

Public Document Pack

FULL COUNCIL

26 JULY 2017

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Judy Rogers) in the Chair, Councillors Sinden (Vice-Chair), Batsford, Cartwright, Chowney, Clark, Cooke, Davies, Howard, Dowling, Roberts, Sabetian, Scott, Street, Turner, Webb, Westley, Wincott, Beaver, Charman, Lee, Fitzgerald, Beaney, Atkins, Edwards, Clarke, Bacon and Rankin

Apologies for absence were noted for Councillor Forward, Poole, Dowling and Patmore

1. **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17 MAY 2017**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 17 May 2017 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Councillors declared their interest in the minutes indicated:

Councillor	Committee	Minute	Interest
Chowney	Cabinet, 17 July 2017	12 – Petition: More Public EV Charging Facilities in Hastings	Personal – he owns an electric vehicle
Fitzgerald	Full Council, 26 July 2017	5 – Questions from Councillors under Rule 12	Personal – he is employed by a domestic violence charity
Sabetian	Cabinet, 17 July 2017	12 – Petition: More Public EV Charging Facilities in Hastings	Personal – he owns an electric vehicle

3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER**

The Mayor announced that she would be holding a community picnic in St Leonards Gardens on 13 August 2017 from 1–5pm.

The Mayor encouraged all members to support Hastings Pride event on 27 August 2017.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER RULE 11**

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A written question had been received from Mr Christopher Hurrell regarding the new visitor centre at Hastings Country Park. Copies of the question and response were circulated at the meeting.

Mr Russell Hall asked a supplementary question of the Leader of the Council, as follows:

“The reply to Part 2 of the question stated that the money from the sale of Warren Cottage is currently earmarked for the new Country Park Interpretative centre. In the Council Leader’s April 2017 report Cllr Chowney stated that “With the funding we’ve now received, there will be plenty to build the visitor centre as originally planned. The council also had set aside money from the sale of Warren Cottage ... to contribute to the new visitor centre, but this will hopefully now be available for other enhancements in the Country Park”. Is the money from the sale of Warren Cottage available for other enhancements in the Country Park?”

Councillor Chowney replied that, as far as he was aware, the full sum was still available for the project.

A written question had been received for Mr Russell Hall regarding the community infrastructure levy (CIL). Copies of the question and reply were circulated at the meeting.

Mr Hall asked a supplementary question of the Leader of the Council, as follows:

“The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) review published in February 2017 recommends that the Government should replace the CIL with a hybrid system of a broad and low level Local Infrastructure Tariff (LIT) and the continuation of Section 106 agreements for larger developments. Is it not time that Hastings Borough Council changed its local policy on Section 106 viability assessments to increase transparency, as Islington and Greenwich councils have, by ensuring that any viability assessments that conclude that Section 106 contributions make the project unviable are put into the public domain so that the Planning Committee and the Public may scrutinise them?”

Councillor Chowney replied that the council would investigate this matter further. He added that Greenwich and Islington councils had adopted supplementary planning documents in relation to viability assessments.

5. 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
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Lee	<p><u>White Rock Theatre</u> with the future of the White Rock Theatre under question, what assurances can the Leader of the Council give that we will retain a good performance facility in the town?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney replied that the existing contract for White Rock Theatre comes to an end in 2019. The council pays a £600,000 subsidy to the theatre operator, and this is not considered to be sustainable, given the council's current financial position. The facilities at the theatre were also not considered appropriate for a modern performance venue. Councillor Chowney acknowledged that it was essential to retain a large performance venue in the town, and this would be considered as part of broader plans for the redevelopment and improvement of the White Rock area.</p>	Chowney
Martin Clarke	<p><u>Supporting Job Creation</u> the corporate plan includes a target for the council to support the economic development of the town and in particular, the creation of employment opportunities. Would the Leader of the Council provide an update on this?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney replied that the council contribute to Locate East Sussex, a county-wide initiative which encouraged business development and relocation to the town. He noted that the number of people in the town employed in the manufacturing sector was above the national average. Hastings also had a good reputation for vacuum and high technology manufacturing. He added that it was important firms could recruit their workforce locally and this will be a key aim for the CLLD programme, if the bid is successful.</p>	Chowney
Bacon	<p><u>Play and Leisure activities</u> what play and leisure activities will the council be providing for children and young people during the summer holidays?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford said that he had recently attended a Playdays in the Park event with the Mayor. This was a high profile, successful event for the town's young people. It demonstrated the council's commitment to providing play and leisure opportunities, as well as the hard work of council officers to deliver these activities. A full brochure of activities organised by Active Hastings over</p>	Batsford

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	<p>the summer period was available. This included a street bites project, aimed at children in receipt of free school meals. The project included both play and sports activities, and a healthy meal for the participants. Further work would be undertaken after the summer season to assess both the financial and social benefits of the programme.</p>	
Cooke	<p><u>Open Wide International Limited</u> a recent article in the Argus newspaper stated that Open Wide International Limited, an adventure sports company, was looking for a potential site in Hastings. Have they contacted the council about this? Councillor Chowney said that he would check this with the lead member and respond in writing.</p>	Chowney
Scott	<p><u>National Crime Statistics</u> national crime levels are showing an upward trend. In Hastings, the number 1 reported crime is domestic violence. What more can be done to address this issue? Councillor Fitzgerald acknowledged that there were a variety of complex reasons which had contributed to the reported increase in domestic violence. In part, the increase was due to improved reporting measures. The council continues to work proactively with a variety of partner agencies, including the Police, on a range of initiatives to tackle violent crime. He added that budgetary pressures across these agencies had impacted this work. Councillor Fitzgerald agreed to raise this issue at the next meeting of the crime reduction partnership and with the Police and Crime Commissioner.</p>	Fitzgerald
Rankin	<p><u>Risk Assessment</u> will the Leader of the Council provide an update on risk assessment works that have been undertaken locally since the Grenfell tragedy? Councillor Chowney replied that the council had been working closely with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) to develop an action plan of priority buildings across the private and social sector which will require assessment. The cladding on the Four Courts tower blocks had already been tested and was found to be safe. Inspections are</p>	Chowney

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	now being carried out on 5-storey blocks in the town, once these have been completed assessments will also be undertaken on all blocks of 3 storeys or more. Given the housing stock in the town, particular consideration would need to be given to practical safety measures that can be introduced for houses in multiple occupation.	
Street	<u>Green Flag Accreditation</u> Alexandra Park, St Leonards Gardens and Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve have retained their green flag accreditation. Will the lead member explain what this means? Councillor Fitzgerald explained that the green flag award was a national accreditation scheme run by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The awards set a benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces, considering not only how clean, well maintained and sustainable they were, but also the levels of community engagement. Retaining the green flag accreditation was to be welcomed and showed the work of members, officers, contractors and volunteers in this area.	Fitzgerald
Beaver	<u>Bexhill Road bus lane</u> given the reduced levels of traffic on Bexhill Road, following the opening of the new link road, does the Leader of the Council agree that the proposed bus route for Bexhill Road is no longer necessary and will he write to the lead member at East Sussex County Council, asking them to reconsider their proposals? Councillor Chowney said that he felt the proposed bus lane was no longer necessary and agreed to write to the lead member at East Sussex County Council regarding this matter.	Chowney

6. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Lee Clark proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Lee, as follows:

“Hastings Borough Council increase with immediate effect the age at which no charge is made for interment fees and cremation fees at Hastings Borough Council facilities for residents of the Borough. The increase is to be from the current age of 5 to the age

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of 18. This is also to include those who have reached their 18th birthday but remain in full time further education.

To be funded from reserves for the remainder of the municipal year 2017 – 2018 and for future years to be costed and allowed for within the Budget for 2018 – 2019 onwards.”

Councillor Fitzgerald proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by Councillor Turner, as set out in the resolution below. The amendment was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the original motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that Hastings Council resolves not to charge for the burial or cremation of children and young people resident in the Borough up to the age of 18 (or 19 if they remain in education or further education). This decision to be implemented with immediate effect

7. **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

No motions for a change in representation on committees were received from the group leaders.

8. **ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2016/17 TO COUNCIL**

The report of the Chief Auditor from the Audit Committee on its annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit to the council was submitted.

Under regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015, local authorities are required to publish a statement of internal control each year, with the authorities financial statements. The findings of the annual review of the council's internal control had been considered by the Audit Committee. The report set out the review of internal control and assurance gathering process.

Under rule 13.3, the report was approved without being called for discussion.

RESOLVED that the Audit Committee report 2016/17 to council is accepted

The reason for this decision was:

Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015 requires relevant bodies to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of internal audit and for a committee of the body to consider the findings.

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9. AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The report of the Chief Legal Officer was submitted which sought approval for amendments to the council's constitution. The constitution formed the basis of the council's corporate governance, and it was necessary to update and revise the documents on an ongoing basis.

Under rule 13.3, the report was approved without being called for discussion.

RESOLVED that the recommended amendments to the council's constitution be adopted by the council

The reason for this decision was:

The council's constitution is the basis for the council's corporate governance.

10. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Mayor having called over the minutes set out in the agenda, the under mentioned minutes were reserved for discussion.

RESOLVED under rule 13.3 that the reports and minutes of committees set out in the agenda be received. Only those items which were reserved were discussed, as follows:

Meeting	Minute	Councillor
Cabinet, 10 July 2017	2 – Hastings & Rother Reducing Health Inequalities Programme	Davies
Cabinet, 10 July 2017	3 – Compulsory Purchase of Long Term Empty Homes	Westley
Cabinet, 17 July 2017	12 – Petition: More Public EV Charging Facilities in Hastings	Sabetian
Cabinet, 17 July 2017	13 – Corporate Plan Retrospective Report on Performance During 2016/17 and Proposed Performance Indicator Targets for 2017/18	Martin Clarke
Cabinet, 17 July 2017	14 – Final Accounts 2016/17	Martin Clarke
Cabinet, 17 July 2017	16 – Social Lettings Agency 2 Year Review	Webb
Cabinet, 17 July 2017	20 – Future Waste & Street Cleansing Services	Davies
Cabinet, 17 July 2017	21 – Flexible Homelessness Support Grant Expenditure	Lee Clark

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No motions for reference to Overview and Scrutiny Committee or reference back to Cabinet were approved in respect of the items reserved for discussion and they were therefore received.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.15pm)