

Public Document Pack

FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2015

Present: The Right Worshipful The Mayor (Councillor Bruce Dowling) in the Chair, Councillors Rogers, Batsford, Cartwright, Charlesworth, Chowney, Clark, Cooke, Davies, Forward, Hodges, Howard, Roberts, Sabetian, Scott, Sinden, Street, Turner, Webb, Wincott, Beaver, Charman, Lee, Fitzgerald, Beaney, Atkins, Clarke and Dowling

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Poole, Pragnell, Westley and Edwards. Apologies for lateness were noted from Councillor Cooke.

11. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2015 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2015

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 July 2015 and the extraordinary Council meeting held on 23 September 2015 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared their interest in the minutes indicated:

Councillor	Committee	Minute	Interest
Cartwright	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of the GMB union
Chowney	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of a trade union
Clarke	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he has been a member of a trade union
Davies	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of Unite and the National Union of Teachers
Fitzgerald	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of Unison
Hodges	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of Unite
Roberts	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of a trade union
Scott	Full Council, 21	14 – Motion (Rule	Personal – he is

FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2015

	October 2015	14)	a member of a trade union
Street	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of a trade union
Turner	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of a trade union
Wincott	Full Council, 21 October 2015	14 – Motion (Rule 14)	Personal – he is a member of a trade union

In relation to minute number 14, it was noted that all members of the Labour group are, or have been, a member of a Trade Union.

13. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS UNDER RULE 12

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

Questioner and Councillor	Subject	Reply Given By Councillor
Atkins	<p><u>Quarterly Targets for Social Lettings Agency</u> at a recent Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting members were advised that quarterly performance monitoring information would not be made available for the social lettings agency pilot. However, appendix 3 of the report to Cabinet states that this information would be made available? Were Cabinet members misled on this matter?</p> <p>Councillor Forward replied that Cabinet members were not misled on this matter and that the social lettings agency pilot is subject to regular review. A target figure for the number of properties the council intended to acquire by the end of the pilot had been set. The council had recently received additional enquiries from landlords looking to participate in the scheme, and efforts would continue to generate interest in the initiative. Indeed, the social lettings agency would be the subject of a news item for Radio Sussex. Councillor Forward agreed to schedule a meeting with Councillor Atkins and the relevant officers to discuss this matter further.</p>	Forward
Street	<u>Hastings Country Park</u> there has been lots of coverage in the media about the clearance of	Davies

FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2015

	<p>gorse at Hastings Country Park. Will the lead member explain what is going on at the country park and why?</p> <p>Councillor Davies explained that the clearance of gorse was part of the council's Higher Level Countryside Stewardship Agreement for Hastings Country Park. The council had taken advice on measures to create a more diverse coastal habitat. Following concerns raised by the local community, the council's contractor had moved away from burning the gorse to chipping the plants and recycling them in the country park. Councillor Turner had previously identified some health and safety issues with the works, which have since been addressed.</p>	
Lee	<p><u>Visitor numbers at the White Rock Theatre</u> the target for visitor to numbers to the White Rock Theatre was not increased this year. Will the lead member confirm how the council plans to increase visitor numbers to the theatre?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney responded that these activities were the responsibility of the contractor who operated the theatre on behalf of the council. The council did not receive an increase in revenue if visitor numbers to the theatre increased. In the long term, the council was considering options for the wider regeneration of the White Rock area. This may include the creation of a new entertainment venue with improved facilities.</p>	Chowney
Charlesworth	<p><u>Regeneration of White Rock and Summerfields</u> will the lead member provide an assurance that all existing users of the land at White Rock and Summerfields will be consulted on any future plans for the regeneration of the area?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney confirmed that any specific plans for the regeneration of this area would be subject to a thorough public consultation, which would include all existing users of the sites affected. A working group of stakeholders had been set up to consider the potential long term use of the area.</p>	Chowney
Clarke	<p><u>Communication with local businesses</u> how does the council communicate with local employers and what can be done to support this in the future?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney replied that the council was in regular contact with local employers, mainly through the work of the regeneration team. The</p>	Chowney

FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2015

	<p>council was also a member of Locate East Sussex, which encouraged business to relocate to the area. SeaChange Sussex had also recently developed new office space in the town centre, as well as new out of town facilities at Queensway Business Park North and South. Initiatives had also been developed to support particular sectors of industry, such as the Tech66 group which worked closely with businesses in the vacuum technology and photonics industry. Councillor Chowney welcomed suggestions from members on how the council could continue to proactively engage with the business community in the future.</p>	
Turner	<p><u>Feed-in Tariff</u> does the Leader of the Council agree that recent reductions to the feed-in tariff will reduce the production of electricity from renewable sources and increase the risk of fuel poverty, will he also raise this matter with the local Member of Parliament? Councillor Chowney noted that there had been a reduction of 87% to the feed in tariff, which may result in the loss of jobs in the renewable energy sector. The reduction may deter businesses and residents from installing solar panels on their premises. Councillor Chowney agreed to raise this matter with the local Member of Parliament, as he did not believe the policy supported the development of renewable energy sources.</p>	Chowney
Dowling	<p><u>Hastings Youth Council</u> will the Leader of the Council join with her in supporting Hastings Youth Council's recent campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues? Councillor Chowney congratulated Hastings Youth Council on their excellent campaign to address the important, but often over-looked, issue of mental health. He added that mental health issues were often linked to other problems such as homelessness and problem-drinking and it was therefore essential that campaigns such as this were supported.</p>	Chowney
Batsford	<p><u>Number 7 Bus Route</u> will the lead member join with him in congratulating residents in St Helens ward and users of the number 7 bus in securing a rescheduled service, which takes better account of the needs of users? Councillor Davies congratulated the residents and users, as well as the local borough and county councillors in securing the improved</p>	Davies

FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2015

	service.	
Beaver	<p><u>Parking spaces on Bexhill Road</u> the new bus lane on Bexhill Road, which will be introduced when the link road is opened, will result in the loss of parking spaces on Bexhill Road causing disruption for residents and business in that area. Will the Leader of the Council raise this matter with East Sussex County Council and ask them to reinstate extra parking spaces? Councillor Chowney agreed to raise this matter with East Sussex County Council, but requested further details from Councillor Beaver before doing so.</p>	Chowney
Sabetian	<p><u>Review of Council Tax Liabilities for Caravans</u> will the Leader of the Council advise of the outcome of a recent review of council tax liabilities in respect of caravans? Councillor Chowney advised that Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council had recently undertaken a review of council tax liabilities in respect of caravans. The review found that an additional 27 caravans were eligible to pay council tax, which would result in an increase in revenue of up to £30,000.</p>	Chowney

14. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Chowney proposed approval of a motion, as set out in the resolution below, which was seconded by Councillor Forward.

RESOLVED (by 21 votes for, to 6 against) that as a major employer in the local area, this council welcomes the positive benefits that arise from the relationship that we have with recognised trade unions, and seeks to encourage trade union membership in its own workforce, as well as promoting the benefits of trade union membership in the town as a whole. However, the council notes that the Trade Union Bill 2015 and associated secondary legislation, if enacted, would:

- **Allow agency labour to be used to substitute for striking workers (currently outlawed);**
- **Introduce very high thresholds for industrial ballots, with an extra threshold in certain public services, without doing anything to improve the ability of workers to participate in ballots;**
- **Severely restrict the right to picket and peacefully protest, including organising campaigns through social media;**
- **Potentially reduce trade union facility time and withdraw check off union contributions in the council and other employers in Hastings;**
- **Require union members to ‘contract in’ to their union’s Political Fund every 5 years.**

FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2015

This council believes that the relationship between employers and their employees in Hastings through their collective representatives would be damaged by the above proposals and calls on the government to scrap the Trade Union Bill and all associated secondary legislation.

We instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the council's opposition to the Bill and requesting that government scrap the proposed legislation.

15. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Cooke proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Lee, as follows:-

"Hastings Borough Council:

1. Welcomes "The Bee Cause" initiative promoted by Friends of the Earth, and supports the principles contained within it of:
 - a) Creating a bee-friendly habitat or installing bee hotels
 - b) Passing a motion or adopting policy to protect bees
 - c) Adopting planning policy to protect or create habitat
 - d) Reviewing pesticide use
 - e) Encouraging businesses and community groups to take action for bees
2. Welcomes the government's publication of The National Pollinator Strategy as a major step forward in raising the profile of this important issue
3. Commits to using both its influence and its direct action, wherever reasonably practical, to create, protect, and encourage bee-friendly environments, starting its renewed commitment by preparing and creating a new, pollinator-friendly flower bed in the Alexandra Park this year"

Councillor Howard proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by Councillor Roberts, as follows: -

"4. Condemns the government for overruling the EU ban on neonicotinoid pesticides, which are known to be a major cause of bee deaths, and calls on them to reinstate the ban when it's reviewed in December"

The amendment was accepted by the proposer of the original motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that: -

Hastings Borough Council:

1. **Welcomes "The Bee Cause" initiative promoted by Friends of the Earth, and supports the principles contained within it of:**
 - a) **Creating a bee-friendly habitat or installing bee hotels**
 - b) **Passing a motion or adopting policy to protect bees**
 - c) **Adopting planning policy to protect or create habitat**
 - d) **Reviewing pesticide use**

FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2015

- e) Encouraging businesses and community groups to take action for bees
2. Welcomes the government's publication of The National Pollinator Strategy as a major step forward in raising the profile of this important issue
 3. Commits to using both its influence and its direct action, wherever reasonably practical, to create, protect, and encourage bee-friendly environments, starting its renewed commitment by preparing and creating a new, pollinator-friendly flower bed in the Alexandra Park this year
 4. Condemns the government for overruling the EU ban on neonicotinoid pesticides, which are known to be a major cause of bee deaths, and calls on them to reinstate the ban when it's reviewed in December

16. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Councillor Chowney proposed a motion in respect of the membership of committees, as set out in the resolution below.

RESOLVED that the council adopt the following arrangements for the membership of committees:

- 1) Councillor Terri Dowling be appointed to Museums Committee, in place of Councillor Charman

Councillor Atkins proposed a motion in respect of the membership of committees, as set out in the resolution below.

RESOLVED that the council adopt the following arrangements for the membership of committees:

- 1) That Councillor Clarke be appointed to the vacant seat on Museums Committee

Councillor Atkins also announced that Councillor Charlesworth had resigned from the Hastings Open Bowls Tournament Committee, as she was no longer able to access the bowls pavilion.

17. AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The report of the Chief Legal officer on amendments to the council's constitution was submitted. The council's constitution was the basis for its corporate governance, and it was necessary to update and improve the document on an ongoing basis. Under rule 13.3, the recommendations contained in the report were approved without being called for discussion.

RESOLVED that:

FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2015

- 1) Council approve the changes to the council's constitution as set out in appendix 1 of the Chief Legal Officer's report;
- 2) Council approve the changes to part 7 of the council's constitution as set out in appendix 2 of the Chief Legal Officer's report;
- 3) Council approve the changes to part 8 of the council's constitution as set out in appendix 3 of the Chief Legal Officer's report, and;
- 4) Council approve the changes to part 4 of the constitution, officer employment procedure rules provision for the proposed procedures of the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer in appendix 4

The reason for this decision was:

The council's constitution is the basis for the council's corporate governance. It is necessary to amend and improve the documents on an ongoing basis.

18. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Mayor called over the minute set out in the agenda; however, the item was not reserved for discussion. Therefore, as minute 14 of the Cabinet meeting held on 7 September 2015 did not relate to a matter for Council decision, the recommendations were received.

(The Mayor declared the meeting closed at. 7.54 pm)