

Public Document Pack

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Councillors Bacon (Chair), Cox (Vice-Chair), Arthur, Barnett, Battley, Batsford, K Beaney, S Beaney, Beaver, Bishop, Carr, Chowney, Edwards, Evans, Fernando, Forward, Foster, Hilton, Marlow-Eastwood, Patmore, Roark, Rankin, Rogers, Roberts, Scott, Sinden, Turner, Webb, Williams.

203. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Councillors Cooke, Pragnell and Hay. Councillor Carr gave apologies for leaving the meeting early.

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

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the minutes of the Full Council meetings held on 14th and 22nd July 2021 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

205. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Meeting	Minute	Interest
Hilton	Cabinet, 4 th October	370 – Land at Harold Place	Personal – Member of Hastings Garden Town
Roark	Cabinet, 4 th October	371 – 2-12 Battle Road – Dangerous Structure	Personal – Lives in the vicinity of the structure
Foster	Full Council, 13 th October	212 – Motion	Personal – Member of the Conservative Environment Network and works for an energy provider
Chowney	Full Council, 13 th October	212 – Motion	Personal – Owns an electric bike

206. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

The Leader of the Council invited the Managing Director to provide an update on the Covid-19 pandemic in Hastings.

The Managing Director informed the council that the latest wave of infections is high compared to this time last year. The main concern remains the capacity of local hospitals to cope with increased hospitalisations.

Rates of infection in Hastings have declined from the peak in September with the 10–19-year-old age group now most affected. Council colleagues are continuing to

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

support the NHS to deliver the adult vaccination programme and it is disappointing that the mobile pop-up vaccinations clinics have recently been inconsistent.

The council has secured a commitment that this will improve and that increased notice of pop-up clinics will be given so that councillors and officers can continue to support the publicity campaign around the vaccination programme in Hastings.

The Town Hall vaccination clinic will open imminently and will operate in addition to the Kings Church vaccination centre, local pop-up clinics and the 3 pharmacy-led clinics in the town. The council is also continuing to lobby for a vaccination hub in St Leonards.

The location for the new local testing site has not been confirmed, however a mobile testing unit remains available at Pelham Place Car Park.

The concern raised by health professionals is of the combined risk of colds, flu and covid this winter. All those eligible for a flu vaccination are urged to get vaccinated as soon as possible and it is understood that pharmacies are able to offer the flu vaccination as an alternative to visiting a GP.

The Mayor acknowledged the climate change protest which took place outside the council building and informed councillors a letter has been received from the protestors which will be shared by email.

The Mayor thanked those who supported events throughout Hastings week.

207. APPOINTMENTS TO REPRESENTATIVE BODIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Councillor Forward proposed approval of the recommendation seconded by Councillor Batsford.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To appoint councillors to partnerships and representative bodies as set out in Appendix A.

Reasons:

Councillors are required to serve on partnerships and representative bodies.

208. EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY POWERS

Councillor Rogers proposed approval of the recommendation seconded by Councillor Barnett.

RESOLVED (by 17 for, to 9 against with 1 abstention):

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

Full Council adopts an amendment to Paragraph 26.22 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution to extend the emergency powers given to the Managing Director with immediate effect for no more than six months.

Reasons:

During the Covid 19 Pandemic it has been necessary to adapt our procedures to be able to continue the Council's business.

209. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

No changes to membership of committees were proposed.

210. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Only those items which were reserved were discussed as follows:

Meeting	Minute	Councillor
Audit Committee – 29 th July 2021	121 – Audit Committee Report to Full Council	Hilton
Cabinet – 6 th September 2021	362 – Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report – 2020-21	Rankin
Cabinet – 6 th September 2021	363 - Amendment to Financial Assistance Policy	Roark
Cabinet – 4 th October 2021	369 – Annual Climate Change Report	Hilton
Cabinet – 4 th October 2021	370 – Land at Harold Place	Patmore
Cabinet – 4 th October 2021	371 – 2-12 Battle Road – Dangerous Structure	Foster

Minute 362 of Cabinet on 6th September 2021, Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report – 2020-21, was a matter requiring Full Council approval. The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Chowney, seconded by Councillor Battley and agreed unanimously.

Minute 370 of Cabinet on 4th October 2021, Land at Harold Place, was a matter requiring Full Council approval. The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Chowney, seconded by Councillor Rogers and agreed by 17 votes for, to 10 against.

Minute 371 of Cabinet on 4th October 2021, 2-12 Battle Road – Dangerous Structure, was a matter requiring Full Council approval. The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Forward, seconded by Councillor Sinden and agreed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7.06pm and reconvened at 7.21pm.

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

Councillors debated minute 121 of Audit Committee on 29th July 2021; minute 363 of Cabinet on 6th September 2021; and minute 369 of Cabinet on 4th October 2021. These matters did not require approval of Full Council.

When discussion moved to minute 121 Councillor Beaver proposed the meeting go into committee mode, seconded by Councillor Edwards, in order for the Chief Finance Officer to answer questions on the Audit Committee report.

211. QUESTIONS (IF ANY) FROM:

211a 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 Collins submitted a supplementary question asking if the council would consider appointing a person to advise those who would like to set up a housing co-operative.

Councillor Batsford responded that there are individuals within the community who have a lot of experience on setting up, and living within, housing co-operatives. Council officers would be happy to signpost members of the public to those individuals for advice.

211b Councillors under Rule 12

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

Questioner	Subject	Reply given by
Councillor Patmore	<p><u>Climate Change</u> – Can you give an assurance that all homes built with council investment, and on council land which is sold on, will go above and beyond the current building regulations to make sure we are doing our utmost to combat climate change?</p> <p>Councillor Forward responded that the council will strive to do all it can to achieve that aim. It is important that all councillors come together to challenge the government to enable local authorities to do this.</p>	Councillor Forward
Councillor Battley	<p><u>Equality Charter</u> – Could you provide an update on what has happened so far, how the charter has been received and how local groups can get</p>	Councillor Rogers

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

	<p>involved?</p> <p>Councillor Rogers said that the Local Strategic Partnership have agreed to take onboard the Equality Charter and the council is now working in conjunction with local partners. The Equality Charter is currently out for consultation and local groups and organisations are encouraged to feedback and meet with councillors and officers to discuss further.</p>	
Councillor Beaver	<p><u>Mental Health</u> – Can the Leader provide an update on what she and colleagues have done over the past 18 months to help those with mental health concerns? After recently losing a friend of 20 years to suicide will the Leader also join me in urging those who are feeling suicidal to speak to someone.</p> <p>Councillor Forward extended her condolences to Councillor Beaver and thanked him for raising this question. Councillor Forward urged anyone who is feeling suicidal or alone to speak to someone. There is a need to work together as a community to end the stigma around mental health. The council will continue to work with partners to raise concerns about the lack of provision around mental health and to amplify messages around mental health and suicide prevention.</p>	Councillor Forward
Councillor Roark	<p><u>Housing</u> – The housing crisis for families in our town is looming large with soaring rents and lack of suitable housing. Can you give us an overview of the issues the council is facing and what action can be taken by those facing homelessness?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford said he had met with local campaigners on this issue and will soon be meeting with the local MP to raise concerns.</p> <p>Labour group councillors from Hastings raised these issues at the recent Labour Party conference and moved a successful conference motion to support an increase in brownfield developments and Compulsory Purchase Orders.</p>	Councillor Batsford
Councillor K Beaney	<p><u>Brown Field Land Release Fund</u> – I understand this council has been awarded funding from the Brown Field Land Release Fund. Can you tell us how this money will be spent?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford confirmed that the council</p>	Councillor Batsford

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

	received just over £147,000 and is now looking at a site on Bexhill Road with the hope of bringing forward 16 LHA rate affordable homes.	
Councillor Cox	<p><u>The Bale House</u> – Could you tell us more about the prestigious award the Bale House has recently won?</p> <p>Councillor Evans replied that the Bale House was mentioned in the Low Carbon Prize category at the International Green Solutions Awards. Plans are now in place for an official opening of the Bale House in the spring.</p>	Councillor Evans
Councillor Edwards	<p><u>York Buildings</u> – Can you confirm what type of heating was installed in the recently renovated flats in York Buildings?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford said he was not involved in this particular project and would respond to Councillor Edwards after the meeting with the information he has requested.</p>	Councillor Batsford
Councillor Sinden	<p><u>Cultural Regeneration Strategy</u> – Can the Deputy Leader outline what is being done to renew this important document?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett responded that just over ten years ago Hastings agreed a new approach to regeneration, joining it up with the cultural agenda, in recognition of the world class arts community in the town.</p> <p>Arts Council England have seconded a senior officer for a twelve-month period to help develop a new Cultural Regeneration Strategy. The officer has been meeting local people over the summer and a draft strategy will be ready for consideration soon.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Fernando	<p><u>CCTV</u> – Could you ensure more CCTV coverage in the town centre to prevent blind spots so that when crime occurs criminals can be prosecuted?</p> <p>Councillor Rogers responded that there is good CCTV coverage across the town centre and that she understood that additional CCTV is due to be installed in York Gardens to tackle anti-social behaviour.</p>	Councillor Rogers
Councillor Hilton	<p><u>Air BnB's</u> – A local resident has calculated that there are 743 Air BnB listings in Hastings, 77% of which are entire homes. What can we do about this problem which is taking houses out of use for local</p>	Councillor Batsford

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

	<p>people?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford said that he had been speaking to his counterpart in Cornwall to discuss their approach to this issue, however, there is a need for national legislation around Air BnB's and second homes. The council already charge maximum council tax on empty homes, with around 20 empty homes paying 400% council tax.</p>	
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212. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Foster proposed a motion, as set out in the agenda, seconded by Councillor Edwards.

Councillor Evans proposed an amendment, seconded by Chowney, to add the following words:

E-bike charging points will be part of a comprehensive programme supporting cycling to include a bicycle and e-bike hire scheme, and storage shelters where charging points can be safely available. This programme requires national funding and the agreement of ESCC Highways to progress.

The amendment was accepted by Councillors Foster and Edwards and the motion as amended became the substantive motion.

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

To help tackle the climate emergency, the council install secure electric bike charging points at strategic points around the town.

E-bike charging points will be part of a comprehensive programme supporting cycling to include a bicycle and e-bike hire scheme, and storage shelters where charging points can be safely available. This programme requires national funding and the agreement of ESCC Highways to progress.

213. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Patmore proposed a vote, seconded by Councillor K Beaney, on whether the meeting should continue past 9pm.

RESOLVED (by 19 for, to 7 against) that the meeting continue past 9pm.

Councillor Hilton proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Bishop.

Councillor Roark proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Battley, to add the following as a fourth bullet point:

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

'Carbon Tax' in this context is a tax levied on businesses proportionate to the amount of carbon dioxide derived from fossil carbon their operations emit, with the proceeds used to provide a 'carbon premium' in the form of lower taxes and more generous benefits for those on low incomes.

Councillors Hilton and Bishop accepted the amendment and the motion as amended became the substantive motion.

RESOLVED (by 13 for, to 9 against) that Full Council do accept the motion as set out below:

'Concentrations of CO2 in the atmosphere continue to rise despite international agreements. Whilst targets can serve a purpose, what has been lacking are mechanisms to drive down emissions quickly. Crucially, this means a Carbon Tax, given that 'Cap and Trade' systems have failed to drive the change we need.

The moral and economic case for such a tax rests on the 'polluter pays' principle:

- Currently the costs of climate breakdown are not born by the industries and activities that are causing the damage but by people and communities coming under increasing pressure and danger. As The Economist leader states (17/7/21); 'The opportunity to pollute the atmosphere without penalty is ... a kind of distorting subsidy'.
- A Carbon Tax, set at the right level, will drive fossil fuel burning out of the economy and promote investment in clean alternatives.
- Applied at the border it will have the same effect internationally. Such a tax can be used as a citizen's dividend to ensure a just transition for communities facing rapid change, help pay for the essential retrofitting to our draughty cold housing stock and helping to alleviate fuel poverty, as well as to help communities around the world adapt to the inevitable change and disruption that climate breakdown is already bringing. It could also help finance a Universal Basic Income as passed by Hastings Borough Council at the last full council meeting.
- 'Carbon Tax' in this context is a tax levied on businesses proportionate to the amount of carbon dioxide derived from fossil carbon their operations emit, with the proceeds used to provide a 'carbon premium' in the form of lower taxes and more generous benefits for those on low incomes.

This approach is supported by a broad coalition of NGOs and civil society groups and was recently included in a set of proposals from the European Commission. COP26 should establish an international carbon tax framework, but if this doesn't happen, the UK and other countries wishing to show leadership should introduce their own carbon taxes. By including border tax adjustment this can drive other economies to follow suit.

Therefore Council resolves to support calls for a Carbon Tax by;

FULL COUNCIL

13 OCTOBER 2021

Writing to our MPs, to Alok Sharma, President of COP26, and to the Prime Minister, calling for the UK to:

1. propose an international carbon tax framework to the COP; the tax to be applied to imports as well as to domestic production
2. Introduce a UK-wide carbon tax by the end of 2022.

(The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 9.12pm)

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Questioner	Question	Answer
<p>Gabriel Carlyle</p>	<p>Heating residential properties is one of the major sources of the UK's carbon emissions. Properly insulating them is therefore an essential step in tackling climate change.</p> <p>In its June 2018 report, the UK's independent statutory Committee on Climate Change (CCC) called for all practicable lofts to be insulated by 2022, and for all practicable cavity walls – and 2 million solid walls - to be insulated by 2030 ('Reducing UK emissions: 2018 Progress Report to Parliament', https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCC-2018-Progress-Report-to-Parliament.pdf).</p> <p>However in its June 2021 report to Parliament, the CCC noted that: 'There has been little of the necessary progress in upgrading the building stock' with insulation rates remaining 'well below the peak market delivery achieved up to 2012 before key policies were scrapped' ('Progress in reducing emissions: 2021 Report to Parliament', https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-2021-Report-to-Parliament.pdf). Indeed, they note, 'installations of loft and solid wall insulation are [currently] only a third of the rate needed by 2021 in the CCC pathway'.</p> <p>In light of the above:</p> <p>A. How many residential properties are there in Hastings & St Leonards that have lofts that it would be practicable to insulate, but which are not currently insulated? What is the estimated cost of installing loft insulation in these properties?</p> <p>B. How many new loft insulations took place in Hastings in 2019 and 2020?</p> <p>C. How many residential properties are there in Hastings & St</p>	<p>Councillor Evans:</p> <p>HBC's Housing Team has a remit that focuses predominately on the private rented sector and therefore we are not exposed to direct information about all properties in the Hastings and St Leonards area which includes owner-occupied properties.</p> <p>Data such at that requested can be by going to https://epc.opendatacommunities.org/ where once registered you can access information and search various parameters including loft insulation.</p> <p>The council use this resource as well as other databases such as Pathways which again can be accessed if you register. You can use these services directly as the data is not for Hastings Borough Council to share and circulate. The data is based on open-source information and therefore may not be 100% accurate.</p> <p>The Housing Team are involved in a number of initiatives that seek to both reduce fuel poverty and improve the energy efficiency of people's homes.</p> <p>Funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has enabled proactive and targeted resources to advise and support landlords to meet their requirements under MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) and where reasonable and proportionate enforce those standards which require all properties offered for rent to be a minimum of an E rating.</p> <p>The outcomes of the second phase of the project which HBC were involved in resulted in to date sending out 90 nudge letters. We have initially focussed on the areas with the highest concentration of F & G rated properties. This also broadly coincides with the areas with the highest instances of fuel poverty.</p>

Leonards that have:

- (a) cavity walls; or
- (b) solid walls, that it would be practicable to insulate, but which are not currently insulated? What is the estimated cost of insulating the walls in these properties?

D. How many new cavity wall and solid wall insulations took place in Hastings in 2019 and 2020?

We have opened 196 proactive M3 worksheets, these are properties that have required further investigation. We have 32 properties currently live and in various stages of investigation (including waiting for information from other councils, in process of selling property, works in progress, yet to respond to nudge letter).

Whilst the nudge letters have seen a significant success rate in obtaining compliance with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, we have had to send Compliance Notices out to those that failed to communicate with us. Out of the 196 proactive M3 worksheets we created, 33 (16%) had to be progressed to a Compliance Notice.

Our Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) return for 2021 highlights the impacts that have been made through insulation and other measures via our Green Homes Grant Local Area Delivery Scheme Funding, ECO Flex statement of Intent etc. The 2021 return will be available [here](#) very shortly.

We have recently submitted a bid for £2.2 million from the Sustainable Warmth Fund to support continued upgrades and improvements to residential properties to make them more energy efficient. This will incorporate a range of measures including loft insulation and the vision adopted is very much a fabric first approach. Successful bids are due to be announced by BEIS at the end of October / early November.

<p>Andrea Needham</p>	<p>In its June 2021 progress report to Parliament (https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-2021-Report-to-Parliament.pdf) the Government's own Committee on Climate Change noted that: 'The rigour of the Climate Change Act helped bring COP26 to the UK, but it is not enough for Ministers to point to the Glasgow summit and hope that this will carry the day with the public.</p> <p>Leadership is required, detail on the steps the UK will take in the coming years, clarity on tax changes and public spending commitments, active engagement with people and businesses across the country. These steps are essential, so people can see opportunity in climate-positive choices.</p> <p>We cannot rely on good will alone. 'This demands a step change in Government action, but it is hard to discern any comprehensive strategy in the climate plans we have seen in the last 12 months. There are gaps and ambiguities. Climate resilience remains a second-order issue, if it is considered at all. We continue to blunder into high-carbon choices.</p> <p>Our Planning system and other fundamental structures have not been recast to meet our legal and international climate commitments.'</p> <p>If Hastings Borough Council determines that national policies are making it impossible for it to meet its share of the UK's obligations under the Climate Change Act, is it willing to take legal action in order to force the Government to align these policies with the Act?</p>	<p>Councillor Evans:</p> <p>The advice of the Monitoring Officer (notwithstanding the pressing demands to meet the challenge of climate change) is that taking legal action against the Government is not a matter for which HBC has a power, duty, function and moreover the funds to enforce.</p> <p>Hastings Borough Council has been ravaged by austerity cuts over the last 11 years. As a Socialist council we want to direct our funding towards helping the most vulnerable within our community, especially those on low incomes, who will need extra assistance when transitioning to cope with climate change. Legal tassels are very expensive, time consuming and without guaranteed outcomes, it's not what we consider a priority for the public purse.</p> <p>The council will nevertheless continue to play its part within its responsibilities and functions to support climate change obligations and commitments.</p>
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Amanda Jobson

Hastings and St Leonard's is a beautiful place, now with a new stretch of Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ - 2020). If the natural environment is imperative to 'our survival' and tourism vital for a town.

What actions for 'Climate Change' are being implemented to stop the frequent (CSO'S) combined sewer outfall from (Southern Water), overflowing into our coastline and shores, not only polluting marine life but affecting the health of a community, during the ongoing and frequent storms and floods we are now facing.

Councillor Evans:

Natural England have responsibility for the designated Marine Conservation Zone designation [MCZ Beachy Head East](#)

The Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) are owned and controlled by Southern Water, and the Environment Agency is the body responsible for enforcement relating to pollution caused by the inappropriate operation of CSOs.

Although HBC does not have direct power in this area, we are looking to pull every lever at our disposal to ensure Hastings' beaches are as clean as possible. We believe that CSOs are an outdated way of dealing with the issue of surges in storm water overwhelming the sewerage system, and the council is pressing Southern Water to spend more on their local infra-structure, including replacing CSOs.

The Leader, Deputy Leader of the Council, and myself have raised this with the Chief Executive of Southern Water when we met last week, to discuss the Bulverhythe Sewer Failure that occurred this Summer. Going forward, the CSO is now a priority issue for us.

From a climate change perspective, anything that helps rainwater to be absorbed into the ground rather than simply running off into the sewerage system will reduce the pressure on CSOs. So in relation to the built environment, things like tree planting, permeable landscaping rather than tarmac and concrete, roof gardens, and of course these have biodiversity benefits too.

The Council have an agency agreement with ESCC whereby we manage the 'highway trees' on their behalf. As a result we have always tried to retain as many highway trees as possible. This helps to keep streets cool and support local biodiversity. Whereas some council's have removed many of theirs to reduce the associated maintenance costs.

		<p>The majority of planning applications involving additional areas of hardstanding to park vehicles require a sustainable urban drainage scheme (Suds) in order to show that rainwater can drain away from the site in a suitable way.</p> <p>The Council has supported and promoted the 'Clean Seas' Project that was set up in 2013 to help address the problem of environmental pollution arising from domestic plumbing connecting to the surface water drainage system as opposed to the main sewer system.</p>
<p>Virginia Vilela</p> <p>Page 5</p>	<p>Tourism is key to our Town's economy and Hastings and St Leonards seafront appears to be falling behind other resorts with innovative ideas to encourage tourism to the town despite our famous name.</p> <p>A large volume of our seafront is given over to parking, largely car parks and the only open space that could be developed for innovative leisure use in West St Leonards is earmarked by the council for housing and commercial development.</p> <p>What is the council's strategy to improve and enhance our Seafront and therefore reinforce our tourism economy?</p>	<p>Councillor Barnett:</p> <p>Tourism is indeed vital to the town and is estimated to have supported over 7000 jobs and contributing over £385m to the local economy in 2019.</p> <p>Since publishing the Seafront Strategy (hastings.gov.uk) in 2015 and delivering many of the commitments within the strategy the seafront features as a key element of the new emergent Local Plan alongside the Foreshore Trust Business plan.</p> <p>The Council has secured funding over many years to enhance and develop the seafront, including to support the projects listed below and projects within the coastal communities fund, designed to enhance the seafront and encourage tourism and footfall along the whole stretch of our urban coastline.</p> <p>The Stade development around ten years ago created a major new art gallery, a new cafe, and popular event space, which continues to host events all year round. A few years earlier the Azur helped revitalise the seafront in St Leonards, and the area around Goat Ledge in front of Warrior Square has become hugely</p>

popular with residents and visitors alike.

The new pier tenants have helped turn the seafront landmark into a major attraction and music venue. The Source Park has transformed the derelict White Rock Baths site, and the addition of the courtyard this year has made the area even more lively.

The public sector funding that has helped much of this is now not so readily available due to national funding reductions so we welcome recent private sector investment, for example, the Old Town funfair.

It has been great to see that the seafront and beach have been busier than ever this summer, with many local residents and visitors commenting about the buzz in the town.

We are using a partnership approach with the private sector at West Marina to regenerate the site for innovative leisure and housing. I look forward to detailed discussions with residents, local businesses and our development partners starting soon.

In 2021 the Council secured Town Deal funding [Hastings Town Deal Blog](#) which includes capital infrastructure investment for projects on the seafront and the town centre including the innovative [Town Centre Public Realm & Green Connections — Hastings Town Deal](#) and the Castle.

It's not just about capital investment either: to support the local economy and attract visitors to the town, the Council funds the Museum and Art Gallery, the White Rock Theatre, the cliff railways and street scene through street cleansing, sustainable planting, parks and open spaces, coastal protection and management and supports local events and festivals details of which can be found at [1066 Country of Origin - Visit 1066 Country](#)

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		<p>The council is now engaged at Chief Executive level in securing better water quality for our beaches by holding Southern Water to account, not just for their recent sewage leak at Bulverhythe, but also for ensuring long term investment across the town.</p>
<p>Tony Collins</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 7</p>	<p>What is the Council doing to support the development of housing cooperatives in Hastings and St Leonards?</p>	<p>Councillor Batsford:</p> <p>Cooperative living is very close to my heart as I lived in and contributed to one in Hastings for many years when I was a young man looking not only for an affordable place to live but that sense of common bond and agency you get when living with like minded people.</p> <p>The council has been using its Community Housing Fund grant received in 2017 to support the development of community led housing locally. We contributed to the establishment and ongoing development of the Sussex Community Housing Hub which provides specialist support to local groups interested in community led housing, including housing cooperatives.</p> <p>Alongside this we have awarded grants directly to local groups to support the expansion of community housing. These grants have supported a range of activities including property refurbishment, project development and start-up costs, initial survey work, financial modelling and capacity building.</p> <p>In this time of spiralling rents, and for many the insecurity of tenancy that almost over 50% of our fellow Hastings people experience, co-ops could be one of the many solutions that can provide that stable home.</p>

		<p>I have met with those who currently run and live in the Hastings cooperatives and have attended the training sessions. The offer is still there from me as Lead for Housing that anything the Council can do to facilitate or support the forming of co-ops we will be there.</p> <p>I believe that co-ops need to form themselves and normally the group have a common purpose to form around so it's important that those living in the co-op have full ownership and the amazing skills and training offered by the Sussex Community Housing Hub is a great starting point.</p> <p>I would be excited to see growth of this type of housing in Hastings.</p>
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Questioner	Question	Answer
Councillor Hilton	<p>In the last year, both house prices and rents in Hastings have risen astronomically.</p> <p>There are now over 1500 empty homes including full time/commercial Air BnBs in Hastings and 1500 people on the housing waiting list. All Air BnB's rented out more than 140 days a year should be registered as business premises.</p> <p>Does the council know how many of these Air BnB's are operating legally, ie registered as business premises and also demonstrating that they have the correct building and public liability insurances in place?</p>	<p>Councillor Batsford:</p> <p>As of 5 October 2021, we have the following domestic rated Empty Properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 873 properties which have been empty for under 2 years. Council Tax charge is normal Band Rate • 189 properties empty between 2 and 5 years (charged equivalent of 200% of normal charge) • 33 properties empty between 5 and 10 years (charged equivalent of 300% of normal charge) • 23 properties empty over 10 years (charged equivalent of 400% of normal charge) <p>Air BnBs are not easily identifiable in our records. If a property is domestic rated we will not be aware if it is being used as a holiday let/AirBnB. If an owner has approached the Valuation Office (VO) requesting that the property is treated as a business premises, they will be required to provide evidence to support their claim. It is the VO that makes the decision not Hastings Borough Council.</p> <p>If business rated, the Rateable Value will be well below the threshold of £15,000. In most cases they will qualify for Small Business Rate Relief and therefore have no charge. Currently we have 101 properties on our Business Rates database which are classed as self-catering holiday lets. We have no way of telling how many of the 101 are advertising as Air BnB.</p> <p>In addition there are 763 second homes, with Council Tax charged at the normal Band Rate.</p>

		<p>The Housing Renewal Team are aware when inspecting properties, particularly HMO's (Houses of Multiple Occupation) that some of the self-contained units are sometimes claimed as being used as holiday lets / Air BnB.</p> <p>Unfortunately, unless we can prove this is not the case, the housing legislation we enforce does not apply to these dwellings, although it would to the common parts. There is no requirement for them to register the property use with us and therefore unless there is evidence it is being used to the contrary, the housing team have no further remit.</p>
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