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FULL COUNCIL

19 JULY 2023

Present: Councillors O’Callaghan (Chair), Bishop (Vice-Chair), Bacon, Barnett, Batsford, Beaney, Beaver, Cannan, Carr, Collins, Cooke, Edwards, Evans, Fernando, Foster, Haffenden, Hay, Hilton, Jobson, Patmore, Roark, Roberts, Rogers, Sinden, Turner, Webb, Williams and Willis.

In attendance: Mary Kilner (Chief Legal Officer), and Victoria Conheady (Deputy Chief Executive – Director of Place)

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Councillors Arthur, Marlow-Eastwood, Pragnell and Rankin.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 24th May 2023 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Meeting	Item	Interest
Carr	Full Council, 19 th July	17. Motion	Personal – Parent of a trans child
Carr	Cabinet, 3 rd July	11. White Rock Theatre Options	Personal – Used to work at the White Rock Theatre

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

The Leader of the Council announced recent changes to the allocation of Cabinet portfolios. Councillor Barnett takes over the finance portfolio and Councillor Willis is now responsible for housing and community development. Councillor Evans takes over the regeneration and climate change portfolio.

The Leader of the Council announced that from August the Cabinet agenda will include a 30 minute question time open to the public. No notice will be necessary, and residents can ask questions on any issue.

The Leader of the Council expressed frustration with Southern Water. East Sussex County Council have been unable to publish their report into the town centre flooding in January as Southern Water have not supplied all the relevant information to date. The Leader of the Council read out an open letter he will be sending to the CEO of

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Southern Water calling on him to make Hastings a priority and to work with local partners.

Councillor Beaver proposed a moment of reflection for Councillor Turner in light of his recent loss.

15. QUESTIONS (IF ANY) FROM:

15a) Members of the Public under Rule 11

A written question was received from Anna Sabin and a written response supplied by Councillor Batsford.

In a supplementary question Anna Sabin asked what is Hastings Borough Council doing to secure a safe cycle network in the town? Councillor Batsford replied that the County Council had decided that cycle paths are not economically viable to build. They have had funding for ten years to complete cycle routes in Hastings. This has been discussed at the cross-party active travel group and a letter will be formulated in response to East Sussex County Council. All councillors agree a shared aim to have a town with safe areas for walking and cycling.

A written question was received from Petra Gent and a written response supplied by Councillor Barnett.

A written question was received from Steve Foreman and a written response supplied by Councillor Batsford.

In a supplementary question Steve Foreman asked if, in relation to the walking and cycling strategy, action rather than words, and co-operation with the County Council, would achieve more? Councillor Batsford replied that East Sussex County Council are the responsible authority to deliver transport projects and referred to his previous answer.

A written question was received from Christopher Hurrell and a written response supplied by Councillor Rogers.

A written question was received from Myriam Lengline and a written response supplied by Councillor Roark.

In a supplementary question Myriam Lengline asked if Councillor Roark would write to Southern Water to ask if they skimmed or drained the ponds in question? Councillor Roark said she would be happy to talk to Southern Water about this issue.

A written question was received from Michelle O'Connor and a written response supplied by Councillor Roark.

A written question was received from Andrew Cordle and a written response supplied by Councillor Roark.

A written question was received from Tracy Knight and a written response supplied by Councillor Roark.

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A written question was received from Becca Horn and a written response supplied by Councillor Roark.

A written question was received from Joanne Walker and a written response supplied by Councillor Roark.

In a supplementary question Joanne Walker asked how many litter clean-up requests are received via MyHastings for the Ore area, and how much does it cost to send street cleaning crews out on request, rather than have regular street cleaning of the area? Councillor Roark said she would ask officers for this information. Hot spots are assessed by the team and if they felt there was more regular cleaning needed, they would act on that.

A written question was received from Daniel Hope and a written response supplied by Councillor Roark.

A written question was received from Adele Bates and a written response supplied by Councillor Roark.

In a supplementary question Adele Bates asked what the Council is doing to make sure Central St Leonards and Warrior Square are being given the same level of cleanliness as the rest of the town? Councillor Roark replied that Biffa are supposed to clean-up any waste they drop when collecting refuse, but a team may be needed to follow up and deal with other rubbish and fly-tipping.

15b) Councillors under Rule 12

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

In a supplementary question Councillor Collins asked if there will be sufficient time for consultation on the Local Plan? Councillor Rogers responded that time will be made available for Councillors to read and consult on the various documents forming the Local Plan.

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

In a supplementary question Councillor Haffenden asked if Councillor Roark would look into alternatives to seagull-proof sacks and agree to trial these in Hastings? Councillor Roark replied that residents can use their own containers if they have space for them and she will talk to officers about alternative options.

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

In a supplementary question Councillor Hilton asked if the videos of meetings which haven't yet been made available could be uploaded to the website? Councillor Rogers said she would have to speak to the IT team about what is already recorded and could be made available.

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

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In a supplementary question Councillor Jobson asked if a template could be made available to support the local green projects applying for council support? Councillor Barnett responded that the ideas form will be paused for six months as there won't be officer capacity before January 2024 to assess those ideas. Councillor Roark clarified that in regard to Councillor Jobson's original question she did meet to discuss the project but made clear she could not approve the location of the orchard plot herself.

Questioner	Question	Reply given by
Councillor Patmore	<p>The Labour Cabinet voted in October 2018 to move the football ground from the Pilot Field to Bulverhythe. Does the current Leader of the Council agree with the 2018 decision that the Pilot Field site could provide much needed housing should a new location be found for Hastings United?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied he wasn't part of the Cabinet in 2018 and so is not aware of what information was available then, but he is more than happy with the decision that was taken this year.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Hilton	<p>Following the Cabinet reshuffle who is responsible for equalities and community development?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett confirmed that he was now leading on equalities and community development is part of Councillor Willis' portfolio</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Turner	<p>Can you give us an update on the projects in Broomgrove?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford replied that funding from the UK Prosperity Fund is allocated for Broomgrove and community groups have been advising on how to spend the funds. A greening project has recently been agreed with Southern Housing.</p>	Councillor Batsford
Councillor Fernando	<p>Hastings remains the 13th most deprived town in England and faces a challenging situation with the early closure of local shops due to staff shortages. How does the Council plan to address this and encourage job creation and local employment opportunities?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that skills will be high on the agenda of organisations across</p>	Councillor Barnett

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	<p>the town in coming years. There are ongoing discussions with the skills team at East Sussex County Council about the support needed in the town, particularly around the retail and hospitality sectors.</p>	
Councillor Beaver	<p>Will you give the same assurances regarding York Buildings as your predecessor?</p> <p>Councillor Willis replied that there is a need to move quickly on York Buildings, probably to dispose of the asset, but we need to wait for the full asset review to come forward from officers.</p>	Councillor Willis
Councillor Bacon	<p>How can we create a healthier Hastings?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford replied that he is incredibly proud of the new tennis courts in Alexandra Park and will also be working with local clubs to make sure local football pitches are fit for purpose. Hastings now is a priority area for the FA to invest in 3G football pitches.</p>	Councillor Batsford
Councillor Carr	<p>It was recently reported on social media that there would be an urgent Cabinet item on St Mary in the Castle. There is rumour that a buyer has been found. Can you tell us why we are not discussing St Mary in the Castle at this meeting?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that negotiations are on going and there is not yet a report for Cabinet or Full Council to consider.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Cooke	<p>Can you explain your decision to sell York Buildings?</p> <p>Councillor Willis replied that there has not yet been a decision to explain and there needs to be a full analysis of the options.</p>	Councillor Willis
Councillor Edwards	<p>Do you not consider it might easier to find new contractors for the Harrow Lane site if you reduce the social housing element to the original 40%?</p> <p>Councillor Willis replied that the site is owned by Orbit and it would be for them to decide how to proceed.</p>	Councillor Willis
Councillor Haffenden	<p>There are strict rules for those in temporary accommodation. Can we review these rules</p>	Councillor Willis

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	<p>so that those in temporary accommodation have some quality of life?</p> <p>Councillor Willis replied that every aspect of the temporary accommodation challenge is being reviewed.</p>	
Councillor Foster	<p>I've had complaints from residents saying the Harrow Lane building site is defunct. Will you apologise for leaving residents with no green space and no houses?</p> <p>Councillor Willis said the Council should not apologise for doing everything within its power to create new housing. It is the highest priority for the community.</p>	Councillor Willis
Councillor Webb	<p>Could you give us an update on our serious financial situation?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that there is a perfect storm where landlords are selling properties, pushing up prices further and making rents more unaffordable. This is causing a major financial crisis. Hastings has one of the highest levels of renters of any town in the South East. The LGA Finance Peer Review will be discussed at the next Cabinet meeting.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Sinden	<p>What is the latest with the White Rock Theatre?</p> <p>Councillor Batsford said he would answer in more detail when the White Rock Theatre report is debated later in the meeting.</p>	Councillor Batsford

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7.09pm and the meeting reconvened at 7.19pm.

16. **MOTION (RULE 14)**

Councillor Collins proposed a motion as set out in the agenda, seconded by Councillor Bacon.

Councillor Cooke proposed an amendment to replace the word 'extension' in the second paragraph with 'extinction'. Councillor Collins accepted the amendment.

RESOLVED (unanimously) the Full Council accepts the motion as set out below:

The world is witnessing a colossal decline in global biodiversity with one million animal and plant species threatened with extinction.

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In 2019, a State of Nature report by the UK State of Nature Partnership presented an overview of how UK wildlife is faring, looking back over 50 years of monitoring. It found the UK to be one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world where 41% of all UK species surveyed have declined, with 15% of species in the UK threatened with extinction.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, RSPB, estimate that the UK breeding population of one of our most iconic birds, the swift, has more than halved in the last 20 years due to loss of nesting sites on buildings.

British Standard, BS42021:2022 'Integral Nest Boxes, selection and installation for new developments' specifies requirements for the selection and installation of integral nest boxes in buildings within new developments for residential, commercial, industrial and public buildings.

The British Standard covers the design and installation principally for the following species, swift, starling, great tit, blue tit, and house sparrow, the numbers of which are in decline in the UK.

The Environment Act 2021 strengthened the duty for local authorities to agree policies and specific objectives to conserve and enhance biodiversity. In November 2023 the concept of Biodiversity Net Gain will become mandatory for local authorities when considering planning applications, to ensure habitats for wildlife are in a better state than before development.

Local authorities are therefore uniquely placed to ensure local planning policies and decisions contribute to and enhance the natural environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Hastings Borough Council commits to developing policies and procedures to help to reverse the decline in biodiversity by ensuring:

1. Our new local planning policies for development set out a robust policy framework to protect and enhance biodiversity;
2. our local plan sets out the criteria for adopting British Standard BS42021:2022, Integral nest boxes, for all relevant planning permissions and approvals; and
3. developing, where appropriate, supplementary planning guidance on how development can incorporate features beneficial for the natural environment.

17. **MOTION (RULE 14)**

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

A recorded vote was requested, and Councillors voted as follows:

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Councillors Bacon, Barnett, Batsford, Beaver, Bishop, Cannan, Carr, Collins, Cooke, Evans, Foster, Haffenden, Hay, Hilton, Jobson, O'Callaghan, Patmore, Roark, Roberts, Rogers, Sinden, Turner, Webb, Williams and Willis voted in favour.

Councillors Beaney, Edwards and Fernando abstained.

RESOLVED (by 25 votes for, with 3 abstentions) the Full Council accepts the motion as set out below:

This Council wishes to send its support to Trans Pride Hastings on the launch of their first festival which has been organised by members of the local transgender and non-binary community with a focus on community building, support, and celebration for trans, non-binary and gender expansive residents from Hastings, St Leonards, & beyond.

This Council celebrates the successes of the transgender community but also recognises that additional support is sometimes needed by them as a section of our society that is too often marginalised, a victim of hate crime, or who may struggle to access the help they need due to other barriers that occur in relation to their status as a trans or nonbinary person.

To turn our words of support into meaningful action, this council resolves:

- That the Equalities Working Group is asked to make recommendations on appropriate equalities training to be considered by the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet, in consultation with the Member Training and Development Group;
- to continue to fly the trans flag during notable dates such as Trans Day of Remembrance and Trans Pride Hastings each year; and
- to continue to foster a culture of safety, acceptance, and inclusion for the trans and non-binary community in our actions as a council.

18. **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

No changes to membership of committees were proposed.

19. **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
Cabinet, 5 th June 2023	4 – Response to council motion re: Hastings United Football Club proposal	Patmore

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Cabinet, 5 th June 2023	5 – Revision of Financial Assistance Policy	Roberts
Cabinet, 3 rd July 2023	11 – White Rock Theatre Options	Carr
Cabinet, 3 rd July 2023	12 – Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2022/23	Hilton
Cabinet, 3 rd July 2023	13 - Financial Monitoring Outturn Report for 2022/23 - to end of March 2023 (Period 12)	Carr
Cabinet, 3 rd July 2023	15 – Unit at Bexhill Road Retail Park	Beaver

Minute 12 of Cabinet on 3rd July 2023, Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2022/23, was a decision requiring Full Council approval. Councillor Barnett proposed approval of the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Willis.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To consider the report – no recommendations are being made to amend the current Treasury Management Strategy as a result of this review.

Reasons:

To ensure that Members are fully aware of the activities undertaken in the last financial year, that Codes of Practice have been complied with and that the Council's strategy has been effective in 2022/23.

Under the Code adopted the Full Council are required to consider the report and any recommendations made. There will be a further report forthcoming on Treasury Management covering a review of the current financial year i.e. the Mid-year review.

Councillor Beaver raised a point of order regarding minute 15 of Cabinet on 3rd July 2023 and asked why ward Councillors were not consulted on this item.

The Mayor proposed the meeting move into private session to discuss the report, seconded by Councillor Beaney.

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of minute 15 of Cabinet on 3rd July 2023, Unit at Bexhill Road Retail Park, 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 paragraphs of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 referred to in the relevant report.

(The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 9.25pm)

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