



Council Meeting

Wednesday, 13th April, 2022

HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Hastings Borough Council to be held at the Council Chamber, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 3UY, on Wednesday, 13th April, 2022 at 6.00 pm at which meeting the business specified below is proposed to be transacted.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Legal Officer

Muriel Matters House
Breeds Place
Hastings

5 April 2022

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Announcements from the Mayor and Leader
5. Election of Leader of the Council
6. Membership of Committees
To give effect to any request received from a political group for a change in their representation on committee(s).
7. To consider draft Corporate Plan update 2022/23 and proposed amendments

8. Delegation of statutory powers (Assistant Director, Environment and Place)
9. Reports of Committees
- a) To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of any items considered while the public were excluded by the relevant committee because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in the respective paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 referred to in the minutes of the relevant committee.
- b) To receive and consider the recommendations and any decisions of the following committees.

Minute No.	Subject	Cabinet Member / Chair
EMERGENCY DECISION – 16 FEBRUARY 2022		
420.	Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF)	Chowney
CABINET – 7 MARCH 2022		
424.	Cornwallis Street Car Park	Chowney
425.	Climate Change Strategy update and plans for 2022	Evans
426.	Energy Procurement – Electricity contract renewal	Chowney
427.	Management Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations on reviewing the process and procedure of motions submitted at Full Council	Rogers
428.	Leisure Services Externally Funded Projects update 2022-23	Barnett
429. (C)	Affordable Housing Development	Batsford
430. (C)	Hastings Contemporary	Chowney
431.	East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative - Commissioning Update	Batsford
EMERGENCY DECISION – 8 MARCH 2022		
433.	Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Scheme Policy (Tranche 4 –	Chowney

	Extended Scheme)	
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Notes:

1. The Mayor will call over the minutes and members will rise and indicate those items which they wish to have discussed.
 2. No discussion shall take place at this stage upon part II minutes covered by the resolution 9a) above. Any such discussion shall be deferred to item 10 on the agenda.
10. To consider the recommendations and decisions of committees (if any) which the Council has resolved should be discussed after the exclusion of the public from the meeting.
11. Questions (if any) from:
- a) Members of the public under Rule 11
 - b) Councillors under Rule 12
12. Motion (Rule 14)
- Councillor Batsford to propose:

This Council, on behalf of the residents of Hastings, agrees to declare a housing emergency.

With rents soaring out of control, thousands of families are left buried in debt and under the threat of losing their home. Many remain stuck on the Council housing list, with little or no chance of an affordable secure home. The problem is made worse by a huge increase in the use of section 21 notices to secure 'no fault evictions' of tenants, destroying family homes as landlords take advantage of unprecedented price rises and sell up.

The Hastings Local Housing Allowance (which determines the maximum level of Housing Benefit that can be paid) now is at least 40% below the market value of most rented properties, once again driving families into debt, with rent arrears blocking them from seeking another home when they're evicted. The government has just announced that LHA rates are to be frozen for another year, while the rents tenants have to pay continue to escalate with no controls on the level of rents landlords can charge.

The shortage of genuinely affordable rented homes is causing a long-term problem too. But significant numbers of empty homes and identified housing sites, particularly brownfield sites, remaining undeveloped, 'land banked' by property speculators who prefer to wait for local housing values to increase still further. Councils can do little

about this, as they lack the cost-neutral CPO powers to bring empty homes and land-banked land back into use for genuinely affordable, social rented housing.

Like many tourist towns, residential homes in Hastings are also being stripped out of the rental market through the increase in homes being used as holiday lets, and being bought for second homes. We recognise that holiday cottages for short-term lets are an important part of the local tourist economy. However, second homes remain empty for most of the year, and are of little local value, as well as depriving local people of a potential home to live in. Councils need powers to control the proliferation of holiday homes, and to discourage people from using properties as second homes.

All these factors have led to a huge escalation in homelessness, with hundreds of millions of pounds wasted each year across the country providing unsatisfactory temporary accommodation, when it should be spent on building affordable homes and paying realistic levels of housing benefit.

All these factors combine to precipitate a real housing crisis. We are only at the very start of this perfect storm which will condemn current and future generations of Hastings residents to insecure, unaffordable and substandard housing. A safe, secure and affordable home is a basic human right.

In recognition of the above, this Council:

1. calls on the Leader of Hastings Council, and encourages the Conservative opposition leader to join her, to write to the Hastings and Rye MP and the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing, Michael Gove, demanding that he:

- abolish section 21 notices;
- reverse the decision to freeze LHA and increase it so it reflects the true level of private sector rents'.
- allows councils to charge up to 300% Council tax on second homes;
- introduces a separate planning use class for holiday let properties, so the council can control the proliferation of holiday homes through the development control process;
- reinstates the fair rent review system to cap housing rents at a realistic level;
- grants councils 'cost neutral' compulsory purchase powers that allow them to deduct costs from compensation paid for the compulsory purchase of long-term empty homes and land-banked land;
- fully funds councils to initiate a social rented house-building programme to finally produce the number of 'council' homes our town desperately needs.

2. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to Marie Lorimer, the UK Public Policy Manager at AirBnb to request a meeting, and seek to introduce a 90-day annual limit for entire home rentals in Hastings within the AirBnb platform. AirBnb currently has a lock on their platform that does not allow Greater London entire home properties to be rented out for more than 90 days a year.

13. Motion (Rule 14)

Councillor Barnett to propose:

Following the appalling sewage leak at Bulverhythe last summer, our residents have been rightly calling for action to ensure that this doesn't happen again. Since then, Hastings BC has been working to hold Southern Water to account.

This Council now calls for:

- * Southern Water to be returned into public ownership
- * Regular meetings with Southern Water at the highest level to hear current plans to improve both the sewage system and clean water supply for everyone, everywhere, in Hastings
- * Further letters to be sent to both our MP and Government expressing severe reservations about the performance of Southern Water
- * Stronger action from the Environment Agency, Ofwat and the Consumer Council for water to enforce sea water and domestic water supply standards in Hastings
- * Residents of Hastings to continue to report concerns about water on the Hastings Borough Council website

14. Motion (Rule 14)

Councillor Arthur to propose:

Climate change is threatening hundreds of millions of lives, livelihoods across every continent and is putting thousands of species at risk. The burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil, and gas – is by far the major contributor to climate change and is responsible for almost 80% of carbon dioxide emissions since the industrial revolution. In addition to being the leading source of emissions, there are local pollution, environmental and health costs associated with extracting, refining, transporting and burning fossil fuels.

These costs are often paid by Indigenous peoples of the Global South as well as marginalised communities here in the UK. Hastings is one of the most deprived towns in the country, residents are forced to spend an ever-increasing proportion of their income meeting the exponentially rising costs of energy. Standards of living and health are directly impacted. It is not sustainable to continue to extract and globally transport fossil fuels when genuinely sustainable methods of

production may exist locally to meet demand.

Globally, egregious industry practices have led to human rights violations and a fossil fuel system that has left billions of people across the globe without sufficient energy to lead lives of dignity. Failure to meet the ultimate goal of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement (to limit global warming to 1.5°C) risks pushing the world towards catastrophic global warming.

Yet, the Paris Agreement has no mention of oil, gas or coal and the much anticipated COP26 deal was disappointingly weak. Meanwhile, the fossil fuel industry continues to plan new projects. Banks continue to fund new projects. Closer to home, despite calls from the Labour-led Hastings Borough Council since 2016, East Sussex Pension Funds continue to invest in fossil fuels.

According to the most recent United Nations Environment Programme report, 120% more coal, oil, and gas will be produced by 2030 than is consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C. Efforts to meet the Paris Agreement and to reduce demand for fossil fuels will be undermined if supply continues to grow.

The solution is clear: fossil fuels must be kept in the ground. We therefore agree:

1. To endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (<https://fossilfueltreaty.org>). That is, for world leaders to work together in a spirit of international cooperation to:

- End new expansion of oil, gas and coal production in line with the best available science as outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and United Nations Environment Programme;
- Phase out existing production of oil, gas and coal in a manner that is fair and equitable, taking into account the responsibilities of countries for climate change and their respective dependency on fossil fuels, and capacity to transition;
- Invest in a transformational plan to ensure 100% access to renewable energy globally, support dependent economies to diversify away from fossil fuels, and enable people and communities across the globe to flourish through a global just transition.

2. To write to Rother District Council, Wealden District Council, Lewes District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council and the East Sussex Pension Fund, communicating this decision to them and urging them to pass similar motions of their own.

3. To continue to call on East Sussex County Council to commit to divesting the East Sussex Pension Fund from fossil fuels.

Note: Nothing contained in this agenda or in the attached reports and minutes of committees constitutes an offer or acceptance of an offer or an undertaking or contract by the Borough Council