

FULL COUNCIL

13 JULY 2022

Present: Councillors Bacon (Chair), O'Callaghan (Vice Chair), Arthur, Barnett, Batsford, Beaney, Bishop, Cannan, Carr, Collins, Cooke, Edwards, Evans, Fernando, Foster, Haffenden, Hilton, Jobson, Marlow-Eastwood, Patmore, Pragnell, Rankin, Roark, Roberts, Rogers, Sinden, Turner, Webb, Williams, Willis.

261. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Councillors Hay and Beaver.

262. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th May 2022 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

263. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

| Councillor | Meeting | Minute | Interest |
|------------|--|--------------|---|
| Bishop | Full Council, 19 th July 2022 | 266 – Motion | Prejudicial – Works for the Environment Agency |
| Patmore | Full Council, 19 th July 2022 | 266 – Motion | Personal – Helps administer two charity investment funds which invest in public utilities |
| Jobson | Full Council, 19 th July 2022 | 266 – Motion | Personal – Member of Clean Water Action |
| Collins | Full Council, 19 th July 2022 | 266 – Motion | Personal – Member of Clean Water Action |
| Bishop | Full Council, 19 th July 2022 | 268 – Motion | Prejudicial – Works for the Environment Agency |
| Roberts | Full Council, 19 th July 2022 | 268 – Motion | Personal – Is a member of the East Sussex County Council pension fund |
| Roark | Full Council, 19 th July 2022 | 268 – Motion | Personal – Is a member of the East Sussex County Council pension fund |

264. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

The Mayor informed the Council that the Cabinet report on updating the Park Byelaws has been withdrawn from the meeting and won't be part of call over. The Byelaws that were approved by the Secretary of State were not the same as the Byelaws that were attached to the report discussed by Cabinet in June.

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The report and the Park Byelaws approved by the Secretary of State will now be referred back to the next available Cabinet meeting for discussion before they can be recommended for approval by Full Council.

The Leader of the Council noted the rise in Covid-19 infections and affirmed that the Council will take its public health responsibilities seriously. The Council will look to restart the local Covid-19 Taskforce bringing together the Council and local healthcare providers to ensure residents are kept safe from the rise in infections.

265. QUESTIONS (IF ANY) FROM:

265a Members of the public under Rule 11

Written questions were received from the public and written responses sent to the questioners and published on the Council's website.

Mr Hart was present and asked a supplementary question. Mr Hart asked what approaches the Council has made to Sussex Garden Trust in order to seek advice or request funds in relation to the Roman bath in Summerfields Wood?

Councillor Hilton said she will be getting a briefing on the background of the Roman bath and will write to Mr Hart with a further update in due course.

265b Councillors under Rule 12

Councillor Edwards submitted a written question to Councillor Barnett, a written response was received and published on the Council's website.

In a supplementary question Councillor Edwards asked if a deposit had been paid as part of the Harrow Lane Playing Field sale, and what is the expected completion date?

Councillor Barnett responded that he would raise these points with officers and respond to Councillor Edwards in writing.

Councillor Patmore submitted a written question to Councillor Evans, a written response was received and published on the council's website.

In a supplementary question Councillor Patmore asked if the money received from Homes England is a capital sum against the refurbishment cost, or can it be used to subsidise the rent?

Councillor Evans confirmed the money was a grant towards the building and the flats will be available to rent at Local Housing Allowance rates.

| Questioner | Subject | Reply given by |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Councillor Patmore | <u>Levelling Up Fund</u> – It is disappointing the Council couldn't put in a bid for the fund. As it is not guaranteed there will be a further round of funding, is the Council taking a big risk missing | Councillor Barnett |

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| | <p>out on vital funds?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett responded that the government criteria required a fully designed scheme, not a concept. There wasn't time to produce a quality scheme for the Bohemia leisure complex and the Council needs time to have a scheme ready for Round 3.</p> | |
| Councillor Carr | <p><u>Carbon Reduction</u> - Have you found any ways we might be able lower our carbon emissions in relation to waste and recycling?</p> <p>Councillor Haffenden replied that the Council is looking to run waste and recycling trucks on HVO oil which will cut emissions by up to 90% immediately. The longer-term goal is to have an all-electric fleet.</p> | Councillor Haffenden |
| Councillor Bishop | <p><u>Council Tax Rebate</u> – Will hard copy forms be available for those still to apply for their £150 Council Tax rebate?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett responded that 13,000 letters have gone out to residents who do not pay Council Tax by direct debit. Many of those will apply online but for those who can't the Contact Centre will provide support to help them complete their forms face-to-face.</p> | Councillor Barnett |
| Councillor Beaney | <p><u>Home Working</u> – What percentage of Council staff are still working from home?</p> <p>Councillor Rogers replied that she would find out and write back to Councillor Beaney.</p> | Councillor Rogers |
| Councillor Jobson | <p><u>Shared Prosperity Fund</u> – Can you offer support to local businesses via the Shared Prosperity Fund and enable them to create new opportunities for the town?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that he had been visiting local small businesses, however the town has not been given enough money via the Shared Prosperity Fund to do what is needed in Hastings. The funding formula favours those areas with a larger population. Hastings gets £1 million, which is the lowest amount that can be awarded.</p> | Councillor Barnett |
| Councillor Webb | <p><u>St Leonards Festival</u> – Can you please update us on the St Leonards Festival?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford replied that there were a wide variety of activities taking place, with a good turnout of local residents. Councillor Batsford thanked the volunteers who organised the event. The festival is one of only two events directly funded by the Council.</p> | Councillor Batsford |
| Councillor | <p><u>Hornty</u> – Can you comment on why the offer of</p> | Councillor Barnett |

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| Williams | <p>money from the Hornty Trust was turned down by the Council?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that the offer wasn't good enough for the people of Hastings. The cricket ground has been held in trust for the people of Hastings and the Council insists that is not renegade on and is not happy with the plan to sell the ground and offer a small percentage of the proceeds to the people of Hastings.</p> | |
| Councillor Collins | <p><u>500 affordable homes</u> – What progress has been made to construct 500 affordable homes to a healthy home standard?</p> <p>Councillor Evans responded that a number of houses are already under construction and she will be attending a workshop with the Hastings Homes Health Group.</p> | Councillor Evans |
| Councillor Turner | <p><u>NHS</u> – In light of local NHS challenges, do you agree that the Levelling Up agenda is just a soundbite?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford replied that it is incumbent upon the Council to make sure that residents do get the NHS services they need.</p> | Councillor Batsford |
| Councillor Fernando | <p><u>Battle Road</u> – Can the Leader of the Council update us on when the work on the Battle Road arches will be complete?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that the work had taken far longer than imagined. This is a project about safety and further issues have been uncovered as the work progressed. It is now a more complicated project. Local residents have had letters explaining the situation in detail. The County Council are going to introduce new road signage and better information to try to stop drivers going too far up Battle Road.</p> | Councillor Barnett |
| Councillor Arthur | <p><u>Community Safety</u> – I am receiving increasing reports of hate crimes and abuse that Black and Asian people are experiencing on our streets. Could you update us on what the Council is doing to tackle racism and violence against women?</p> <p>Councillor Rogers replied that domestic abuse cases are down by 8% since lockdown was lifted. There have been 325 instances of violence against women and girls in Hastings this year. This is a 16% increase. There have been 299 reported cases of hate crime in Hastings so far this year, a 6.4% increase.</p> | Councillor Rogers |

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266. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Bishop declared a prejudicial interest and left the Council Chamber for the duration of the item.

Councillor Barnett proposed a motion as set out in the agenda, seconded by Councillor Sinden.

Councillor Hilton proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Jobson, to amend the second bullet point so that it reads:

“To setup a working group including representatives from groups such as the Coastal Users Group, subject to their agreement, and Clean Water Action to hold 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. This to include at least one public meeting a year where residents are able to ask progress on these plans.”

Councillor Barnett accepted the amendment.

Councillor Pragnell proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Patmore, to delete the following words:

“Southern Water to be returned to public ownership”

Councillor Barnett did not accept the amendment.

The Deputy Mayor proposed suspending Rule 16.6b of the Council’s Constitution, seconded by Councillor Pragnell.

RESOLVED that council suspends Rule 16.6b of the Constitution to permit the substantive motion and any proposed amendments to be on the table and open for discussion at the same time.

The amendment was not carried by 10 votes for, to 18 against.

RESOLVED (by 18 votes for, to 10 against) that Full Council accepts the motion as set out below:

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

* To setup a working group including representatives from groups such as the Coastal Users Group, subject to their agreement, and Clean Water Action to hold 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

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Hastings. This to include at least one public meeting a year where residents are able to ask progress on these plans.

* 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.

267. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Bishop returned to the Council Chamber.

Following legal advice the Mayor deferred the housing crisis motion to the next Full Council meeting.

268. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Bishop declared a prejudicial interest and left the Council Chamber for the duration of the item.

Councillor Arthur proposed a motion as set out in the agenda, seconded by Councillor Roark.

RESOLVED (by 24 votes for, to 2 against with 2 abstentions) that Full Council accepts the motion as set out below:

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.

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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.

269. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Bishop returned to the Council Chamber.

Councillor Carr proposed a motion as set out in the agenda, seconded by Councillor Patmore.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that Full Council do accept the motion as set out below:

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. #

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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.

270. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

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Councillor Barnett informed the Council that Councillor O'Callaghan is to be appointed to the Licensing Committee.

Councillor Patmore informed the Council that Councillor Cooke is to be appointed to the Environment and Safety Committee in place of Councillor Hay.

RESOLVED that the Council notes the following arrangements for the membership of committees:

1. Councillor O'Callaghan is appointed to a vacant seat on Licensing Committee
2. Councillor Cooke replaces Councillor Hay on Environment and Safety Committee

271. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

Councillor Rogers proposed approval of the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Roberts.

Councillors Rogers thanked the Independent Persons, John Baker and Amanda McIntyre, for their support and advice to the Standards Committee during their first term.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To renew the appointment of John Baker and Amanda McIntyre as Independent Persons for a further three-year term from 1st November 2022 to 31st October 2025.

Reasons:

The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to appoint at least one Independent Person to assist with the Standards process. Further, changes in employment legislation requires an Independent Person to be involved in any disciplinary action against any of the three statutory officers, those being the Head of Paid Service, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

272. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

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

RESOLVED that under rule 13.3 the reports and minutes of committees set out in the agenda, including those items on which a council decision was required, be received, and agreed. Only those items which were reserved were discussed as follows:

| Meeting | Minute | Councillor |
|---------|--------|------------|
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| Cabinet, 6 th June 2022 | 437 - Reviewing the Anti-Social Behaviour Public Space Protection Order (ASB PSPO) | Arthur |
| Cabinet, 6 th June 2022 | 439 – Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Business Plan 2022 – 25 | O’Callaghan |
| Cabinet, 6 th June 2022 | 440 – Cabinet Appointments to Committees, Working Groups, Partnerships and Representative Bodies | Edwards |
| Cabinet, 6 th June 2022 | 443 – Budget Update May 2022 | Rankin |

Minute 443 of Cabinet on 6th June 2022, Budget Update May 2022, was a matter requiring Full Council approval. The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Willis, seconded by Councillor O’Callaghan and agreed unanimously.

Councillors debated minutes 437, 439 and 440 of Cabinet on 6th June 2022. These matters did not require Full Council approval.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

(i) The existing Harold Place project be removed from the Capital programme until such time as a revised scheme for the area is determined.

(ii) The Capital programme budget for the Castleham Industrial units be increased to £250,000 (from £140,000).

(iii) The Capital programme budget for Buckshole Reservoir works be increased to £1,353,000 (From £1,253,000)

(iv) Undertake a Mid-year budget review to potentially increase fees and charges, reduce expenditure, and sell assets.

Reasons:

The budget report in February 2022 identified that a balanced budget in 2022/23 could only be achieved by using £2.33m of reserves, and that further savings would be required given the relentless increases in homelessness costs in particular. The forecasts for future years showed annual deficits increasing e.g. £2.426m in 2023/24, £2.544m in 2024/25, and £2.531m in 25/26.

Following the steep increases in inflation and bank rates the forecast for the current and future years shows annual deficits potentially increasing by over £900,000 in 2022/23 and over £1,000,000 in 2023/24. Costs for Capital schemes are likewise increasing dramatically.

(The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.55pm)