

Full Council

Minutes of meeting held in Council Chamber, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE on 23 May 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Christine Brett (Chair).

Councillors Adrian Ross (Vice-Chair) (Chair from minute 2), Sam Adeniji, Robert Banks, Nancy Bikson, Matthew Bird, Liz Boorman, Julie Carr, Ciarron Clarkson, Roy Clay, Chris Collier, Phil Davis, Sharon Davy, Johnny Denis, Lynda Duhigg, Stephen Gauntlett, Tom Jones, Isabelle Linington, Jim Lord, Sylvia Lord, James MacCleary, Imogen Makepeace, Milly Manley, Ron Maskell, William Meyer, Zoe Nicholson, Emily O'Brien, Laurence O'Connor, Ruth O'Keeffe (from minute 11a), Nicola Papanicolaou, Christine Robinson, Geoff Rutland, Christoph von Kurthy and Linda Wallraven.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services), Joanne Stone (Principal Planning Solicitor) and Sarah Lawrence (Senior Committee Officer).

1 Election of the Chair of the Council

Councillor Brett welcomed Councillors to the meeting, in particular Councillor Clarkson, attending his first meeting since his election.

Councillor Brett thanked Democratic Services Officers who had supported her in her year as the Chair of the Council, in particular Sophia Daw and Caroline Hanlon, and thanked Councillors for electing her to the position.

Councillor Brett advised that two nominations had been received for the election of the Chair of the Council for 2022/23 – for Councillor Adrian Ross and Councillor Linda Wallraven and invited Councillors to formally propose the nominations.

Councillor Collier proposed and Councillor Brett seconded the nomination of Councillor Ross to be elected as the Chair of the Council for 2022/23.

Councillor Boorman proposed and Councillor Linington seconded the nomination of Councillor Wallraven to be elected as the Chair of the Council for 2022/23

The two nominations were put to the vote and by 19 votes to 14 it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Ross be elected as the Chair of the Council for 2022/23.

Councillor Ross then signed his statutory declaration of acceptance of office and took the chair.

In his speech of acceptance of his election as Chair, Councillor Ross advised that his theme for the year would be ‘tackling the cost-of-living, climate and ecological crises’. He thanked the outgoing Chair, Councillor Brett, for her work over the last year, and what she had accomplished around her theme of ‘Improving Food Security’.

2 Appointment of the Vice-Chair of the Council

The Chair (Councillor Ross) advised that two nominations had been received for the appointment of the Vice-Chair of the Council for 2022/23 – for Councillor Graham Amy and Councillor Richard Turner and invited Councillors to formally propose the nominations

Councillor Ross proposed and Councillor O’Connor seconded the nomination of Councillor Amy to be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Council for 2022/23.

Councillor Davy proposed and Councillor Linington seconded the nomination of Councillor Turner to be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Council for 2022/23.

The two nominations were put to the vote and by 19 votes to 14 it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Amy be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Council for 2022/23.

As Councillor Amy had given apologies for the meeting, it was noted that he would sign his declaration of acceptance of office as soon as possible and before undertaking any civic duties.

3 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Amy, Burman, Macleod, Peterson, Rigden, Saunders and Turner.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 February 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the Council.

6 Urgent items

There were no urgent items for decision.

7 Announcements

A list of Councillor Brett's engagements as Chair of the Council made since the last meeting of the Council were noted.

Councillor Gauntlett (Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure) provided an update on the development of the next Local Plan, in particular on the work ongoing to challenge the standard calculation of the minimum number of houses to be delivered. He drew Members' attention to a change in tone in a recent Government office response to a letter from the 11 northern parishes in Lewes, which said that although the standard method should be used, the Government was monitoring the effect of this, and that the absence of a local plan did not mean that planning applications should automatically be approved.

Councillor Gauntlett had sent out to Members a detailed briefing note on progress in advance of the meeting and invited all members to a briefing on 26 May 2022 on the issues and options for the next Local Plan.

8 Result of the District Council By-Election 2022

The Chair of the Council drew the Council's attention to the results of the District By-Election held on 12 May 2022, and formally welcomed to the Council, Councillor Ciarron Clarkson, the new ward Councillor for Peacehaven West.

9 Appointments Report.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nicholson advised that her Cabinet Member appointments were unchanged and were as follows:

Cabinet Member	Portfolio
Councillor Zoe Nicholson	Leader of the Council Finance
Councillor James MacCleary	Deputy Leader Regeneration and Prosperity
Councillor Matthew Bird	Sustainability
Councillor Julie Carr	Recycling, Waste and Open Spaces
Councillor Collier	Performance and People
Councillor Denis	Communities and Customers
Councillor Stephen Gauntlett	Planning and Infrastructure
Councillor Meyer	Housing
Councillor O'Keefe	Tourism and Devolution

The Council received the report of the Head of Democratic Services, and the list of nominations for members and chairs of committees and other council bodies (Appendix 1) and outside bodies (Appendix 2) in accordance with proportionality of the Council, contained in the agenda and the agenda supplement. As there were no contested nominations, the Chair advised that the recommendations could be dealt with as one item.

Councillor Nicholson moved and Councillor MacCleary seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved, and this was put to the vote.

RESOLVED:

- a) To approve the appointments of members to Committees and Other Bodies and as Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees, as set out in Appendix 1;
- b) To approve the appointment of representatives to serve on outside and joint bodies, as set out in Appendix 2;
- c) To appoint all members of the Council to the 'approved list' of members appointed as substitute members in accordance with Council's Rules of Procedure, except where prohibited by those rules such as for Licensing Committee and Cabinet;
- d) To note the Leader of the Council's appointments to Cabinet, the individual areas of responsibility allocated to the Cabinet and the allocation of those areas of responsibility to the members of the Cabinet, as reported verbally at the meeting;
- e) To delegate to the Head of Democratic Services to make the necessary changes to the constitution and website to remove the Devolution Committee and incorporate its powers into the Strategic Property Board; and
- f) That Neal Robinson and Graham Branton be re-confirmed as the Council's Standards Independent Persons for the municipal year.

10 Annual Pay Policy Statement.

The Council considered the report of the Assistant Director for HR and Transformation recommending the adoption of the Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23. Councillor Collier moved and Councillor MacCleary seconded approval of the report recommendations.

RESOLVED – That the updated Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23 be approved and be published on the Council's website.

11 Notices of motion.

11a Motion - To protect our local rivers and sea by taking into account the cumulative impact of sewage discharge.

(Note: Councillor O'Keeffe joined the meeting at the commencement of this item at 6.25 pm)

Councillor O'Brien moved and Councillor Gauntlett seconded the motion seeking the protection of local rivers and seas by taking into account the cumulative impact of sewage discharge, as detailed in the agenda.

The motion was debated and received support from across the Council.

The motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED:

This Council resolves to:

1. Recognise this Council's obligation to protect its rivers and seas, including from the cumulative impacts of pollution, in line with its local planning policy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Recognise that there is clear evidence of deterioration of water quality due to cumulative impact of multiple sewage discharge events or 'sewage overload'.
3. Ensure the evidence base being compiled for the new local plan fully assesses the cumulative impact of sewage discharge so that this is factored into decisions made in the new local plan, including the overall level of future development.
4. Seek to better understand the cumulative impact of waste water discharge including untreated sewage on the District's rivers, wildlife and the health of its residents
5. Continue to take a lead on addressing this issue, working constructively with other agencies.
6. Write to the Environment Agency asking it to issue a position statement in relation to Lewes District, which sets out its understanding of the cumulative impact of 800+ sewage discharge on our rivers, or if it is not willing to do, the reasons why.
7. Ask Natural England to update its 2013 assessment of Lewes Brooks SSSI.
8. Ask the Policy and Performance Committee to invite the Chief Executive of Southern Water plus senior representatives from the Environment Agency and Natural England to attend a Lewes District Council Policy and Performance Committee meeting to answer questions on the current levels of sewage discharge.
9. Ask Southern Water, from this date onwards, in its planning consultation responses for major development, to clarify which treatment works will be managing the sewage; and whether it has the information available to assess the impact on the number or duration of sewage discharges into local rivers or seas, and if it does have this information to share it (noting that this can only be requested not required).
10. Request that District Council planning officers, from now onwards, include in all reports relating to major development a specific section on Core Policy 10 and the impact on watercourses, including the potential for the development to affect sewage outflow into watercourses (i.e. cumulative impact), or to flag if this information is not fully available, so that this information (or the lack of it) is clearly and transparently set out.

12 Calendar of meetings 2022/23

The Chair of the Council drew members' attention to the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23 included in the agenda for ratification.

Councillor Nicholson moved and Councillor MacCleary seconded that the Calendar of Meetings be approved.

RESOLVED – To approve the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23.

13 Urgent decisions taken by the Cabinet or Cabinet members

The Council formally noted the decision made by the Leader under special urgency powers since the last meeting in relation to the '2022/23 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief scheme', made on 28 February 2022. This was reported to the Council in accordance with the Policy and Performance Committee Procedure Rule 7.

14 Reporting back on meetings of outside bodies

The following reports had been provided on outside bodies which had met since the last meeting and these were noted:

- Team East Sussex – Councillor Nicholson
- Newhaven Town Deal Board – Councillor Nicholson
- Greater Brighton Economic Board – Councillor Nicholson
- Seaford to Brighton Steering Group – Councillor O'Brien
- South East Councils – Councillor O'Brien
- LGA People and Places Board – Councillor O'Brien
- East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board – Councillor Ross
- Citizens Advice Bureau – Councillor Makepeace
- South Downs National Park Authority and other SDNP meetings - Councillor Meyer
- Decarbonising our Housing Stock (DOHS) – Councillor Bird
- Upper Ouse Flood Protection and Water Retention Works Working Group – Councillor Bird

15 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Full Council was due to take place on Monday 18 July 2022 at 6 pm.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

Councillor Adrian Ross (Chair)