

INFORMAL FULL COUNCIL

15 DECEMBER 2021

Present: Bacon (Chair), Cox (Vice-Chair), Arthur, Barnett, Battley, Batsford, K Beaney, S Beaney, Beaver, Bishop, Carr, Chowney, Cooke, Edwards, Evans, Fernando, Forward, Foster, Hay, Hilton, Marlow-Eastwood, Patmore, Pragnell, Roark, Rankin, Rogers, Roberts, Scott, Sinden, Turner and Williams.

214. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

215. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

216. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

The Leader of the Council thanked Hastings Borough Council officers for their dedication over the course of a very difficult year and asked residents to remember the importance of social distancing, masks, and handwashing in protecting themselves against Covid-19.

The Leader of the Council invited the Managing Director to provide an update on the pandemic response in Hastings.

The Managing Director, Jane Hartnell, informed councillors that infection levels had reached 800 per 100,000 in Hastings over the last few weeks. Whilst the high infection rate in Hastings is mainly related to the Delta variant, there is concern about the likely impact of Omicron, with 64 cases of the Omicron variant already confirmed in East Sussex. The Conquest Hospital is initiating its critical incident plan, seeking to discharge patients as soon as possible in order to direct resources to the vaccination programme. The council is aware that some parts of the town still need their first and second vaccination, with the lowest areas of take-up being Central St Leonards and Central Hastings. The council is working with partners to provide intelligence and support to the local vaccine effort. Additional effort and capacity are now focussed on the booster vaccine rollout.

The Mayor thanked volunteers and staff associated with the vaccination programme.

217. QUESTIONS (IF ANY) FROM:

217a Member of the Public under Rule 11

A written question was received from a member of the public regarding the local Housing Register. Councillor Batsford provided a written response which was sent to the questioner and published on the council's website.

Supplementary questions will be taken at the next formal Full Council meeting.

217b Councillors under Rule 12

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Councillor Patmore submitted a written question to Councillor Evans regarding development northeast of Fern Road. A written response was received and published on the council's website.

Councillor Patmore did not have a supplementary question.

Councillor Hilton submitted a written to Councillor Roger regarding the council's staff organisation chart. A written response was received and published on the council's website.

As a supplementary question Councillor Hilton asked if more information could be shared on the total number of staff in each department and some detail on their roles so that councillors could understand the capacity of each department.

Councillor Rogers said she would take those comments to officers and see if any further information could be provided.

The Mayor took oral questions from councillors to the Leader and cabinet members.

Questioner	Subject	Reply given by
Councillor Patmore	<p>Town Centre Crime – Given the rate of violent crime in Castle ward will the Leader of the Council tell us what she will be doing to combat this spike in violent crime and can she please look at reinstating the town centre CCTV?</p> <p>Councillor Forward replied that she has long been concerned about town centre crime. Councillor Forward said she had met with the Leader of East Sussex County Council and the Chief Inspector of Hastings and Rother police to discuss this. The council will continue to use its warden service to tackle anti-social behaviour. The CCTV is functioning and accessed by Sussex Police.</p>	Councillor Forward
Councillor Bishop	<p>Bale House – Can you tell us the latest attendance statistics for the Bale House?</p> <p>Councillor Evans replied that since the opening of the Bale House there have been over 25,000 visitors.</p>	Councillor Evans
Councillor Cooke	<p>Carbon Reduction - Many councils have put a year-on-year carbon reduction target into their climate change strategies. What year-on-year reductions does Hastings require to meet its net zero target, and what progress are we making towards that?</p> <p>Councillor Evans replied that housing stock and transport are the two main contributors to carbon emissions in Hastings. Councillor Evans said she</p>	Councillor Evans

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	would discuss further with officers and get back to Councillor Cooke with the figures.	
Councillor Turner	<p><u>Healthcare Reorganisation</u> - Is there anything Councillor Barnett can do to make sure that we encourage people to participate in the consultation process regarding reorganisation of the local NHS Trust?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett paid tribute to local NHS workers but said the town is lacking in healthcare resources considering its size and health outcomes. Councillor Barnett encouraged residents to engage with the consultation.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Carr	<p><u>Equalities Training</u> - Can I ask when councillors will be given equalities training and when did officers last receive equalities training?</p> <p>Councillor Rogers replied that face-to-face equalities training for councillors has been delayed due to Covid-19, however an online training session is being looked into for the new year. Staff have annual training and this is being looked at currently.</p>	Councillor Rogers
Councillor Battley	<p><u>White Ribbon Campaign</u> – Can you give us some information on the local White Ribbon campaign?</p> <p>Councillor Rogers replied that the campaign is about ending male domestic violence against women. Councillor Rogers said she was a little disappointed with engagement and so is intending to organise a working group with local partners to look at raising the profile of the campaign.</p>	Councillor Rogers
Councillor K Beaney	<p><u>Sea Road Shelter</u> - In May this year I asked why the public shelter on the seafront at the western end of Sea Road was fenced off. At the time you said it was fenced off for refurbishment, to be reopened for peak season. Can you let me know why it is still fenced off?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that refurbishment was completed over the summer but not where shelters were being occupied. Until the legal process is complete the shelter can't be accessed for maintenance. Councillor Barnett said he would speak to officers and provide Councillor K Beaney with an update.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Hilton	<p><u>Carbon Tax Motion</u> – Can you confirm a letter has been sent to the recipients named in the carbon tax motion passed at the last Full Council?</p> <p>Councillor Forward replied that she would confirm</p>	Councillor Forward

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	with officers that this has been done and update Councillor Hilton.	
Councillor Roark	<p><u>Refugee Crisis</u> – Can you please give us an update on the resettlement programmes that the council has in place?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford said that Hastings had led nationally on the resettlement programme, taking more refugees than was suggested. This has reinforced the message to other councils in the south east to step up and make similar offers.</p>	Councillor Batsford
Councillor Marlow-Eastwood	<p><u>Conquest Hospital Ophthalmology</u> - Can you clarify what you said about ophthalmology, it is my understanding the proposals are to relocate Hastings ophthalmology from the Conquest to Bexhill which already hosts a large number of appointments for Hastings' residents.</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that the consultation document sets out that Hastings will lose its ophthalmology service with it being relocated and divided between Eastbourne and Bexhill.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Scott	<p><u>Town Centre Safety</u> – Are local agencies coming together to address the issue of town centre crime and what are they doing to address these issues?</p> <p>Councillor Rogers replied that the Leader will be calling a meeting with local partners to discuss this. What is happening is not acceptable for residents. This is a priority for Hastings and the Council has asked Sussex Police to provide more details on where and when these crimes are occurring.</p>	Councillor Rogers

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.54pm)