

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday, 18 November 2015 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Councillor Janet Coles (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillors Margaret Bannister, Colin Belsey, Raymond Blakebrough, Sammy Choudhury, Penny Di Cara, Jonathan Dow, Tony Freebody, Pat Hearn, Steve Holt, Gordon Jenkins, Gill Mattock, Harun Miah, Colin Murdoch, Jim Murray, Pat Rodohan, Dean Sabri, Margaret Salisbury, Alan Shuttleworth, Robert Smart, Kathy Smethers, Colin Swansborough, Barry Taylor, Troy Tester, David Tutt, John Ungar and Steve Wallis.

31 Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2015 were presented and the Mayor was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

32 Mayor's announcements.

1. The Council observed one minute's silence in memory of the victims of the Paris terror attacks on 13 November 2015. Books of Remembrance had been placed at Council receptions at the Town Hall and 1 Grove Road.
2. On 30 July the Mayor attended the University of Brighton's Summer Graduation ceremony at Brighton Dome and saw some of those who studied at the Eastbourne campus collect their awards.
3. The Mayor attended various events linked to Airbourne, including a luncheon at the Chaseley Trust on 14 August followed by a presentation to retiring officers on the Western Lawns.
4. The Mayor's Charity Car Wash took place in the Town Hall car park on 19 August. The volunteers all worked very hard and raised £150 for the Mayor's Charity appeal. The volunteers are hoping to do another car washing day in April.
5. On 2 September the Mayor was in attendance at Eastbourne Rugby Club to welcome the Webb Ellis World Cup Trophy to the Town, whilst on its way to the Rugby World Cup 2015. The Mayor then attended the Rugby World Cup South African Team Welcome Ceremony at the Winter Garden on 13 September.
6. The Eastbourne Samaritans held a 50th Anniversary Walk on 20 September in memory of former Mayor and Honorary Alderman Beryl Healy, who died earlier this year. The Mayor joined the walk along the seafront from Fort Fun.

7. On 2 October the Mayor attended the launch of a new 'A Level' Centre at Sussex Downs College in Kings Drive.
8. The Mayor's Charity Barn Dance took place on 17 October at the Winter Garden. Over 70 people joined the Mayor for a fun evening of dancing, featuring the Spinning Jenny Band. A delicious tex mex buffet was served during the course of the evening and the event raised just under £500. The Mayor's Charity Committee are hoping to repeat this event again next year.
9. On 29 October the Mayor joined Care for the Carers at its 25th Anniversary Celebration at the View Hotel. During the event the Mayor presented an award to one of the charity's long serving volunteers.
10. The Mayor attended a number of Remembrance events around the Town in November. This included a Remembrance event at the Redoubt Fortress on 6 November, where a Legion D'Honneur was presented to Gordon Mackay and a visit to the hard working poppy sellers around the Town on 7 November.
11. The Mayor's Charities for this year are RNLI Eastbourne Lifeboats and The JPK Project and the Charity Committee is busy organising fundraising events. Events coming up include the Society of Eastbourne Artists Exhibition at the Town Hall on 21/22 November, a Christmas Fayre at the Devonshire Park Tennis Centre on 12 December and a Quiz Night at the Town Hall on 29 January. The Mayor's Charity Ball will be held at the Winter Garden on 4 March 2016, and tickets will be going on sale very soon.

33 Apologies for absence.

No apologies received.

34 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.

Councillors Taylor, Ungar and Wallis declared that in respect of the motion at item 42, as members of the East Sussex County Council Planning Committee, which may be required to determine planning applications for fracking, they would withdraw from the meeting during the debate and decision to ensure all such determinations could be approached with an open mind and with no suggestion of predetermination of the issues.

35 Boundary review.

The Council considered the report of the Senior Head of Corporate Development and Governance on proposals made in respect of Borough Wards in accordance with the requirements of part 2 of the 2015

boundary review being conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

A review in relation to council size had been determined by Council at its meeting on 27 May 2015. It unanimously approved that no change be made to the Council size of 27 and this submission had been accepted by the Boundary Commission. A working group of 3 members was established at that meeting to conduct the second stage review of the current wards and boundaries.

The report of the working group was appended to the report and detailed its findings relating to the key overarching issues of electoral equality, community cohesion and strong natural boundaries.

The working group had recommended no changes be made to existing ward names. A consensus on its final recommendations on ward boundaries had not been reached and three options were proposed for consideration. The basis for all the options was considered valid in terms of the detailed work analysing potential change scenarios using the evidence gathered on electorate equality, forecasts and community factors.

In support of option A, Councillor Jenkins as a member of the working group made reference to Eastbourne's electoral figures both current and forecast with only two wards being outside the 10% ideal variance figure and in both cases by only a 1% margin. The degree of change required as set out in option B was considered disproportionate to the scale of the variance and would have cost implications.

In supporting option B, Councillors Tester and Ungar as members of the working group referenced the importance of preserving community identities and highlighted the opportunity to address an identified boundary anomaly between Ratton (RNC) and Old Town (OTB) which currently was considered to divide a defined residential community. The option would also improve the electorate percentage variance in Hampden Park.

The working group had unanimously agreed that although Sovereign Harbour had an 11% variance, no changes be made to the current boundaries given its well defined community identity and the number of second home residencies.

Members conveyed their thanks to the working group, the Head of Corporate Development and Governance and the Electoral Services Team for their detailed work to ensure that the Council's proposals met the objectives set by the Commission.

The following options were submitted for consideration:

Option A - No change to existing ward boundaries on the basis that the degree of electorate variance forecast for existing wards is acceptable and does not warrant disproportionate change.

Option B - Adjust boundaries in 3 areas to improve the variance figure of Hampden Park and improve a community boundary between Ratton and Old Town.

Option C - No formal submission is made on the basis that the working group was unable to reach a consensus on the above options. Council was advised that the working group had reached a consensus in recommending that the Council should make a formal submission to the Boundary Commission.

Although the Borough boundary was outside the scope of this review, the working group proposed that the Council formally record the need for a review at the earliest opportunity, in particular to enclose existing residential developments clearly identifiable as part of the Eastbourne residential community.

As part of a County-wide review, East Sussex County Council would be assessing its representation across all East Sussex Districts, however it was likely that Eastbourne would retain a representation of nine county councillors and therefore maintain its coterminous boundaries with County divisions.

The Boundary Commission would undertake a public consultation exercise following its consideration of all submission proposals, which are invited from any group or individual, with a final decision expected in February 2016.

It was moved by Councillor Jenkins and seconded by Councillor Freebody that option A be approved.

It was moved by Councillor Tester and seconded by Councillor Ungar that option B be approved.

No proposal was made for option C.

Following debate both motions were put to the vote:

The motion to approve option A was lost by 17 votes to 9.

Resolved: That the following recommendations of the working group be approved for submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England:

(1) (By 17 votes to 9) That option B (involving boundary adjustments to Hampden Park, Old Town and Ratton wards) be approved as set out in the working group's submission as appended to the report.

(2) (Unanimously) That there be no change to the existing ward names.

(3) (Unanimously) To endorse the recommendation that a formal request to address the current anomalies in the existing Borough boundary be conveyed to the Boundary Commission.

(4) (Unanimously) That the Senior Head of Corporate Development and Governance be authorised to submit the decision to the Boundary Commission on behalf of the Council.

36 Regulatory services enforcement policy and service standards.

The Council considered the report of the Senior Head of Community regarding the publication of clear service standards including an enforcement policy in order to meet its responsibilities under the statutory principles of good regulation and to provide transparency and accountability in terms of its response to non-compliance. The Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy and service standards were appended to the report.

Members conveyed their thanks to the Strategy and Commissioning Lead for Environment and Waste and her team for their valuable activities within the community to protect public health.

It was moved by Councillor Wallis and seconded by Councillor Bannister and:

Resolved: That the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy and associated Service Standards be adopted.

37 Annual treasury management annual report 2014/15.

This matter was reported and moved by Councillor Mattock on behalf of the Cabinet and seconded by Councillor Shuttleworth.

Resolved: (1) That the Annual Treasury Management report for 2014/15 be approved and that specific approval be given to the 2014/15 prudential and treasury indicators set out in the report.

(2) That the proposed amendment to the Council's Treasury Management Policy to allow lending to investment companies be approved.

38 Scrutiny annual programme 2015/16.

This matter was reported and moved by Councillor Smart on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee and seconded by Councillor Ungar.

Councillor Smart highlighted the proposed reviews on safer policing to commence with a presentation by the District Commander at the December meeting and the Towner on its performance and future funding which was scheduled for June 2016. It was noted that a presentation from the Highways Agency on progress of the A27 improvements east of Lewes would now take place on a date to be confirmed in February 2016.

Resolved: (Unanimously) That the annual scrutiny work programme for 2015/16 be approved.

39 Eastbourne community safety plan.

This matter was proposed by Councillor Shuttleworth on behalf of the Cabinet and seconded by Councillor Ungar.

Councillor Shuttleworth highlighted the impact of planned government spending cuts on police resources and the inevitable reduction in police officers as a result. The further budget reductions facing Sussex Police would have significant implications for the work of the local partnership and community policing and the Council's concerns should be recorded.

Members praised the work of Sussex Police and all partners involved in the achievements of the community safety partnership and its continued value and strength to meet the stated financial and performance challenges.

Resolved: (Unanimously) That the 2014-17 Eastbourne community safety plan and the continued delegated implementation authority to the Senior Head of Community be approved.

40 Local council tax reduction scheme 2016/17.

This matter was proposed by Councillor Shuttleworth on behalf of the Cabinet and seconded by Councillor Mattock.

Resolved: (1) That the following changes to the current local council tax reduction scheme be approved:

- (i) That the maximum amount of council tax reduction be limited to 80% of the claimant's council tax liability.
- (ii) That a minimum income floor for self-employed claimants be introduced.

(2) That no transitional arrangements be made in respect of the above changes.

(3) That the exceptional hardship scheme be adopted.

41 Motion - Reduce the rate of VAT on tourism to 5%.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Bannister and seconded by Councillor Wallis:

Eastbourne Borough Council calls upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce the rate of VAT on tourism to 5% as the United Kingdom tourism industry is currently at a disadvantage in Europe as it is one of only three European Union countries charging VAT at the full rate. Eastbourne Borough Council believes that this VAT reduction will increase visitors to UK holiday destinations, thus increasing revenue, employment and local economies.

An amendment proposed by Councillor Smart and seconded by Councillor Di Cara that the first use of the word "tourism" be replaced with the word "accommodation" was lost by 17 votes to 9.

Resolved: (By 17 votes to 1) That this motion be approved.

42 Motion - Fracking.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Murray and seconded by Councillor Mattock:

Eastbourne Borough Council has concerns about important aspects of fracking and are opposed to any fracking activity in our area, until satisfactory answers are scientifically proven not to have an adverse effect on the general wellbeing of not only the natural habitat directly affected by fracking but the surrounding plant life and wildlife in neighbouring sites.

Resolved: (By 15 votes with 9 abstentions) That this motion be approved.

43 Motion - Cycling.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Blakebrough and seconded by Councillor Smethers:

Eastbourne Borough Council requests that East Sussex County Council delays any decision to proceed with the implementation of a shared walking and cycling scheme on Eastbourne promenade until an integrated walking and cycling strategy is in place.

Ms S McNally and Mr H Simpson, Eastbourne residents and Mr P Humphreys, on behalf of Bespoke cycle group, addressed the Council on the motion.

Resolved: (By 17 votes to 9) That this motion be rejected.

44 Minutes of council bodies and items for discussion.

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

Planning Committee	4 August, 1 September, 29 September and 27 October 2015
Conservation Area Advisory Group	25 August 2015 and 6 October 2015
Cabinet	2 September and 21 October 2015
Scrutiny Committee	7 September 2015
Audit and Governance Committee	23 September 2015
General Licensing Committee	5 October 2015
Licensing Act Committee	5 October 2015

No items for discussion were raised on the above minutes. Further to Council procedure rule 14.3 it was:

Resolved: That the minutes of the above Council bodies be accepted.

45 Exclusion of the public - motion that:

Resolved: That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the consideration of confidential proceedings of council bodies is likely to disclose exempt information within the categories specified either beneath the item or within the open summary of the relevant minutes.

46 Minutes of confidential council bodies and items for discussion.

The confidential minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 October 2015 were submitted to this meeting.

In accordance with Council procedure rule 14, the following item was raised for discussion - Minute 38 – Corporate assets - investments and disposal - raised by Councillor Taylor.

Further to Council procedure rule 14.3 it was:

Resolved: That the minutes of the above Council body be accepted.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm

Councillor Janet Doris Coles
Mayor, Chairman