

FULL COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2018

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Nigel Sinden) in the Chair, Councillors Bacon, Barnett, Batsford, Battley, S Beaney, Berelson, Bishop, Charman, Chowney, Cox, Davies, Evans, Fitzgerald, Levane, Louise, O'Callaghan, Roberts, Rogers, Sabetian, Webb, Lee, Patmore, K Beaney, Beaver, Edwards, Foster, Marlow-Eastwood and Rankin

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Scott, Forward and Turner

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

22. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS ON 11 JULY 2018 AND 23 JULY 2018

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting held on 11 July 2018 and the minutes of the reconvened meeting on 23 July 2018 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

23. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

The Right Worshipful, the Mayor gave a speech in remembrance of Ion Castro, a former Councillor, who had sadly passed away. He stated achievements such as the creation of Happy Harold for the town. The council were then asked to hold one minute's silence.

There were no announcements from the Leader of the Council.

24. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER RULE 11

A written question was received from a Mr Russell Hall, directed to Councillor Andy Batsford. The question was as follows:

"The Prime Minister announced on 3 October 2018 that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing cap for council house building will be lifted (see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-new-generation-of-council-housing>). Hastings Borough Council does not have an HRA as there is no council housing in Hastings.

The council has chosen not build council housing itself, I believe due to the 'Right to Buy' undermining such an effort, so it will be unable to take advantage of the lifting of the HRA borrowing cap yet on 3 October our council Leader again decried the

FULL COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2018

"desperate shortage of genuinely affordable housing" in Hastings. The developers and Housing Associations that the council relies upon to meet this need have clearly failed to do so.

Given the above, how does Hastings Borough Council plan to meet the need for new genuinely affordable housing?"

The answer was as follows:

"In 2017/18, 75 new affordable homes were created in the town, exceeding the target of 70. However, the council will need to continue to explore new ways of working with both private and social developers as part of its new Housing Strategy to increase the supply of all types of accommodation, but particularly affordable housing, to meet growing demand.

The council has recently appointed a Planning Development and Housing Enabling Officer to work closely with both private and social sectors in supporting the provision of affordable housing and ensure the number of units are maximised. The council also has plans to develop its own land for housing, including affordable housing, in line with its broader regeneration and income generation priorities. Development of key residential sites, such as Harrow Lane and the lower tier site at Bexhill Road, provide an opportunity to significantly improve housing supply and increase various forms of housing provision in future years if the council is able to successfully bring these sites forward. The council is also recruiting a Housing Development Manager, to advise the council and its housing company on the viability of potential development opportunities and secure funding to deliver a programme of residential development."

25. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS UNDER RULE 12

A written question was received from Councillor Foster, to the Leader of the Council, as set out below;

"Given the Prime Ministers recent announcement that the Government will lift the borrowing cap on councils to help support more housebuilding. Once funding is available, what direction do you think this will take the council, regarding the overall housing strategy?"

The answer to this from the Leader of the Council was as follows:

"The changes recently announced by the Government, give local authorities with existing housing stock held in a Housing Revenue Account the ability to borrow more money to support the development of new housing. The borrowing capability of stock-holding authorities was based on an assessment of the size, value and condition of their existing stock. The difference between this figure and the actual levels of Housing Revenue Account was referred to as headroom, many councils had limited headroom left and were therefore unable to borrow funds to support new developments. The recent announcement indicates that the government is going to

FULL COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2018

remove this requirement and enable councils to borrow within their Housing Revenue Account at a level which is considered prudential.

The changes will have a limited impact on non-stock holding local authorities, including Hastings Borough Council, as we do not have a Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Re-opening a HRA would require approval by the Secretary of State, the council would also be open to the risk of the right to buy on any of the new units it developed, which authorities with existing stock are able to offset against their wider portfolio. As part of its broader income generation strategy, the council has established a housing company to acquire new accommodation. Properties owned by the housing company are exempt from the right to buy.

As part of the development of its Housing Strategy, the council is continuing to explore new ways of working with both private and social developers to increase the supply of all types of accommodation, but particularly affordable housing, to meet growing demand. This includes the development our own sites to provide residential accommodation, and work is currently underway to model the viability of opportunities in the town and secure additional funding.

If government policy should change to limit or get rid of the Right to Buy, and to allow councils with no existing stock to borrow and start building council housing again, then I would want us to pursue this option.”

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

Questioners and Councillor	Subject	Reply Given by Councillor
Lee	Commercial Property Purchase Plan: There is currently a limit to the funds in the plan on commercial property purchases. Is there a plan to increase the limit, and if so, by how much? Councillor Chowney replied that it depends on what is made available to use up. To use up any available funds, there would be an agreed increase, to attempt to reduce deficit.	Chowney
Sabetian	Mergers: The recent development of Eastbourne and Lewes merging in to one authority raises questions as to whether Hastings Borough Council will consider the same kind of plan. Councillor Chowney replied that currently, the smallest size of the town would have to be 300,000 people. He said that it would be an interesting possibility to look in to, but Hastings was a unique town in the county.	Chowney
K Beaney	Addressing Caravans: With caravans on the roads, with many people in them, with	Chowney

FULL COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2018

	<p>seemingly no enforcement, the public health risks and anti-social behaviour, what is the situation on this? Councillor Chowney replied that this is the responsibility of highways at East Sussex County Council, and that it is a complicated issue. It was agreed with ESCC however, that they would take action on the issue.</p>	
Evans	<p>Station Plaza: Please could the Leader provide an update on the Station Plaza and the cuts to GPs. Councillor Chowney replied that keeping the station plaza treatment centre open was important, and supported by Hastings Borough Council, who had provided a petition to the CCG. However, this petition was currently deferred. The urgent treatment centres would be kept open for the time being.</p>	Chowney
O'Callaghan	<p>Homelessness: Please could Councillor Batsford provide an update on homelessness in the borough? Councillor Batsford gave an update, stating that the housing first scheme was underway. It would begin in early November. He also said that there was success in working with Seaspac. Interventions were 88% successful. He gave a recommendation to use Streetlink (Streetlink.org) to report rough sleepers.</p>	Batsford
Patmore	<p>Review of income generation: With the risk of income generation, why has the board to review income generation been disbanded? Councillor Chowney replied that it has not been disbanded, but will need to undergo a review to its role in income generation, and how the group will work in the future from now on.</p>	Chowney
Levane	<p>Borrowing cap: With the lifting of the borrowing cap, what opportunities are there in the future for Hastings Borough Council? Councillor Batsford replied that he was delighted at the news, however becoming a housing association was not an option, however, investment in to the Right to Buy scheme would be sought after.</p>	Batsford
Beaver	<p>Fees and Charges: What would the benefit be to owners of beach chalets with the raises to fees and charges? Councillor Chowney replied by saying that raising fees and charges instead of putting in</p>	Chowney

FULL COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2018

	cuts was the better option, however he saw that there was no reason as to why there was a ban on sub-letting beach chalets, and that the council should seek to change this at some point.	
Cox	Procurement of Waste Contract Update: Would Councillor Fitzgerald offer an update on the procurement of the new waste service contract? Councillor Fitzgerald replied with thanks to the officers in to their hard work. It was stated that there were workers' meetings and they seem positive at the change.	Fitzgerald

26. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Rankin proposed a motion, as set out in the resolution below, which was seconded by Councillor Lee.

RESOLVED (by 8 votes for, 21 against, with 0 abstentions) that:

The council do not accept the motion, as set out below;

“In order to assist in the process of setting sustainable budgets this council undertakes to establish a reasonable estimate of costs at an appropriate point each year for delivery of:

***A - its statutory services (as required by law)
and, if necessary:***

B - its 'core offer' or desired objectives over and above it's legal requirements in item (a)”

27. 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:

FULL COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2018

1. Councillor Turner to resign from Planning Committee and be appointed to Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2. Councillor Webb be appointed to Planning Committee
3. Councillor Berelson to resign from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to be appointed to Audit Committee.
4. Councillor Louise to resign from Audit Committee

28. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

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

It was agreed that all part 2 items would be deferred until the next Full Council meeting.

RESOLVED that only those items which were reserved were discussed, as follows: -

Meeting	Minute	Councillor
Cabinet – 3 September 2018	98 – Medium Term Financial Strategy	Patmore
Cabinet – 3 September 2018	99 – Site at West Marina (Part I)	Beaver
Cabinet – 1 October 2018	104 – Petition – No Marina at Rock a Nore	Louise
Cabinet - 1 October 2018	106 – Update on Temporary Accommodation	Battley

Councillor Lee, having declared a prejudicial interest in minute 99 of Cabinet on 3 September 2018, Site at West Marina (Part I), did not take part in the discussion.

No motions for reference for 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 Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.35pm)