



# Council Meeting

---

**Wednesday, 13th  
July, 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 July, 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 July 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. Questions (if any) from:
  - a) Members of the public under Rule 11
  - b) Councillors under Rule 12
6. 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

## 7. 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 the other Hastings political party leaders to join him, to write jointly to the Hastings and Rye MP and the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing, demanding that they:
  - Ensure that this government is strong and holds its promise to abolish section 21 notices and to allow councils to charge up to 300% Council tax on second homes.
  - reverse the decision to freeze LHA and increase it so it reflects the true level of private sector rents.
  - 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.

## 8. 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://fossilfuel treaty.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.

9. Motion (Rule 14)

Councillor Carr to propose:

This Council recognises that equality needs to be at the centre of everything we do and every decision we make, especially in how we provide services to the public.

As a Council we know that our town is one of diversity which we must celebrate and encourage, but also one of inequality which impacts on many people's day to day lives.

We believe that all residents should be given truly equal opportunities to thrive and live happy, healthy lives, free of fear and bigotry.

In line with our Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in The Equality

Act 2010), I move that this motion to set up an Equalities Working Group be referred to Overview & Scrutiny in accordance rule 14.5 of our Constitution. To reflect that equality is the responsibility of all of us as Councillors, no matter what our political group, a cross party Equalities Working Group should be set up to:

- Look at our internal equalities practices and how these can be improved
- Engage with groups and professional organisations for advice and guidance to help shape the councils understanding of the issues of under-represented groups as we recognise that listening to those with lived experience is vital when delivering effective services
- Further pursue our commitment to becoming an Age Friendly Community so that this status is achieved
- Look to achieve a recognised award for equalities as assessed under the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) scheme from the Local Government Association (LGA)
- Review and rewrite the Equalities Charter so that it becomes a meaningful document that can be shared to other businesses and groups across the town, in a way that is measurable, monitorable and with a system of recognised award so that the hard work of our partners can be clearly seen and celebrated
- Develop a long-term Equality and Inclusion Strategy

This Working Group will be open to all elected Councillors and the Portfolio Holder for Equalities and other Cabinet members will be invited to contribute to the discussions of the Working Group. The Working Group should meet at least quarterly but may meet more as the Group decides.

A progress report can be requested at any time by Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Managing Director so that the Group remains accountable, open, and transparent in its working. A full report with the conclusions of the Working Group and a draft Equalities Charter shall be submitted to Council for its approval.

I call upon my fellow Councillors to support the Working Group with enthusiasm to bring true equality to both the Council and the residents of the town.

## 10. Membership of Committees

To give effect to any request received from a political group for a change in their representation on committee(s).

11. Appointment of Independent Persons

12. 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.

<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Cabinet Member / Chair</b>
<b>CABINET – 6 JUNE 2022</b>		
437.	Reviewing the Anti-Social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order (ASB PSPO)	Rogers
438. (C)	Bye Laws for Pleasure Grounds, Public Walks and Open Spaces	Hilton
439.	Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Business Plan 2022-25	Batsford
440.	Cabinet Appointments to Committees, Working Groups, Partnerships and Representative Bodies	Barnett
441.	Household Support Fund	Willis
442.	Energy Rebate Policy	Willis
443. (C)	Budget Update May 2022	Willis

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 12a) above. Any such discussion



shall be deferred to item 13 on the agenda.

13. 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.

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