of the scheme became clear. It had not been possible to accept all of the landlords that came forward for the scheme, as the council had set strict conditions on the standard of properties it would accept.</p>	Chowney
Charlesworth	<p><u>Queensway Gateway Planning Application</u> the planning application for Queensway Gateway was due to be submitted to committee in July but has since been withdrawn. When will the application be submitted to Planning Committee?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney replied that the planning application was due to be submitted to Planning Committee in August. The application had been withdrawn from the July meeting to allow more time to revise the report.</p>	Chowney
Pragnell	<p><u>White Rock Trust</u> will the Lead Member join with him in congratulating the White Rock Trust on becoming a Coastal Communities Team, as part of the government scheme and provide details of how the council plans to support the Trust in the future?</p> <p>Councillor Poole congratulated the White Rock Trust on becoming a Coastal Communities Team but explained that she felt the Trust should not have had to bid for this</p>	Poole

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	<p>status. She added that the council was already in contact with the Trust on a range of issues and would meet with them to discuss their new accreditation.</p>	
Clarke	<p><u>High Speed Rail Link</u> what will the council do to support the local Member of Parliament in securing a high speed rail link from Hastings? Councillor Chowney replied that a high speed rail link remained a long term ambition for the town. He added that he continued to meet with the Member of Parliament and would support efforts to bring a high speed rail link to the town.</p>	Chowney
Clark	<p><u>Spending Review</u> does the Leader of the Council agree that the local Member of Parliament should speak out against the government's planned spending review and the impact this could have on public services in the town? Councillor Chowney expressed his disappointment at the government's planned spending review, and the potential impact of reducing public services on this scale could have on the town. Hastings Borough Council would support East Sussex County Council in opposing further budget reductions, whilst continuing to explore alternative means of income generation.</p>	Chowney
Cooke	<p><u>Waste Collection and Streetscene</u> recently, there has been a problem with litter in the streets around the town centre, particularly early in the morning. Will the Lead Member ensure that all residents in these areas are provided with seagull proof sacks and the the council's contractors are taking action to improve the street scene? Councillor Davies agreed that the streetscene in the town required improvement and had already raised this matter with the council's contractor. The council and its contractor were in the process of developing a programme to address issues around litter and fly tipping, particularly in high profile areas of the town, which included re-educating residents on the use of seagull proof sacks.</p>	Davies
Scott	<p><u>Community Engagement</u> how will the council develop its community engagement work in the future?</p>	Chowney

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	Councillor Chowney replied that the council had reduced the level of its community engagement work in recent years due to budget restrictions. He noted that much of the ongoing community engagement work was focused on the town centre, with the hope that this would improve the quality of life of residents in the whole town. Councillor Chowney continued that there may be scope to raise the profile of the council in other areas through existing festivals and events	
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4. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Councillor Chowney proposed a motion regarding the membership of committees, as set out in the resolution below.

RESOLVED – that the council adopt the following arrangements for the membership of committees: -

- 1) **Councillor Terri Dowling be appointed to Licensing Committee in place of Councillor Fitzgerald**

Councillor Atkins proposed a motion regarding the membership of committees, as set out in the resolution below.

RESOLVED – that the council adopt the following arrangements for the membership of committees: -

- 1) **Councillor Clarke be appointed to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Services, in place of Councillor Lee, and;**
- 2) **Councillor Edwards be appointed to the Country Park Management Forum, in place of Councillor Beaver**

5. ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2014/15 TO COUNCIL

The report of the Chief Auditor, from the Audit Committee, on the annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit was submitted. Under regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2011, local authorities are required to publish a statement of internal control each year, with the authorities' financial statements. The findings of the annual review of the council's internal control had been considered by the Audit Committee. The report set out the review of internal control and assurance gathering process. The council was also working with the Sussex Audit Group on a reciprocating basis to arrange a peer review of internal audit, which would be completed by 31 March 2018.

Under rule 13.3 the report was approved without being called for discussion.

RESOLVED – that the Audit Committee report 2014/15 to Council be accepted

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The reason for this decision was:

Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2011 requires relevant bodies to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal audit and of a committee of the body to consider the findings.

6. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Mayor having called over the minutes set out in the agenda, the under mentioned minutes were reserved for discussion.

RESOLVED – under rule 13.3 that the reports and minutes of committees set out in the agenda be received. Minute number 9 of Cabinet on 6 July 2015, which was a matter for Council decision, was approved without being called for discussion. Only those items which were reserved were discussed, as follows: -

Meeting	Minute	Councillor
Cabinet, 6 July 2015	2 – Boundary Review – Council Size	Beaver
Cabinet, 6 July 2015	3 – Amendments to the Council's Constitution	Turner
Cabinet, 6 July 2015	5 - Corporate Plan Retrospective Report on Performance During 2014/15 and Proposed Performance Indicator Targets for 2015/16	Lee
Cabinet, 6 July 2015	6 - Sex Establishment Policy – Review of Numbers and Development of a Policy	Clark
Cabinet, 6 July 2015	7 – Reducing Health Inequalities	Webb
Cabinet, 6 July 2015	EU Funding Project Approval (SHINE)	Westley

Minute number 2 of Cabinet on 6 July 2015 was a matter for Council decision. Councillor Cartwright moved approval of the minute, seconded by Councillor Westley, which was agreed by 21 votes for, 0 against with 8 abstentions.

Minute number 3 of Cabinet on 6 July 2015 was a matter for Council decision. Councillor Cartwright moved approval of the minute, seconded by Councillor Turner, which was unanimously agreed.

Minute number 6 of Cabinet on 6 July 2015 was a matter for Council decision. Councillor Davies moved approval of the minute, seconded by Councillor Clark, which was unanimously agreed.

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No motions for reference to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or reference back to cabinet were approved in respect of the items reserved for discussion and they were, therefore, received and agreed.

7. CO-LOCATION OF ESCC REGISTER OFFICE IN HASTINGS TOWN HALL AND CREATION OF CIVIC FACILITIES WITHIN AQUILA HOUSE

This item was moved down the agenda with the agreement of the Mayor.

Councillors Hodges, Pragnell, Scott, Webb and Wincott, having declared a prejudicial interest in this matter left the Council Chamber for the duration of this item.

The Right Worshipful the Mayor proposed that the Council should proceed as if it were a committee for this item, in order for Members to take advice from the Assistant Director of Financial Services and Revenues to inform decision making on this matter.

The Assistant Director of Financial Services and Revenues presented the report of the Director of Corporate Services and Governance, which invited Members to agree to lease space within Hastings Town Hall to accommodate the East Sussex County Council Register Office. A refurbished space within Aquila House would accommodate a fully accessible Council Chamber, Committee Rooms, Mayors Parlour and Member facilities in order for the council to transfer its democratic and civic functions from the Town Hall.

Following the relocation of the Register Office from its present location, the council would be able to achieve a capital receipt from the sale of land at Summerfields to Amicus Horizon for a social housing scheme. The council would also receive additional income from the lease of space in Hastings Town Hall to East Sussex County Council.

Councillor Cooke proposed an amendment to one of the recommendations of the report, as follows:

“Council is recommended that the Director of Corporate Services and Governance, be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader and the Leader of the Opposition...”

The proposed amendment was accepted by the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Chowney proposed approval of the recommendations, as set out in the resolution below, which was seconded by Councillor Cartwright.

RESOLVED (by 23 votes for, 2 against) that: -

- 1) Council delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Services and Governance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition, to:**

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- a) **Agree Heads of terms with East Sussex County Council for the lease of space in the Town Hall for 10 years;**
 - b) **Design and implement a programme of refurbishment to accommodate the civic functions within Aquila House and any other accommodation works as required to facilitate the move, to a maximum cost of £200,000;**
 - c) **Renegotiate the existing Aquila House internal refurbishment work contract to undertake the works, rather than tender the additional works on the grounds of expediency and urgency**
- 2) **That the Council agrees to the replacement of the existing microphone system, and the purchase of new audio visual equipment at an estimated cost of £50,000**

The reason for this decision was:

An opportunity has arisen to achieve a substantial capital receipt for sale of land at Summerfields for affordable housing. This sale has prompted the proposal to co-locate the ESCC Register Office within the Town Hall – providing an income stream, and an opportunity to relocate the council's civic and democratic functions to an efficient, modern, flexible working environment in Aquila House.

PART II

8. **CO-LOCATION OF ESCC REGISTER OFFICE IN HASTINGS TOWN HALL AND CREATION OF CIVIC FACILITIES WITHIN AQUILA HOUSE**

The Director of Corporate Services and Governance submitted a report to advise Members of the commercially sensitive information regarding the sale of land at Summerfields to Amicus Horizon.

Under rule 13.3 the report was agreed without being called for discussion.

RESOLVED – that Members note the report

The reason for this decision was:

To inform the Member decision on the co-location of the East Sussex County Council Register Office in Hastings Town Hall and the creation of civic facilities within Aquila House.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 9.44 pm)