

Full Council

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 28 February 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Candy Vaughan (Mayor).

Councillors Amanda Morris (Deputy Mayor), Nick Ansell, Kathy Ballard, Margaret Bannister, Colin Belsey, Daniel Butcher, Penny di Cara, Andy Collins, Ali Dehdashty, Peter Diplock, Christina Ewbank, Nigel Goodyear, Stephen Holt, Jane Lamb, Robin Maxted, Jim Murray, Hugh Parker, Pat Rodohan, Teri Sayers-Cooper, Alan Shuttleworth, David Small, Robert Smart and Jenny Williams.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Homira Javadi (Director of Finance and Performance (Section 151 Officer)), Kate Slattery (Head of Legal Services), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer) and Sarah Lawrence (Committee Team Manager).

46 Minute's Silence

The Council held a minute's silence in memory of former Councillor and Mayor, Olive Woodall, who had passed away since the last scheduled meeting.

47 Minutes of the meetings held on 15 November 2023 and 24 January 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 15 November 2023 and 24 January 2024 were signed as a correct record, subject to a correction to the Minutes of 15 November 2023, Minute 38c (Motion – Southern Water), to add the name of Councillor Murray at the bottom of page 7, as the proposer of the original motion.

48 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) by members as required under Section 31 of the Localism Act and of other interests as required by the Code of Conduct (please see note at end of agenda).

Councillor Holt and Councillor Ewbank both declared personal interests in Agenda Item 11(b), To support the Youth Voice in Eastbourne, as they were involved in the organisation who was a supporter of the Youth Market.

Councillor Holt and Councillor Ewbank also declared personal interests in relation to Agenda Item 9(a), in relation the mention of EDEAL, an organisation they worked for, which was in receipt of an ongoing grant.

Councillor Williams declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 11(b), Motion - To support the Youth Voice in Eastbourne, as she was on the board for Towner and delivery partner with Eastbourne Alive.

Councillors Ballard, Belsey, di Cara, and Shuttleworth declared personal interests on agenda item 11e, Motion – Health Services at the Eastbourne DGH, as they were members of the East Sussex Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). In addition, Councillor Shuttleworth and Councillor Belsey advised they were also on the HOSC review panel looking at the paediatric provision. All advised that they would leave the room to avoid any conflict of interest when considering the matter at HOSC in the future.

49 Mayor's announcements.

The Mayor drew the Council's attention to the civic events that she and the Deputy Mayor had attended between November 2023 and February 2024, as set out on the agenda.

She highlighted in particular: the event celebrating 100 years of the Eastbourne Blind Society, the Turner Prize award, Christmas Day events including Alone at Christmas and Rotary Club hosting over 70 people, chairing the Alderman ceremony, citizenship ceremonies, celebration of the Chinese New Year, and the range of choirs and orchestras in Eastbourne.

50 Notification of apologies for absence.

The Head of Democratic Services reported apologies from Councillors Mayes, Shore and Swansborough.

51 Public right of address.

The Mayor advised that the following public speakers had registered to speak during the meeting and would be called up at the start of the relevant agenda item:

- Loretta Lock (Managing Director, Defiant Sports) as the petition organiser had 5 minutes to present the petition at item 8 under the Council's petition scheme.
- Martin Smith of Eastbourne Palestine Solidarity Campaign had 3 minutes to speak on Agenda Item 11(a) – Motion on Gaza.
- Dennis Scard (Chair of Meads Community Association) had 3 minutes to speak on Agenda item 11(c), Motion – HMO study.
- Serena Stallard had 3 minutes to speak on Agenda Item 11(d), Corporate Plan 2024-28, in relation to 'Sustainability and Environment'.

52 Order of business.

The Mayor advised that she had agreed to change the order of business to take account of public speakers and attendees and the agenda items would be considered in the following order:

- Agenda Item 8 - The petition regarding Defiant Sports.
- Agenda Item 11A – Motion on Gaza.
- Agenda Item 11B – Motion to support the Youth Voice in Eastbourne.
- Agenda Item 11C – Motion on HMO study
- Agenda Item 7C - Corporate Plan 2024-28.

All remaining items would proceed in the order set out on the agenda.

53 Petition - EBC must give Defiant Sports compensation, an alternative site and hold a public meeting regarding Fort Fun

The Council received a petition signed by 1,938 people in relation to Defiant Sports. In accordance with the Council's petition scheme, Loretta Lock as the petition organiser presented the petition, and then the Council debated the matter for up to 15 minutes.

Councillor Holt thanked those who had signed the petition and thanked Loretta Lock for the constructive discussions that had taken place over the last few months. He confirmed that earlier that day the Council had signed new heads of terms with Defiant Sports for a 25-year lease on space at the Archery building and sports courts as its new home. In recognition of the volunteer hours spent on Fort Fun, this included an initial rent-free period, and small community grant to enable work to start. In addition, Councillor Holt advised that the Council would be bringing forward a Seaside Strategy later in the year for consultation.

Councillor Holt moved and Councillor Parker seconded a proposal:

“To thank the petitioners, and that the Council notes the petition and the action already taken by the Council on this matter, and the Leader of the Council and Cabinet be requested to consider any further action required”.

Councillor Smart welcomed the action taken to sign the lease for Archery and looked forward to seeing the Seaside Strategy when published.

The proposal was put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously): To thank the petitioners, and that the Council notes the petition and the action already taken by the Council on this matter, and the Leader of the Council and Cabinet be requested to consider any further action required.

54 Motion - Gaza Conflict

Councillor Holt moved and Councillor Ballard seconded the motion in relation to Gaza as set out on the agenda.

The public speaker, Mr Martin Smith of the Eastbourne Palestine Solidarity Campaign, spoke in relation to the proposals.

In moving the motion Councillor Holt explained that the motion had been brought to show the Council's support for the need for a ceasefire in Gaza, and in particular to explore how the Council can encourage communities to come together, and to support those affected by the conflict in the Eastbourne area.

The motion was debated by the Council. The proposals to better support and facilitate events for people of all faiths and none, and offer support to any local resident who needs our assistance as a result of these violent events, was supported across the Council. However, some Councillors indicated that they could not support the call on Government for the end to the conflict and whether it should be the subject of an Eastbourne Council motion.

The motion was put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (By 17 votes for, 0 against, 7 abstentions) –

This Council:

- Expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine. To those in Eastbourne who have been affected by this conflict we offer our support in this difficult time.
- Condemns the murder of Israeli civilians, the taking of hostages by Hamas and subsequent death and destruction in Gaza, killing tens of thousands of Palestinians.
- Believes that the urgent priority must be to stop the deaths and suffering of any more civilians in Gaza, Israel and the rest of Palestine.
- Hopes for an immediate further release of all hostages and release of Palestinian prisoners held without charge and an immediate permanent ceasefire to allow more aid and the possibility of a peaceful resolution.
- Believes that the only credible basis for long-term peace is the delivery of a Palestinian state alongside a safe and secure Israel.
- Believes the tragic recent events in Israel, Gaza and Palestine must not be allowed to divide our communities in Eastbourne.
- Condemns the increase in anti-Semitic and Islamophobic violence and abuse in the UK and that all forms of racism have no place in Eastbourne.

The Council resolves to:

1. Explore how the Council can better support and facilitate events for people of all faiths and none, where they can come together and express solidarity and sadness in response to these events.
2. Offer appropriate support to any local resident who needs our assistance as a result of these violent events.
3. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Affairs to call on the UK Government:

a) to press all parties to agree:

1. To an urgent permanent, bilateral ceasefire in Gaza, Israel and the rest of Palestine and to make every effort to resume the peace process;
2. To guarantee that international humanitarian law is upheld and that civilians are protected in accordance with those laws;
3. To allow the Red Cross immediate access to hostages in Gaza, in order to provide urgent medical aid to the elderly, the sick and the wounded and to ensure all civilians have access to humanitarian support, including unfettered access to medical supplies, food, electricity, other fuel and water.

b) to do all in its powers to support those that are committed to a permanent peace and a 2-state solution.”

55 Motion - To support the youth voice in Eastbourne

Councillor Williams moved and Councillor Holt seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

Councillor di Cara and Councillor Lamb seconded an amendment as below:

- To amend the initial statement and delete the following words: ‘The Council will: ~~adopt a new and co-created approach to local democracy by seeking to:~~’
- To amend the first sentence under the ‘Connect with Young People’ to add reference to the East Sussex Youth Cabinet: “To encourage all local Councillors to connect with existing youth structures and seek such as the East Sussex Youth Cabinet to provide a platform for young people to offer an input on policies and participate in discussions on local issues.”
- To amend the first sentence under ‘Collaboration’ to add reference to the East Sussex Youth Cabinet: “For the relevant Cabinet Members and members appointed by Full Council to hold a ‘youth brief’, to seek to engage with the East Sussex Youth Cabinet who collaborate with local schools, youth and community groups to encourage young people to be consulted and involved in decision-making processes and civic activities.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Williams, welcomed students from the East Sussex College to the meeting, she explained the work with students which had led to the motion, and the importance of co-creation. She advised that she was happy to accept the reference to East Sussex Youth Cabinet in the amendment to the motion but could not accept the deletion of the first sentence or to limiting the work to just the Youth Cabinet. Councillor Holt as seconder confirmed the acceptance of the change to the motion to include reference to the East Sussex Youth Cabinet.

The motion was debated across the Council and engagement with young people was supported. In the course of the discussion, Councillor Goodyear as a trustee of Leaf Hall, offered its use to young people's events and meetings, and Councillor Ewbank offered the youth cabinet the opportunity to join the future leaders group run by the Chamber of Commerce.

The amendment was put to a vote and was lost (7 votes for, 17 against).

The original motion as amended to include reference to the youth cabinet, was put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

The Council will adopt a new and co-created approach to local democracy by seeking to:

Connect with Young People:

To encourage all local Councillors to connect with existing youth structures, such as the East Sussex Youth Cabinet, to provide a platform for young people to offer an input on policies and participate in discussions on local issues.

To offer an annual open forum at the Town Hall hosted by Councillors, allowing young people to express their views to elected members on matters important to them.

Promote Youth-Friendly Spaces:

To actively promote youth-friendly spaces and events where young people can express their ideas, concerns, and aspirations for the community.

Collaboration:

For the relevant Cabinet Members and members appointed by Full Council to hold a 'youth brief', to seek to engage with the East Sussex Youth Cabinet, who collaborate with local schools, youth and community groups to encourage young people to be consulted and involved in decision-making processes and civic activities.

Promote Street Art and Young Artists:

To promote street art, murals, and showcasing the talent of young artists, reflecting the desire of young people to see themselves reflected in the town through 'colour' and life.

Support Young Artists Market:

To support the Youth Market and ensure it provides creative opportunities to showcase young people's talent, fostering town-wide pride in our youth.

56 Motion - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Study

Councillor Smart moved and Councillor Goodyear seconded the motion.

Councillor Murray moved and Councillor Bannister seconded the amendment which had been tabled as follows:

“This Council ~~requests~~ **welcomes** the issuing of the updated report by Aecom entitled ‘Eastbourne Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Study’, a draft of which was produced in June 2023, subject to Aecom having all required information. With this additional information, it will allow the Council, as a matter of urgency to bring forward and consider through a future committee report the intervention options that might be proposed in the final report. ~~including but not limited to Article 4 intervention.~~

It is important that the Council looks at this particular area of housing, as it supports those with specific needs, with the housing crisis that we are facing and fills in some of the gaps that are being left by the traditional housing supply chain. It is important that the Council addresses these issues to support those most in need, whilst ensuring that the local community has a mixed tenure of housing in its area. The report will guide the Council in delivering options to deal with HMO’s including, but not limited to, Article 4 intervention.”

The public speaker, Mr Dennis Scard (Chair of the Meads Community Association), spoke for up to 3 minutes.

In presenting his motion, Councillor Smart confirmed that he would support the amendment from Councillor Murray, and this was confirmed by the seconder Councillor Goodyear.

The motion as amended was debated, and then put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

“This Council welcomes the issuing of the updated report by Aecom entitled ‘Eastbourne Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Study’, a draft of which was produced in June 2023, subject to Aecom having all required information. With this additional information, it will allow the Council, as a matter of urgency to bring forward and consider through a future committee report the intervention options that might be proposed in the final report.

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Councillor Holt moved and Councillor Ewbank seconded the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 7 February 2024, to approve the Corporate Plan 2024-28, following a consultation process.

The public speaker, Ms Serena Stallard spoke on the matter in relation to Sustainability and Environment in the Corporate Plan, and in objection to the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and proposals for achieving net zero.

Councillor Holt in presenting the Corporate Plan, advised that the Council had had 254 responses to the corporate plan consultation, and he thanked all who had taken the time to respond. Councillor Holt and Councillor Murray thanked the public speaker but re-iterated the Council's commitment to be a net zero Council by 2030.

The matter was debated by the Council and then the recommendations were put to a vote and approved.

RESOLVED (unanimously): To adopt the Corporate Plan as its overarching corporate policy document for the next 4 years (as attached to the referral report as Appendix 1).

(The meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes at the end of this item).

58 Council Budget and Setting of the Council Tax for 2024/25

Councillor Maxted moved and Councillor Holt seconded the recommendations set out in the agenda in relation to the Council Budget and setting of the Council Tax for 2024/25. This incorporated recommendations from Cabinet regarding the General Fund Revenue Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme, the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators 2024/25, Capital Strategy and Investment Strategy, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget and Rent Setting 2023/24 and HRA Capital Programme 2024-27, and the Council Tax Discounts and Premiums 2024-25.

The Council noted an email sent in by Mr and Mrs Tilbury in relation to Council Tax Discount and Premiums, which has been circulated to Councillors as Mr Tilbury had been unable to attend as a public speaker.

Councillor Maxted (Portfolio Holder for Finance) presented the budget and set out the context of the funding of Councils, the cost-of-living crises and high inflation, and the housing and homelessness crisis. He thanked the Chief Finance Officer, deputy Chief Finance Officer and their team for preparing the budget and managing the financial pressures affecting the Council. He also thanked Jamie Wainwright-Jones and her team for the work they had done around homelessness, in mitigating the adverse effects on the people that they have helped, and also supporting the Council's finances.

Councillor Maxted advised that the Council had now heard from the

Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), that the Council had been granted exceptional financial support for two years, with the agreement that the Council would use its capital resources to fund exceptional revenue pressures, which would allow time for longer term savings plans to be put in place.

The Shadow Portfolio Holder for Finance responded to the budget on behalf of the opposition, criticising the administration for the management of the budget and its record over the last few years.

The Council then debated the proposals and the matter was put to a recorded vote as follows and carried:

For (17): Councillors Ballard, Bannister, Butcher, Collins, Dehdashty, Diplock, Ewbank, Holt, Maxted, Morris, Murray, Parker, Rodohan, Sayers-Cooper, Shuttleworth, Vaughan and Williams)

Against (7): Councillors Ansell, Belsey, di Cara, Goodyear, Lamb, Small and Smart)

Abstentions: none

RESOLVED (by 17 votes for, 7 against, 0 abstentions):

1. To approve the recommendations as detailed in the reports from the Chief Finance Officer to Cabinet on 7 February 2024:

- I. Continue to lobby the UK Government for additional funding in recognition of the exceptional financial pressures placed on Local Councils in tackling the cost of homelessness, which in Eastbourne is projected to be £4.9m for 23/24 to pay for temporary accommodation.
 - a. In this circumstance, EBC Council Tax would increase for a Band D property to 2.99% and deliver £3.8m of savings over two years as per previous MTFS and reporting. This is Eastbourne Borough Councils preferred option.
 - b. Our preference is that the Government recognise the extreme pressures placed on Councils of all political persuasions, and agrees, as they have done with social care, to provide exceptional, emergency support to Councils to cover the costs of EA/TA in the Budget.
 - c. However, in appreciation that this may be unlikely, the Council have put forward three other alternatives as we continue dialogue with DLHUC to provide support for this authority.
- II. To approve the following options in respect to the General Fund Budget 2024/25 dependent on the outcome of the Councils application to the Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities for Exceptional Financial Support, noting that option C has now been withdrawn.
 - a. Option A is based on Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities recognising and directly funding the increased

number of homelessness and temporary accommodation placements activity from 2023/24 onwards (Appendices 1A, 2A, 3A & 4A to the Cabinet report).

- b. Option B which assumes the acceptance of Exceptional Financial Support by Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities but does not include additional Council Tax setting powers over and above the existing pre-referendum limit of 2.99% (Appendices 1B, 2B, 3B & 4B to the Cabinet report).
 - d. Option D which assumes the refusal of Exceptional Financial Support by Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities (Appendices 1D, 2D, 3D & 4D to the Cabinet report).
- III. To give delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer and Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance to set the 2024/25 budget.
 - IV. Further to recommendation III above, if the outcome of DLUHC's decision results in the Council having to adopt option D officers will immediately implement plans already in place to develop an Emergency Budget with the purpose of finding additional savings of £3m in 2024/25 which will be presented to the next Full Council meeting in May.
 - V. To approve an increase in the Council Tax for Eastbourne Borough Council of 2.99% resulting in a gross Band D charge of £277.74 for 2024/25 an increase of £8.06 per annum.
 - VI. To approve the flexible use of Capital Receipts to fund improvement and transformation costs in line with the Statutory Guidance updated in August 2022.
 - VII. The revised General Fund & Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2024/25 as set out at Appendix 5 to the Cabinet report.
 - VIII. The rates of Fees and Charges proposed within Appendix 6 of the Cabinet report to apply from 1 April 2024 and to implement changes to statutory fees and charges for services shown within Appendix 6 of the Cabinet report as and when notified by Government.
 - IX. To note the Section 151 Officer's sign off as outlined in the report.
 - X. To approve the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25.
 - XI. To approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2024/25.
 - XII. To approve the Prudential and Treasury Indicators 2024/25 to 2026/27.

- XIII. To approve the Capital Strategy 2024/25.
- XIV. To approve the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) income and expenditure proposals, including revised HRA budget for 2022/23 and the budget for 2023/24, rents and service charges and the HRA Capital Programme, including:
- a. That social and affordable rents (including Shared Ownership) are increased by 7.7% with effect from 1st April 2024 in line with government policy.
 - b. That, with effect from 1 April 2024, when social-rented properties are relet to new tenants, the applicable rent will be increased by 5% above target rent.
 - c. That the revised service charges as set out in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.6 of the report are implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.
 - d. That Garage Rents are increased by 6.7%.
 - e. To grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio holder for Finance and Resources and the Chief Finance Officer to finalise Eastbourne Homes' Management Fees and Delivery Plans for both 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- XV. To approve the Council Tax Discount and Premiums from 1 April 2024 and 1 April 2025, as set out in Appendix 5 of the report.
2. That delegated authority is given to the Chief Finance Officer to amend the budget for any presentational changes ensuring the Council Tax Requirement at 6 below remains unchanged.
 3. That it be noted, that since the Cabinet meeting on 7 February the Business Rates return to the Government (NNDR1) has been finalised with no changes to the previous net budget assumptions.
 4. That consequent upon a General Fund budget of £9,911,763 and other matters, the basic amount (Band D) of Council Tax for the Borough Council's functions will be £277.74 (representing an increase of 2.99%) calculated.

However, as a result of the uncertainty of DLUHC decision regarding recommendation II above, the following tables reflect the likely outcome of the application as follows:

I. Option A – DLUHC directly fund the increased number of homelessness and temporary accommodation.

	£'000	£'000
Gross Expenditure:		
General Fund		98,645
HRA		21,582

Business Rates Tariff payable and deficit		12,427
		<u>132,874</u>
Less Income:		
Service Income	-79,030	
HRA	-21,582	
Other Government Grants	-6,040	
Business Rates income	-14,122	
Additional EA/TA Funding	-2,181	
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	-7	
		<u>-122,962</u>
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT		<u><u>9,912</u></u>
Band 'D' Council Tax		£277.74

II. Option B - Acceptance of Exceptional Financial Support by DLUHC

	£'000	£'000
Gross Expenditure:		
General Fund		99,684
HRA		21,582
Business Rates Tariff payable and deficit		12,427
		<u>133,693</u>
Less Income:		
Service Income	-79,030	
HRA	-21,582	
Other Government Grants	-6,040	
Business Rates income	-14,122	
Capitalisation Direction	-3,000	
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	-7	
		<u>-123,781</u>
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT		<u><u>9,912</u></u>
Band 'D' Council Tax		£277.74

III. Option D Refusal of Exceptional Financial Support by DLUHC.

	£'000	£'000
Gross Expenditure:		
General Fund		98,645
HRA		21,582
Business Rates Tariff payable and deficit		12,427
		<u>132,874</u>

Less Income:		
Service Income	-79,030	
HRA	-21,582	
Other Government Grants	-6,040	
Business Rates income	-14,122	
Contributions From Reserves	-2,181	
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	-7	
		-122,962
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT		9,912
Band 'D' Council Tax		£277.74

The statutory resolutions relating to this matter are given at paragraphs 5 and 6 below.

5. That it be noted that at its meeting on 14 December 2022 the Cabinet agreed the Council Tax Base of 35,687.2 for Band 'D' equivalent properties for the year 2024/25 (Item T in the formula in section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended).
6. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 as £9,911,763.
7. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended:
 - I. **Option A – DLUCH directly fund the increased number of homelessness and temporary accommodation.**
 - (a) £132,874,157 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
 - (b) £122,962,394 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - II. **Option B - Acceptance of Exceptional Financial Support by DLUHC**
 - (a) £133,693,157 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
 - (b) £123,781,394 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

III. Option D - Refusal of Exceptional Financial Support by DLUHC

- (a) £132,874,157 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
- (b) £122,962,394 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

For both options described in I & II above the following amounts remain the same.

- (a) £9,911,763 being the amount by which the aggregate at 5(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 5(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
- (b) £277.74 being the amount at 6(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (5 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including local precepts).

8. To note that East Sussex County Council, the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and the East Sussex Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.
9. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings.

COUNCIL TAX 2024/25 – BY AREA AND VALUATION BAND								
MAJOR PRECEPTOR	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
East Sussex Fire Authority (ESFA)	71.66	83.60	95.55	107.49	131.38	155.26	179.15	214.9
Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (SPCC)	168.61	196.71	224.81	252.91	309.11	365.31	421.52	505.8
East Sussex County	1,185.54	1,383.13	1,580.72	1,778.31	2,173.49	2,568.67	2,963.85	3,556.6

Council (ESCC)								
Eastbourne Borough Council	185.16	216.02	246.88	277.74	339.46	401.18	462.90	555.4
Total Council Tax Requirement	1,610.97	1,879.46	2,147.96	2,416.45	2,953.44	3,490.42	4,027.42	4,832.

10. To determine that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

11. To note, as the billing authority, that the Council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is excessive and that the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

59 Local council tax reduction scheme

Councillor Maxted moved and Councillor Diplock seconded the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 7 February 2024 to adopt the 2023/24 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme as the 2024/25 scheme.

In moving the item, Councillor Maxted advised that the Council currently operates a maximum of 80% council tax reduction scheme, and it was the intention to increase this to 100% scheme, when appropriate consultation had taken place with other preceptors including East Sussex County Council.

The Council debated the matter and it was put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (by 17 votes for, 7 abstentions):

(1) That the 2023/24 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is adopted as the 2024/25 scheme (as set out in Appendix 1 to the referral report).

(2) To note that subject to Full Council approval, Cabinet grants the Chief Executive delegated authority:

(a) to implement the Scheme, such delegated authority to include any measures necessary for or incidental to its management and administration; and

(b) if necessary, and in accordance with paragraph 2.3, to amend the Scheme in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

(3) That the Exceptional Hardship Scheme continues in 2024/25 subject to funds being available.

(4) That an initial £25,000 be added to the Exceptional Hardship Scheme with

this coming from the additional income raised from changes to Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions.

60 Approval of Licensing Fees 2024/2025

Councillor Morris moved and Councillor Butcher seconded the recommendations of the Licensing Committee held on 5 December 2023, to approve the Licensing Fees for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the referral report.

The recommendations were put to a vote and approved.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – To approve the Licensing fees proposed within Appendix 1 to apply from 1 April 2024.

61 Calendar of Meetings 2024/25

Councillor Holt moved and Councillor Bannister seconded the draft calendar of meeting for 2024/25. It was noted that the dates would be subject to final ratification at annual council in line with legislation.

Councillor Small asked if an additional meeting of Full Council could be considered for September, given the number of items on Council agendas. The Head of Democratic Services advised that discussions could take place with Group Leaders before the Annual Council meeting, when the calendar would be finalised.

The recommendation was put to a vote and approved.

RESOLVED (By 20 votes, 4 abstentions): That the draft Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25 be approved.

62 Motion - A Housing Emergency

Councillor Diplock moved and Councillor Holt seconded the motion as tabled.

Councillor Small moved and Councillor Ansell seconded an alternative course of action as follows:

“This Council Notes:

- That the underlying issues behind Eastbourne’s increased demand for temporary and emergency accommodation are complex and many, but primarily driven by a shrinking and increasingly unaffordable private rental sector, a severe shortage of housing available to the Council for placements and employment levels in the town falling relative to the national average, all further being exacerbated by the increased cost of living following the pandemic and energy crisis triggered by the invasion

of Ukraine.

- This is despite a national backdrop of record levels of house building, with the national target of a million homes built during this current parliament on course to be met and close to record levels of employment across the UK.
- Locally, Eastbourne has seen an average of 180 net dwellings constructed every year, with just half of these being new builds, despite a significant number of brownfield sites sitting vacant for years on end.
- There is also a major shortage of housing for those on the housing waiting list, with cases of residents in band C waiting as long as 13 years for a property.

For Eastbourne, the end result has been:

- Ordinary working families being priced out of the housing market through no fault of their own;
- Almost everyone knowing someone who is struggling to access housing of their choice; and
- The Council's total net spend on TA in 2023/24 forecast to be circa £4.6m, up from 3.8m in 2022/23 and £1.6m in 2021/22.

As such, this Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet to:

- Make use of all available powers to maximise Eastbourne's attractiveness for new housing proposals and commits to working meaningfully with all partners at both local and national level to solve the challenges that are blocking development in the town, notably but not limited to the sites at Bedfordwell Road, Junction Road, TJ Hughes and Debenhams buildings.
- Commits to publishing its own locally determined housing need figure, to help guide the towns housing ambitions.
- Commends the government for the action already taken to address the temporary accommodation challenges that this Council faces, namely in uprating the Local Housing Allowance Rate at a cost of £9Bn over the next 5 years, and uprating the core spending power grant to Eastbourne by an additional £145,000.
- Requests that the local MP continues to lobby the Treasury and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for the Housing Benefit Subsidy Rate to be increased and that the Council engages with the housing sector, MP and Government on what long term solutions are needed to fix the national housing crisis.
- Formally consider redefining the tourist zone, with a view to having a

smaller number of higher quality beds and allowing some existing tourist accommodation to be converted to residential.”

The Council debated the motion and the amendment together.

The alternative course of action was put to a vote and declared lost by 7 votes to 17 votes.

The original motion was put to a vote and was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED that –

This Council notes:

- The unanimous, cross-party call on Government made at November’s Full Council meeting.
- At the Eastbourne Borough Council-led Housing Conference in Westminster in January, Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent local authorities repeated our collective call to raise the cap on housing benefit subsidy for local authority housing placements from the current 2011 levels, in order to properly reflect the real costs of providing Temporary Accommodation (TA).
- That this meeting was joined and supported by Crisis, the Trussell Trust, MPs and Peers.
- The most recently available figures show that rough sleeping in England has increased by 26%, and a record 280,000 households are in TA.
- Over the 2023/24 financial year, this has resulted in:
 - Ordinary working families being priced out of the housing market through no fault of their own;
 - Almost everyone knowing someone who is struggling to access housing of their choice; and
 - The Council’s total net spend on TA in 2023/24 forecast to be circa £4.6m, up from £1.3m just three years ago, with scores of local authorities across the country similarly affected.

This situation is unsustainable and continues to represent an existential threat to local government.

Whilst the Council's teams will continue to do everything in its powers to meet both the needs of its residents and its statutory obligations, the system was not created to deal with these numbers. The driving forces underpinning this are systemic and structural and are not in the Council's control. Under current funding arrangements the Council does not have the resources to solve the problem alone.

As such, this Council resolves to:

1. Declare a Housing Emergency for the Borough of Eastbourne.
2. Recognise and endorse the work of the Leader of the Council in pursuing a cross party, cross community consensus on this national challenge.
3. Reaffirm the full support of this Council in the actions of this authority, and

that the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive continue to press the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Chancellor of the Exchequer - along with their shadow counterparts - for additional resources to help those local housing authorities and councils worst affected, such as Eastbourne, including raising the current 2011 cap on housing benefit subsidy for local authority housing placements.

4. Continue to work with the sector and try and engage Government to develop long term solutions to fix the national housing crisis.

63 Motion - Health Services at the Eastbourne District General Hospital (DGH).

Councillor Diplock moved and Councillor Butcher seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

Councillor Diplock presented the motion and advised that it was intended to support the action already taken by the East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) calling for a pause to East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust's (ESHT) changes to paediatric services at the DGH, for a review to take place.

The matter was debated and there was agreement across the Council that there had been insufficient consultation on the proposals by ESHT.

The motion was put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously)–

This Council:

- Recognises the demands placed on the NHS, and the phenomenal hard work and dedication of the doctors, nurses and the healthcare family. We thank them for it.
- Notes that in 2010, Eastbourne had a 24/7 in-patient paediatrics unit, a fully-fledged and operational maternity unit, and several branches of emergency medicine.
- Notes that, some 14 years later, emergency general surgery and emergency orthopaedics have gone from the Eastbourne District General Hospital (DGH). The DGH's full maternity unit has been downgraded to a midwife-led unit, which itself was closed for almost 3 months in total last year and has been closed since December with no date to reopen, conducting outpatient appointments only. In January 2024, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) began implementing changes to DGH paediatric services, including the closure of the Short Stay Paediatric Unit. In December 2023, the East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) called for a pause to ESHT's changes to paediatric services at the DGH and is conducting a review.

This Council:

1. Endorses the decision to request the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to call in the changes by ESHT to DGH paediatrics.
2. Calls on the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to outline how they will support ESHT to overcome the midwife shortage that has led to the DGH Midwifery Unit to close for births; and
3. Calls upon ESHT to:
 - Pause the changes to paediatric services, allowing a full review of the proposals;
 - Make public its plans to permanently and safely re-open the DGH's Midwifery Unit for births;
 - Commit to being transparent and open with local residents;
 - Commit to reviewing its threshold for what constitutes significant change; and
 - Commit to fully inform and consult both HOSC and the people of Eastbourne before any future changes to services at the DGH are implemented.

(Having declared interests, Councillors Ballard, Belsey, di Cara, and Shuttleworth left the room for the duration of this item).

64 Discussion on minutes of council bodies.

The minutes of the following Council bodies were submitted to the meeting for information:

Audit and Governance Committee – 28 November 2023
Scrutiny Committee – 4 December 2023
Licensing Committee – 5 December 2023 and 15 January 2024
Cabinet - 13 December 2023 and 7 February 2024
Planning Committee – 29 January 2024

No items were called for discussion.

Councillor Holt moved and Councillor Bannister seconded acceptance of the minutes.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That the minutes be accepted.

65 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting was the Annual Council meeting on 22 May at 6 pm.

The meeting ended at 9.47 pm

Councillor Candy Vaughan (Mayor)