

Lewes District Council



Council Agenda

Thursday, 16 July 2015

Southover House, Lewes

Jenny Rowlands
Chief Executive

Lewes District Council



Council Meeting

Councillors are kindly requested to switch off their mobile 'phones and other mobile devices prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Note: At the commencement of the meeting the Chair will ask for a period of silence to enable councillors to focus their thoughts on the meeting or to pray silently.

To all Members of the Council

A meeting of the **Council** will be held in the **The Council Chamber, County Hall, St Annes Crescent, Lewes BN7 1UE** on **Thursday, 16 July 2015** at **14:30** which you are requested to attend. Please note the start time and that the venue for this meeting is wheelchair accessible and has an induction loop to help people who are hearing impaired.

This meeting may be filmed, recorded or broadcast by any person or organisation. Anyone wishing to film or record must notify the Chair prior to the start of the meeting. Members of the public attending the meeting are deemed to have consented to be filmed or recorded, as liability for this is not within the Council's control.

Agenda

Introduction

1 Minutes

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council dated 20 May 2015 (copy previously circulated).

2 Apologies for Absence

3 Declarations of Interest

Disclosure by councillors of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the councillor regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct

4 Announcements

To receive any announcements from the Chair of the Council, Leader of the Council, Members of the Cabinet or the Chief Executive.

A list of the Chair of the Council's engagements since the Annual Meeting of the Council on 20 May 2015 is enclosed – page 7.

5 Questions from Members of the Public

To deal with questions which members of the public may wish to put to members of the Cabinet in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10 (herewith - page 9).

6 Petitions

To receive petitions from councillors or members of the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12 (if any).

7 Written Questions from Councillors

To deal with written questions which councillors may wish to put to the Chair of the Council, a Lead Councillor on the Cabinet or the Chair of any committee or sub-committee in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 (if any).

8 Questions to the Leader of the Council

To deal with questions (if any) which councillors may wish to put to the Leader of the Council. It will be at the Leader's discretion to re-direct questions to relevant Members of the Cabinet. A councillor wishing to raise a question must notify the Chair of the Council of the text of the question prior to the commencement of the meeting. *(NB This item is limited to a maximum of 5 questions, with no more than 1 question being asked per councillor. If a question requires a detailed or technical response, the Leader may decide that a written response is more appropriate).*

9 Ward Issues

To deal with ward issues which councillors wish to raise. A councillor wishing to raise a ward issue must notify the Chair of the Council prior to the commencement of the meeting in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.8 (if any).

10 Urgent Decisions taken by the Cabinet or Cabinet Members

In accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17, to receive details of any urgent decisions taken by the Cabinet or Cabinet Members since the Annual Meeting of the Council on 20 May 2015.

11 Recommendations from Cabinet

To consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 July 2015 (herewith - page 10).

12 Notices of Motion

(a) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13 Councillor Osborne has submitted the following Notice of Motion:

To change the thresholds for petitions to trigger referral to Scrutiny and Full Council

Council notes that a petition must contain at least 750 signatures to require the relevant senior officer to give evidence at a public meeting of the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

And a petition must contain at least 1,500 signatures or more for it to be

debated by all our councillors as an agenda item at a full Council meeting.

We believe that this somewhat arbitrary threshold, discriminates against small rural communities with populations below 750 signatures (or 1500). For example East Chiltington and St John Without combined only has approx 470 people. Even if 100% of the residents of both parishes felt strongly enough to sign a petition, they could not have their concerns debated at a public meeting. By contrast Seaford will only need to gain the signatures of approximately 3 % or 6% respectively of the population to be afforded the attention of councillors and officers at LDC.

Therefore we suggest that the constitution be changed to read as follows:

A petition must contain at least 750 signatures (or 40% of the population of a parish, if on a localised issue) to require the relevant senior officer to give evidence at a public meeting of the Council's Scrutiny Committee. A petition must contain at least 1,500 signatures (or 40% of the population of a parish, if on a localised issue) for it to be debated by all councillors as an agenda item at a full Council meeting.

If there is any doubt as to whether the subject of the petition is a localised as opposed to a district wide issue, this will be determined by the relevant service Director in consultation with the Chief Executive.

(b) In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13 Councillor Osborne has submitted the following Notice of Motion:

Timing of Council Meetings

The Council notes the following:

The District Council has historically met for Full Council Meetings at 2.30pm.

We believe Public meetings should be held at a time convenient for the majority of the public, whenever possible.

For most of the public, scheduling a public meeting for a weekday afternoon is somewhat inconvenient unless they're retired, unemployed, work nights or have very flexible working hours. Having meetings in the evening may not draw a crowd, but having them scheduled during the day almost ensures plenty of empty seats.

Beyond that, day meetings send residents a signal that their participation is neither encouraged nor desired. That's exactly the wrong signal to be sending those who pay the bills, elect the council and play a big role in shaping Lewes District.

As all council meetings with the exception of the Planning Applications Committee meet during the day, many working Councillors are having to take a substantial amount of time off from their paid employment or own businesses to attend. Although it is assumed that legislation demands that employers give their employees reasonable time off to attend meetings and many do, this is not the case in law. Whether by choice or out of necessity many of my colleagues choose to take the time off as annual leave and

therefore give up a large percentage of the holiday time they have available to spend with our families. This is one of the reasons that many members of the community are dissuaded from ever becoming Councillors in the first place and subsequently reduces the cross-section of the membership of the Council as a whole.

I would ask the Council to improve the present situation by adopting the following Notice of Motion:

To enable greater engagement with members and the public:

The timing of the meetings of Full Council be changed from 2.30pm to 6 pm commencing with the meeting in July 2016 and thereafter.

13 Outside Body & Joint Body Representatives and Cabinet Membership

To consider the Report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services (Report No 92/15 herewith – page 20).

14 Protocol on Member-Officer Relations

To consider the Report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services (Report No 93/15 herewith – page 23).

15 Officer Employment Procedure Rules Update

To consider the Report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Services (Report No 94/15 herewith – page 26).

16 Pay Policy Statement

To consider the Report of the Director of Corporate Services (Report No 95/15 herewith – page 32).

17 Reporting Back on Meetings of Outside Bodies

To receive feedback from the Council's representatives who serve on outside bodies in respect of meetings they have attended (if any). A councillor wishing to provide feedback must notify the Chair of the Council prior to the commencement of the meeting.



Jenny Rowlands
Chief Executive

For further information about items appearing on this Agenda, please contact Catherine Knight at Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1AB. Telephone (01273) 471600.