

COUNCIL

23 JULY 2014

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

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Cooke

1. **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE 2014**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the annual council meeting held on 4 June 2014 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor	Committee	Minute	Interest
Forward, Hodges and Westley	Cabinet, 9 June 2014	3 – White Rock Baths	Prejudicial – Members of Charity Committee
Cartwright and Street	Cabinet, 7 July 2014	15 – Overview & Scrutiny Review of Changes to the Welfare System: Management Response	Personal – regarding discussion on the Credit Union

3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER**

There were no announcements from the Mayor or Leader at the meeting.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS UNDER RULE 12**

No written questions had been received.

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

Questioner and Councillor	Subject	Reply Given By Councillor
Charlesworth	<u>Active Hastings</u> a visitor to the town recently had difficulty finding out information about the Active Hastings programme of events; could the Lead	Poole

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	<p>Member explain how the programme is promoted?</p> <p>Councillor Poole said that she was surprised the visitor had been unable to find information about the programme, as Active Hastings events were publicised around the town. Councillor Poole requested that Councillor Charlesworth provide her with further details so that she could investigate the matter.</p>	
Lock	<p><u>Council Tax billing</u> will the policy on information items included with council tax bills be reviewed? East Sussex County Council (ESCC) recently offered to include details of its consultation on street lighting provision with council tax bills, but this was declined.</p> <p>Councillor Birch replied that a significant amount of information about local services was already included with the council tax bill mail out. He was not aware that ESCC had requested details of the street lighting consultation be included with the bill.</p>	Birch
Sabetian	<p><u>Events to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War</u> would the Lead Member provide an update on plans to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War? Councillor Poole explained that a wide programme of events were planned to mark the anniversary. Hastings Remembers, an exhibition of local stories from the First World War, was due to open at Hastings Museum on 25 July 2014. A pop up exhibition would also be held at the Old Town Hall Museum. We will also participate in 'Lights Out' on the seafront on 4 August 2014. The senior's forum were also planning further events for later in the year, to mark the centenary.</p>	Poole
Davies	<p><u>Notable local residents</u> a symphony is due to be performed at the Royal Albert Hall, as a tribute to Alan Turing, who lived locally. 2014 also marks the 100th anniversary of the publication of the Ragged Trousers Philanthropists. Are there any plans to celebrate the achievements of these local residents?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney replied that a film about the life of Alan Turing was due to be released shortly. The council would be publishing a special centenary edition of the Ragged Trousers Philanthropists, which would be available to buy from the Tourist Information Centre and other local shops shortly.</p>	Chowney

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Atkins	<p><u>Grass verges</u> is it possible to increase the frequency of grass cuttings to verges? Councillor Birch responded that ESCC was the agency responsible for highways matters, including the maintenance of grass verges. Hastings Borough Council had previously undertaken additional cuts to the verges; however, it had been necessary to stop these to achieve budget savings. It would not be possible to reinstate the additional cuts to grass verges, without having to find savings from other council services.</p>	Birch
Batsford	<p><u>Local bus services</u> does the Lead Member agree that the planned reductions by ESCC to local bus services would have a disproportionate effect on elderly and infirm residents of Hastings? Councillor Forward expressed her concern at the proposed changes to the local bus and dial-a-ride service, and noted that these services were particularly important to elderly and infirm residents. Councillor Forward encouraged as many people as possible to respond to the ongoing ESCC consultation on this matter.</p>	Forward
Beaver	<p><u>Teenage pregnancy rates</u> does the Leader of the Council agree that recent figures showing an increase in the number of teenagers that continue to smoke while pregnant is very worrying, would he also consider convening a multi-agency meeting to discuss options to tackle this issue? Councillor Birch commented that the figures illustrated an ongoing social challenge in Hastings, but added that statistics related to teenage pregnancy are often slightly out of date. Councillor Birch noted that ESSC and the local Clinical Commissioning Group were primarily responsible for addressing this issue. He asked Councillor Turner to raise this issue at the next meeting of the Health and Well Being Board, to ensure that support is targeted at areas with the greatest need.</p>	Birch
Sinden	<p><u>High speed train links to Hastings</u> is there an update on plans to develop a high speed train link to Hastings? Councillor Birch replied that Network Rail was currently investigating the technical feasibility of a high speed train link from Ashford to Bexhill, via Hastings. The technical investigations should be completed in early 2017. Meanwhile, the council and its partners continued to support the project;</p>	Birch

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	<p>a consultant had been commissioned to develop a business case for the investment by Network Rail in this service. The proposed works would need to fit into Network Rail's 2019/2024 funding and work programme.</p>	
Street	<p><u>Summer events</u> the programme of events over the summer has already been very successful, are there any figures for the number of visitors to Hastings?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney responded that visitor numbers to Hastings had increased, although the exact figures were not yet available. The excellent programme of events and good weather had attracted tourists to the town. Councillor Chowney added that further events including the, carnival, Seafood and Wine Festival and Stade Saturday's programme were planned to take place over the rest of the season. He highlighted the work of local community groups which, with support from the council, helped to create an exciting and varied programme of events across the year.</p>	Chowney
Edwards	<p><u>Parking</u> would it be possible to utilise the Stade open space for parking, when it is not in use for events?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney responded that the Stade open space was in use at the busiest times of year, when additional parking may be required. He explained that efforts were underway to continue to promote the use of the open space by residents and visitors.</p>	Chowney
Webb	<p><u>FLAG conference</u> I understand that the Lead member recently attended a FLAG conference, is there any good news for fishermen in Hastings?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney replied that further information had been given at the conference regarding the next round of FLAG funding. While it was intended to target funding for deprived areas, there was also a desire to expand the FLAG programme to cover the entire coast of England. Councillor Chowney also advised of continued efforts to ensure the fishing quotas are allocated fairly.</p>	Chowney
Scott	<p><u>Pelham roundabout</u> the recent works to Pelham roundabout have created significant improvements to the area, when will the fountain be switched on?</p> <p>Councillor Poole responded that the refurbished fountain would be switched on at 9.30pm on 26</p>	Poole

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	July 2014.	
Pragnell	<p><u>Town Hall lift</u> when will the new Town Hall lift be installed and why have the repairs taken so long to complete?</p> <p>Councillor Cartwright replied that the Head of Corporate Services had written to all Members in June to update them on repairs to the lift. Councillor Cartwright advised that the new lift would be installed in December, in the meantime, he asked officers to investigate the possibility of holding the next Full Council meeting at an alternative venue.</p>	Cartwright

5. ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2013-14 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 on 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.

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

RESOLVED – that the Audit Committee report 2013/14 to council is accepted.

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 for 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 16 of Cabinet on 7 July 2014, which was a matter for Council decision, was approved without being called for discussion. Only those items which had been reserved were discussed, as follows: -

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Meeting	Minute	Councillor
Cabinet, 9 June 2014	3 – White Rock Baths	Batsford
Cabinet, 9 June 2014	4 - Hastings Walking and Cycling Strategy	Sabetian
Cabinet, 7 July 2014	10 – Empty Homes Compulsory Purchase Programme	Clark
Cabinet, 7 July 2014	15 – Overview & Scrutiny Review of Changes to the Welfare System: Management Response	Davies

Councillors Forward, Hodges and Westley, having declared a prejudicial interest in minute number 3 of Cabinet on 9 June 2014, left the chamber while this matter was discussed.

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.

(The Mayor declared the meeting closed at. 8.01 pm)