

Full Council

26 July 2023



Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Quorum: 7

Published: Tuesday, 18 July 2023

To the Members of the Borough Council

You are summoned to attend an ordinary meeting of Eastbourne Borough Council to be held at the Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 26 July 2023 at 6.00 pm to transact the following business.

Agenda

1 Minute of Silence

The Council will pay tribute and hold a short period a silence in memory of former Borough and County Councillor Barry Taylor, who sadly died on 10 June 2023, and who had served on the Council for 30 years.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2023 (Pages 5 - 10)

3 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).

4 Mayor's announcements. (Pages 11 - 14)

A list of the Mayor's announcements in respect of his activities since the last meeting is attached for information.

5 Notification of apologies for absence.

6 Public right of address.

The Mayor to report any requests received from a member of the public under council procedure rule 11 in respect of any referred item or motion listed below.

7 Order of business.

The Council may vary the order of business if, in the opinion of the Mayor, a matter should be given precedence by reason of special urgency.

8 Appointment of Standards Independent Persons (Pages 15 - 16)

Report of the Monitoring Officer.

9 Matters referred from Cabinet or other council bodies.

The following matters are submitted to the Council for decision (council procedure

rule 12 refers):-

(a) Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23 (To Follow)

Report of Councillor Robin Maxted on behalf of Cabinet meeting on 19 July 2023.

10 Motions.

The following motions have been submitted by members under council procedure rule 13:-

(a) Motion on Highways Disrepair

The following motion has been submitted by Councillor Hugh Parker:

“Many of the highways within the Borough are now in a disgraceful state of disrepair. This applies to potholes in roads and uneven pavements some of which have only been patched and repatched rather than repaired, with others outstanding. Further to the announcement that East Sussex County Council unanimously approved the additional spending from reserves to pay for extra patching and drainage work, and to increase the capital programme, funded through borrowing, and a decision on capital funding due to be made this month - Eastbourne Borough Council asks the Leader and Chief Executive:

1. To contact East Sussex County Council and ask that the County, if it has not already done so, undertakes an immediate and comprehensive condition survey of all Borough highways and within 3 months of that contact, provide this Council with a work plan for undertaking the necessary repairs and resurfacing over a period not exceeding 12 months, giving priority to the more serious conditions; and
2. To invite the relevant officers from East Sussex County Council to attend an early meeting of this Council’s Scrutiny Committee to provide details of the arrangements for the repair and maintenance of the highways.”

(b) Motion - Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

The following motion has been submitted by Councillor Kshama Shore:

“This Council notes that in November 2017, Eastbourne Borough Council implemented Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) covering the seafront and a number of open spaces throughout the town.

These PSPOs grant authorised individuals to issue fixed penalty notices of up to £75 or fines of up to £1000 to dog owners who do not keep their dogs on leads in designated areas, or when asked to do so, to clear up after their dog or allow their dogs to enter certain prohibited areas.

This Council notes that these PSPOs have seen exceptionally little enforcement and are commonly ignored.

This Council instructs the Cabinet member for Community Spaces and officers to ensure there are dedicated enforcement patrols of these PSPOs going forward and requires the relevant officer to produce a report for Scrutiny Committee every 6 months detailing the location and number of patrols and any enforcement undertaken that have taken place in the preceding 6 months.

The Council also requests the Director of Service Delivery to make arrangements to extend each of these PSPOs beyond their current November 2023 expiry date, subject to statutory consultation requirements.”

11 Discussion on minutes of council bodies.

Members of the Council who wish to raise items for discussion (council procedure rule 14) on any of the minutes of the meetings of formal council bodies listed below must submit their request to the Head of Democratic Services no later than 10.00 am on the day of the meeting. A list of such items (if any) will be circulated prior to the start of the meeting.

The following are appended to this agenda:-

- (a) **Minutes of Licensing Committee - 26 May 2023 (to follow)**
- (b) **Minutes of Audit and Governance Committee - 8 June 2023** (Pages 17 - 22)
- (c) **Minutes of Planning Committee - 12 June 2023** (Pages 23 - 26)
- (d) **Minutes of Cabinet - 13 June 2023** (Pages 27 - 30)
- (e) **Minutes of Scrutiny Committee - 10 July 2023** (Pages 31 - 38)
- (f) **Minutes of Cabinet - 19 July 2023 (to follow)**

12 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for 15 November 2023.



Robert Cottrill
Chief Executive

Information for the public

Accessibility:

Please note that the venue for this meeting is wheelchair accessible and has an induction loop to help people who are hearing impaired. If you would like to use the hearing loop please advise Democratic Services (see below for contact details) either in advance of the meeting or when you arrive so that they can set you up with the relevant equipment to link into the system.

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Public participation:

Please contact Democratic Services (see end of agenda) for the relevant deadlines for registering to speak on a matter which is listed on the agenda if applicable.

Information for Councillors

Items for discussion:

Members of the Council who wish to raise items for discussion on any of the minutes of council bodies attached to the meeting agenda, are required to notify Democratic Services by 10am on the day of the meeting.

Disclosure of interests:

Members should declare their interest in a matter at the beginning of the meeting.

In the case of a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI), if the interest is not registered (nor the subject of a pending notification) details of the nature of the interest must be reported to the meeting by the member and subsequently notified in writing to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

If a member has a DPI or other prejudicial interest he/she must leave the room when the matter is being considered (unless he/she has obtained a dispensation).

Democratic Services

For any further queries regarding this agenda or notification of apologies please contact Democratic Services.

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Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Full Council

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 24 May 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Pat Rodohan (Mayor).

Councillors Candy Vaughan (Deputy Mayor), Nick Ansell, Kathy Ballard, Margaret Bannister, Daniel Butcher, Andy Collins, Ali Dehdashty, Peter Diplock, Christina Ewbank, Nigel Goodyear, Stephen Holt, Jane Lamb, Robin Maxted, Anita Mayes, Amanda Morris, Jim Murray, Hugh Parker, Teri Sayers-Cooper, Kshama Shore, Alan Shuttleworth, David Small, Robert Smart, Colin Swansborough and Jenny Williams.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Kate Slattery (Head of Legal Services), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Sarah Lawrence (Committee Team Manager).

1 Election of the Mayor.

It was proposed by Councillor Shuttleworth and seconded by Councillor Swansborough that Councillor Candy Vaughan be elected as Mayor for the municipal year 2023/24.

It was accordingly:-

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That Councillor Candy Vaughan be elected Mayor for the 2023/24 municipal year and until the election of the Mayor at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

Councillor Vaughan then signed her statutory declaration of acceptance of office as Mayor and took the chair. In her speech of acceptance, the Mayor advised that she would be raising money for two charities in 2023/24 which would be Band of Brothers and The Old Bank Wellbeing Centre.

Councillor Vaughan thanked Councillor Rodohan and Barbara Rodohan for their excellent work as Mayor and Mayoress during the last year and congratulated them on the £22k raised for their charities.

2 Notification of apologies for absence.

The Head of Democratic Services advised that apologies had been received from Councillors Belsey and di Cara.

3 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).

There were no declarations of interest made.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 February 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

5 Appointment of Deputy Mayor.

It was proposed by Councillor Murray and seconded by Councillor Diplock that Councillor Amanda Morris be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2023/24.

RESOLVED (by 19 votes for, 0 against and 6 abstentions) – That Councillor Amanda Morris be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Councillor Morris then made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office as Deputy Mayor. In her speech of acceptance, the Deputy Mayor advised that Nick Reynolds would act as her consort for the year, and her daughter, Sophia Morris, who would accompany her to events when her official consort was unavailable.

6 Investiture of Mayor's Consort.

The Mayor reported that her daughter, Nickie Foster, would act as the Mayor's consort for the 2023/24 municipal year.

7 Mayor's Chaplain - Notification of Appointment.

The Mayor reported that Father Danny Pegg would serve as the Mayor's Chaplain for the municipal year 2023/24.

8 Election of Leader of the Council

It was proposed by Councillor Swansborough and seconded by Councillor Ewbank that Councillor Stephen Holt be elected as Leader of the Council.

This was debated by the Council.

RESOLVED (by 19 votes to 6) - That Councillor Holt be elected as Leader of the Council and Cabinet Chair for a 4-year term of office until May 2027, to continue until a new Leader is elected.

Councillor Holt gave a speech of acceptance for the role of the Leader of the Council.

9 Borough Council Elections 2023 - Returning Officer report.

The Council received the report of the Chief Executive and Returning Officer

setting out the results of the elections held on 4 May 2023, and the Councillors elected until May 2027 as follows:

Ward:	Councillor (*newly elected)
Devonshire	Margaret Elizabeth BANNISTER, Christina Jane EWBANK* Stephen Alfred HOLT
Hampden Park	James Robert MURRAY Teresa Marie SAYERS-COOPER* Colin Richard SWANSBOROUGH
Langney	Anita MAYES* Alan SHUTTLEWORTH Candy VAUGHAN
Meads	Andrew William COLLINS* Jane Elizabeth LAMB Robert Christopher SMART
Old Town	Ali Asgar DEHDASHTY* Peter Robert DIPLOCK Amanda Jennifer MORRIS
Ratton	Nicholas John Raymond ANSELL* Colin Sidney BELSEY, David SMALL*
St Anthony's	Daniel David Anstey BUTCHER* Hugh Wayne PARKER Jenny WILLIAMS*
Sovereign	Penelope Rose DI CARA Nigel Royston GOODYEAR* Kshama SHORE
Upperton	Katherine Leah BALLARD* Robin Hugh MAXTED Patrick Joseph RODOHAN

The report recommendations were proposed by Councillor Holt and seconded by Councillor Smart.

Councillors congratulated all Councillors on their election and took time to thank and pay tribute to all those who had served the Council and stood down at this election including Councillors Babarinde, Choudhury, Dow, Freebody, Miah, Murdoch, Taylor, Tutt, Wallis and Whippy.

Thanks were extended to the Returning Officer and his team for their work on the election.

RESOLVED (unanimously)- That the Returning Officer's report be noted.

10 Appointments Report

The Council considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services, setting out political balance and the allocation of seats on Committees and Other Bodies prepared in consultation with Group Leaders.

Councillor Holt proposed and Councillor Bannister seconded the recommendations set out in the report and appendices, subject to a correction advised by Councillor Holt (which was tabled) to the representative for 'Team East Sussex', to be Councillor Holt, and substitute Councillor Swansborough.

RESOLVED (by 19 votes to 6):

1. To approve the proposed number and allocation of seats and nominations as set out in Appendix 1, to Committees, Other Bodies and Outside Bodies, and to Chairs and Deputy Chairs;
2. That the continuation of the following bodies be confirmed with terms of reference as set out in the Council's Constitution, and that they have a fixed membership or to which members are appointed by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive or relevant Director as the need arises: Equality Steering Group, Council Panels, Recruitment Panels, Task Groups and Project Boards;
3. That Neal Robinson and Graham Branton be re-confirmed as the Council's Standards Independent Persons until their tenure ends on 31 July 2023, and to note that the Monitoring Officer will undertake a new recruitment process for the positions, to be reported back to the next meeting of the Full Council;
4. To approve the establishment of a Constitution Working Group and its proposed terms of reference, as set out at Appendix 2 of the report, approve its membership, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report, and to delegate the Monitoring Officer to incorporate its formation into the relevant sections of the Council's constitution; and
5. To approve the Scheme of Delegations to Officers and Proper Officer functions as set out in the relevant sections of the Council's Constitution.

11 Executive Arrangements

Councillor Holt as Leader of the Council advised that the Councillors appointed to the Cabinet for 2023/24 were as follows:

- Leader of the Council (and Community Strategy, Local Strategic Partnership, the Corporate Plan, Performance and Staff) – Councillor Stephen Holt
- Deputy Leader (Tourism, Leisure, Accessibility and Community Safety) – Councillor Margaret Bannister
- Finance and Resources – Councillor Robin Maxted
- Carbon Neutral 2030 – Councillor Jim Murray
- Enterprise, Community Spaces and Heritage Assets – Councillor Colin Swansborough
- Housing and Planning – Councillor Peter Diplock

In addition, Councillor Holt confirmed that the terms of reference and constitution of the Cabinet were as set out in the Council's Constitution and were unchanged, and that delegations to individual Cabinet members in respect of executive functions had not been made at this time.

12 Calendar of Meetings 2023/24

Councillor Holt moved and Councillor Smart seconded the ratification of the Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24, as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That the Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 be approved.

13 Annual Pay Policy Statement 2023-24

The Council received the report of the Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development, presenting the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2023/24 for approval by the Council.

Councillor Holt moved and Councillor Smart seconded the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That the Council approves and recommends the updated Pay Policy Statement for publication on the Council's website.

14 Discussion on minutes of council bodies.

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

Planning Committee – 27 February 2023 and 17 April 2023
Audit and Governance Committee – 1 March 2023
Cabinet – 14 March 2023

No items were called for discussion.

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

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That the minutes be accepted.

15 Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was scheduled to take place on 26 July 2023 at 6 pm.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Councillor Candy Vaughan (Mayor)

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Agenda Item 4

Eastbourne Borough Council



Mayor
Councillor CANDY VAUGHAN

Deputy Mayor
Councillor AMANDA MORRIS

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's ENGAGEMENTS May 2023 – July 2023

Date	Attendee	Event
25.05.23	Mayor & Consort	Lightning Fibre Networking Event The View Hotel
27.05.23	Mayor & Consort	Eastbourne Carnival Eastbourne Seafront
01.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Engles in Eastbourne Conference The View Hotel
01.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Drusillas Dream Night Drusillas Park
02.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Inspire Events Launch Party The Hart Pub
03.06.23	Mayor & Consort	999 Emergency Services Display Western Lawns
05.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Mayor's Charity Committee Meeting Town Hall
08.06.23	Mayor & Consort	SERFCA Armed Forces Briefing Army Reserve Centre, Crawley
09.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Currant Care Branch Inauguration 326 Seaside
10.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Phoenix Choir Concert All Saints Church
11.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Eastbourne Chinese Association Dragon Boat Festival, Hampden Park Community Centre
12.06.23	Mayor	2022/23 Mayor's Charity Cheque Presentation Town Hall
12.06.23	Mayor	Reception with Lord Lieutenant Westfield House, Lewes
13.06.23	Mayor	HMS Puncher Reception Town Hall
14.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Visit to HMS Puncher Sovereign Harbour
15.06.23	Mayor	Eastbourne Borough Walking Football Tournament

Date	Attendee	Event
		Priory Lane
16.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Opening of Water Refill Stations Across Eastbourne
17.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Concentus Sings Summer St Saviours Church
20.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Our King in Bloom Holywell
21.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Beechwood Grove Care Home 5 th Birthday East Dean Road
22.06.23	Mayor & Consort	A Band of Brothers Homecoming Friends Meeting House
23.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Chaseley Trust Coffee and Cake Chaseley Trust
24.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Armed Forces Day 5 Acre Field
25.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra Concert St Saviours Church
26.06.23	Mayor & Consort	CSBA Centenary Tournament Eastbourne Bowling Club
26.06.23	Mayor	Meeting at Grand Hotel
28.06.23	Mayor & Consort	Eid in the Park Princes Park
29.06.23	Mayor & Consort	NHS Big Tea Eastbourne Blind Society
29.06.23	Mayor & Consort	CSBA Centenary Dinner The Royal Eastbourne Golf Club
01.07.23	Mayor	Celebrating Diversity Bankers Corner
01.07.23	Mayor	Rothsay International Eastbourne Tennis Finals Devonshire Park
02.07.23	Mayor & Consort	Iolanthe – Eastbourne Gilbert and Sullivan Society Royal Hippodrome Theatre
03.07.23	Mayor & Consort	Opening of Cornerstone Chiropractic 251 Seaside
03.07.23	Mayor & Consort	Mayor's Charity Committee Meeting Town Hall
04.07.23	Mayor & Consort	Eastbourne Concert Orchestra Concert Town Hall
05.07.23	Mayor	Allingham Lodge Town Hall Tour Town Hall
07.07.23	Mayor & Consort	Compass Arts – Invocations Exhibition St Peter's Church, The Hydneye
08.07.23	Mayor & Consort	Shinewater Fun Day Shinewater Park
09.07.23	Mayor & Consort	Eastbourne Open Bowls Tournament Gildredge Park Bowls Club
10.07.23	Mayor	Fred Olsen Travel Shop Opening Beacon
11.07.23	Mayor	Funeral of County Councillor Barry Taylor

Date	Attendee	Event
		All Saints Church
12.07.23	Mayor & Consort	ESCC Chairman's Reception Buxted Park Hotel
14.07.23	Mayor	Eastbourne Open Bowls Tournament Presentation Gildredge Park Bowls Club
14.07.23	Mayor	Opening of JPK Supported Living Flats JPK Project
18.07.23	Mayor	Meeting with Lightning Fibre Town Hall
19.07.23	Mayor & Consort	Reception with the Bishop of Chichester Bishop's Palace, Chichester
20.07.23	Mayor & Consort	St Wilfrid's Hospice Awards St Wilfrid's Hospice

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Report to:	Full Council
Date:	26 July 2023
Title:	Standards – Appointment of Independent Persons
Report of:	Monitoring Officer
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	To seek Council’s approval for the appointment of two Independent Persons.
Officer recommendations:	<p>(1) That Council approve the appointment of Neal Robinson and Paul Cummins as Independent Persons for Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council for a term of four years, commencing on 1 August 2023, subject to re-confirmation at the Annual Council meetings throughout their term of office.</p> <p>(2) That Council record its thanks to Graham Branton for his service as outgoing Independent Person.</p>
Reasons for recommendations:	To meet the Council’s statutory duty to appoint at least one Independent Person to advise on councillor code of conduct matters.
Contact Officer(s):	Name: Simon Russell Post title: Head of Democratic Services (and Monitoring Officer) E-mail: simon.russell@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk Telephone number: 01323 415021

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires district and borough councils to appoint at least one Independent Person to advise on the determination of allegations that a member has failed to comply with their code of conduct.
- 1.2 Independent Persons play an important role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by elected members of Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils (‘the Councils’).
- 1.3 Since 2018, the Councils have operated with two Independent Persons and this has provided the Monitoring Officer with greater resilience when considering code of conduct matters and is also reflective of best practice.

2 Appointment Process

- 2.1 The Councils advertised the posts in June 2023 and received over 17 expressions of interest and 9 applications. Following a shortlisting exercise and in accordance with the Council's constitution, a selection panel consisting of the Chair of Audit and Governance Committee (EBC), the Chair of Audit & Governance Committee (LDC) and the Monitoring Officer conducted interviews.
- 2.2 The Councils may not appoint any person who has been a member or co-opted member or officer of the Councils or a town or parish in the Lewes district within the last five years; nor a relative or close friend of any such member or officer.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 Following assessment, the selection panel recommends to Full Council that Neal Robinson and Paul Cummins be appointed as Independent Persons for both council areas for a four-year term commencing on 1 August 2023.
- 3.2 As a check on the continuing suitability of the Independent Persons, it is recommended that their appointment is subject to re-confirmation at Annual Council meetings during their term of office.

4 Outgoing Independent Persons

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Council places on record its thanks to the outgoing Independent Person, Graham Branton, for the valuable advice he has provided to the Monitoring Officer and to the Councils' Standards Panels. His term of office ends on 31 July 2023.

5 Financial appraisal

- 5.1 Once appointed, each Independent Person receives an annual allowance of £1,000, plus £25 per hour for duties performed. In addition, the Councils will fund relevant external training to help ensure the post holders perform their role as effectively as possible.

6 Legal implications

- 6.1 The Independent Person appointment process detailed in this report meets the relevant statutory requirements (section 28 of the Localism Act 2011).

Appointments must be approved by a majority of the members of the local authority concerned.

Lawyer consulted 11.07.23

Legal ref: 007708-JOINT-OD

7 Appendices

- 7.1 None

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 None



Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Audit and Governance Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 28 June 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Christina Ewbank (Chair).

Councillors Ali Dehdashty (Deputy-Chair), Kathy Ballard, Daniel Butcher, Andy Collins, Hugh Parker, Kshama Shore, David Small and Stephen Gilbert, (Audit Independent Member).

Officers in attendance:

Homira Javadi (Director of Finance and Performance (Section 151 Officer)), Steven Houchin (Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance)), Jackie Humphrey (Chief Internal Auditor) and Elaine Roberts (Committee Officer)

1 Minutes

Minutes from the last meeting, held on 1 March 2023, were confirmed as an accurate record.

2 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute members

There were no apologies.

3 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.

There were no declarations of interests.
For transparency, Councillor Ewbank noted her position on Eastbourne's Chamber of Commerce and Edeal Enterprise Agency.

4 Questions by members of the public.

There were none.

5 Urgent items of business.

The Chair confirmed there were no urgent items of business.

6 Right to address the meeting/order of business.

There were no requests to address the meeting.

7 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Work Report 2022-2023

The Chair invited, Jackie Humphrey, Chief Internal Auditor (CIA), to present the report. For the benefit of Members new to the Committee, the CIA gave a detailed presentation of the report, as an introduction to the standing item.

During the presentation, the CIA drew Members' attention to Section 3 of the report, which detailed a response to an information request from the previous Committee for a progress update on creation of business continuity plans. The CIA also provided a detailed overview, with explanations, of the work of the Counter Fraud Team and of the process for gaining assurances of good governance from the Council's associated companies. The CIA talked through the final parts of the report that were only reported annually, which included a summary of the Council's overall performance, the CIA's opinion statement, and noted that results of a peer review of the audit function would be brought back to committee, once completed. The Committee considered the report.

Following comment and questions from Members, Officers clarified that:

- Some business continuity plans, which were different to 'emergency plans', were still in draft and would need to be checked before sign off. Having collated status update responses from each Head of Service, the CIA reported that considerable progress had now been made across all areas. Many plans were now complete, and monitoring was place for those few remaining outstanding areas. The CIA confirmed that managers had received training before completing their business continuity plans.
- The Audit Team was currently auditing risk management at operational level (point 8.3 of the report) and findings would be reported back to the Committee at a future date.
- The large number of follow ups had impacted Audit Team resources but recent progress in this area was expected to ease the situation and the CIA assured Members that the Team's work planning had ensured that the required breadth of work was maintained.
- The CIA agreed to share a copy of the Annual Internal Audit Plan for the current year with new Committee Members
- The high number of withdrawals from right-to-buy applications (point 4.3 of the report) was not unusual and it was not possible to know if the reason for a withdrawal was due to the abandonment of an attempt to defraud. The CIA confirmed that every application was checked and that some questions were designed to test for money laundering.
- The quarterly report was timed to work with the timeframes for financial reporting and therefore reflected findings to the end of March 2023. However, the varied timing of company board meetings meant that any governance statements from companies were reported in the next quarterly report that followed the receipt of the statement.

Members thanked the CIA for the in-depth explanations.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

1. **To note the report; and**
2. **To agree the approach for an external assessment.**

8 Strategic Risk Register Quarterly Review

Jackie Humphrey, Chief Internal Auditor (CIA), presented the report, beginning with an explanation of what the Strategic Risk Register was, how it worked and how it was monitored. The CIA explained that, traditionally, the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) was only brought to the Committee when either changes had been made, or when there were new Committee members.

The Committee considered the report. During the follow discussion, Officers assured Members that the amber grading for risk SR_006 (page 40) was appropriate, as the Audit Team had seen evidence of progress and because the Service Delivery Department had proved that it could respond appropriately during a crisis, as demonstrated during Covid-19.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

To note the update to the Strategic Risk Register and agree that the report should continue to be brought to the Committee only when there had been a change to the Risk Register or to the Committee membership.

9 Annual Governance Statement

Jackie Humphrey, Chief Internal Auditor (CIA), presented the report in detail and talked through all parts of the Annual Governance Statement.

The Chair thanked the CIA for the report and asked Members for their questions and comments.

In response to questions over how Directors, including members of the Corporate Management Team (CMT), were audited, the CIA explained that an area audit would include a review of Director decisions and reports and Director activity was also covered by the peer audit reviews.

Officers explained that the Annual Governance Statement followed a prescribed format, every statement had to be formally evidenced-based, and had to be signed by the Leader and the Chief Executive as an assurance to Members.

Officers confirmed that digital signatures were accepted where there was a digital audit trail, supported by individual logons. Officers also confirmed that IT had already instigated a system where laptops automatically turned off when not in use.

A concern was raised around the wording concluding paragraph 4.6 of the report regarding data protection; Officers agreed to address this with a minor amendment to the corresponding element of the Annual Governance Statement in liaison with the Audit Independent Person (AIP).

Resolved (unanimously)

To approve the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2022-23, subject to the CIA making a minor amendment to tighten wording in the Annual Governance Statement's Governance/Policies section in agreement with the Audit Independent Person (AIP), prior to publication.

10 External Audits update

Steven Houchin, Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer (IDCFO), gave a background briefing from both a national and Eastbourne Borough Council perspective, to explain the current backlog of external audits, and noted the most recent guidelines and funding arrangements issued by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The IDCFO reported that, following delegation to Officers by the previous Audit and Governance Committee, the 2019-2020 Statement of Accounts had been signed off on 3 April 2023 and were published on the Council's website. Officers confirmed that the final Statement of Accounts would also be published on the Committee papers website, and that copies would be emailed to Committee Members, along with copies of a letter sent in May to the Minister of State, DLUHC, and to Deloitte, at the request of the previous Committee, regarding its concerns about the state of affairs with local government audits.

The IDCFO outlined Deloitte's latest estimated delivery times for the remaining external audits: A draft Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 should now be expected by 29 September and a draft Statement of Accounts for 2021/22 by 12 January 2024.

The IDCFO explained that work to publish the draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 was currently ongoing. He reported that the new, earlier Government deadline for publishing draft accounts of 31 May had been missed, due to the ongoing delays with Deloitte for prior year accounts, as well as the national issues created by the requirements of Local Government financial reporting, and the increase in assurance work now required of auditors, as detailed earlier in the update. A public notification of the delay had been published on the Council's website and publication of the accounts was currently expected by 31 July 2023.

The Chair thanked the IDCFO and the Committee considered the update.

Members welcomed the news that Grant Thornton UK LLP had been appointed as replacement for Deloitte but expressed concerns over the latter's commitment to deliver the outstanding audits.

Officers confirmed that, to their knowledge, Eastbourne Borough Council had

always submitted its accounts on time and that there had been no delays to the publishing of the Annual Accounts prior to working with Deloitte. The CFO, Homira Javadi, advised the Committee that the current backlog would have a negative legacy impact on the timely production of external audits going forward.

Officers confirmed that for the 2020/21 Audit, and every year thereafter, the External Auditors would be asked to present its report to the Committee including information about its findings and any areas of concern, and that Members would have the opportunity to question the External Auditor on its draft Statement of Accounts and any of its findings at Committee.

Officers confirmed that Deloitte had typically attended Committee meetings remotely via Teams, but that it was the Officers' experience to expect external auditors to appear in person at some point.

Following questions around the value of feedback of old accounts, Officers explained that timely external audits were valuable and seen as a critical part in the financial planning process by all councils and that there was still a value to securing a process for Deloitte to meet its own revised deadlines. However, Officers recognised that much of the value of information in the overdue accounts had largely passed. The CFO advised that there would be a discussion about the audit fees once Deloitte had met all its audit obligations.

In response to queries about the presentation of the draft Statements of Accounts submitted by the Council to Deloitte, Officers explained the process for an external audit, and how the allocation of an appropriate period of time for review work by the External Auditor was a critical element for ensuring a clean audit process. The CFO reminded Members that Councils around the country were suffering similar experiences of delayed external audits.

The CFO thanked the Committee for awarding delegated authority to Officers and the Chair to sign off the 2019/2020 Statement of Accounts. The CFO added that, without the delegation, finalisation of those accounts may have incurred further delays, due to Deloitte's decision to move its staff onto other projects in April.

In response to comments from Members regarding clarity around delegation of authority, the CFO explained that Deloitte's Statement of Accounts had been submitted in November 2022 and that the delegated authority had been requested because Deloitte had assured the Council that it was not expecting any changes. The CFO referred to the minutes of the Committee's meeting in March which captured the remit of the delegation.

In response to a question by committee, the CFO commented that the Council's Finance Team had arranged for a 'lessons learnt' session to engage with Deloitte to see how the process could be improved going forward and agreed that Deloitte would be encouraged to confirm its commitment to the delivery timelines. CFO also added that Deloitte had been copied into the letter sent to the Minister of State, and a copy sent directly to them.

The CFO assured Members that an audit trail already existed to provide a record of the on-going concerns raised by the Committee.

The Chair thanked the Committee Members for their contributions.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

To note the update.

11 Treasury Management Annual Report 2022-2023

Steven Houchin, Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer, introduced the report and provided a detailed presentation for each section, including explanations of the key terminology and of the various tables.

The Chair thanked the Officers for the report and commented positively on its clarity and comprehensive nature.

The Committee considered the report.

Following questions around the capital expenditure budget (point 3.2 of the report) Officers confirmed that both spend and debt figures were down on the previous year and that a copy of the Capital Outturn report would be circulated for Members' information after the meeting, which included status details of all capital projects.

Officers assured the Committee that specialist Treasury Management training would be organised for Members later in the year.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

To recommend to Full Council (via Cabinet) that

1. That Members consider and approve the Annual Treasury Management report for 2022/23; and
2. To approve the 2022/23 Prudential and Treasury Indicators included in the report (Section 9.1)

The meeting ended at 7.57 pm

Councillor Christina Ewbank (Chair)



Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Planning Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 12 June 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Hugh Parker (Chair).

Councillors Amanda Morris (Deputy-Chair), Nick Ansell, Andy Collins, Penny di-Cara, Anita Mayes, Teri Sayers-Cooper and Ali Dehdashty.

Officers in attendance:

Leigh Palmer (Head of Planning First), Neil Collins (Senior Specialist Advisor – Planning), Helen Monaghan (Lawyer, Planning), Emily Horne (Committee Officer) and Sarah Lawrence (Committee Team Manager).

1 Introductions

A short period of silence was held in memory of Barry Taylor, former councillor, who suddenly passed away on Saturday, 10 June 2023.

Members of the Committee and Officers introduced themselves to all those who were present during the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members

Apologies had been received from Councillor Jane Lamb and Councillor Candy Vaughan. Councillor di-Cara confirmed that she was acting as substitute for Councillor Lamb and Councillor Dehdashty confirmed he was acting as substitute for Councillor Vaughan.

3 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.

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2023 were submitted and approved as a correct record, and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

5 Urgent items of business.

There were no urgent items.

6 Officer Update

An officer addendum was circulated to the Committee prior to the start of the meeting, updating the report on the agenda with any late information (a copy of which was published on the Council's website).

7 13 Gorringe Road. ID: 220961

Change of Use from Residential Care Home (C2 use) to 11 bedroom HMO (Sui Generis use) with associated bin and cycle storage area – **UPPERTON**.

The Development Management Lead presented the report and advised the Committee of two additional conditions to be added to the conditions listed in the officer's report. These were: 1) To restrict and control the use as an HMO's within the Sui Generis Use Class, and 2) To restrict number of occupants to 11. Reason: To ensure rooms are single occupancy and not double occupancy and a minimum stay of 3 months by all individuals living within the building.

The Committee was advised by way of an Addendum that there were no further updates.

Dr Yusaf Samiullah OBE spoke on behalf of local residents in objection to the application. Sarah Collins, Agent, spoke in favour of the application. Councillor Maxted, Ward Councillor, addressed the Committee in relation to the application.

The Committee sought clarification on various points: enforcement of conditions, implications of advertisement of the site on Airbnb, access to bins and noise, parking, egress from property, tenancy requirements and display of management team's contact details.

Officers confirmed the retrospective application would be assessed on its own merits and neither this nor any current unauthorised use of the site (such as for Airbnb) were material and not valid reasons for refusal. Proposed conditions for a maximum of 11 occupants and minimum stay 3 of months would address these concerns and could be enforceable if the application was approved. Refuse collections/noise would be controlled by a condition and fire safety and means of escape would fall under Building Control. East Sussex County Council (ESCC), Highways, had considered there would no significant increase in street parking above the current use class. Officers were not aware of an interview process for HMO residents. Contact details for the building management company would be made available in the building and on the internet.

Councillor Morris put forward a proposal against the officer's recommendation to refuse the application for the reason of over intensive use of the site. This was seconded by Councillor di Cara and put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED: (by 7 votes to 0 against, and 1 abstention) that the application

be refused subject to the following reason: The level of occupancy is considered to be an over intensive use of the property and likely to result in a material loss of residential amenity, contrary to policy B2 of the Eastbourne Core Strategy 2013, saved policy HO20 of the Eastbourne Borough Plan 2003 and National Planning Policy Framework (para. 174).

8 Lion Works, Sidley Road. ID: 220339

Demolition of the existing building and erection of 5no. 2 x bedroom dwellings – **DEVONSHIRE.**

The Development Management Lead presented the report.

The Committee was advised by way of an Addendum that there were no further updates.

Mr Keith Morris spoke on behalf of local residents in objection to the application. Patrick Griffin, Agent, spoke in favour of the application. Councillor Ewbank, Ward Councillor, addressed the Committee on behalf of residents and her fellow ward Councillors Holt and Bannister in relation to the application.

The Committee raised concerns regarding vehicular access, noise disturbance, storage, sewage/drainage/flooding and lack of outside space. Members also felt that the site provided a good development opportunity, offering much needed housing on a brown field site with access to public transport.

Officers confirmed that there was no emergency vehicular access to the site and parking was the responsibility of East Sussex County Council, Highways. Impacts of construction, vehicles, demolition and access would be controlled by a management plan condition. Sewage was for the statutory undertakers to agree and some attenuation measures, i.e. the provision of a green roof, were covered by a landscaping condition. Flood risk was dealt with by the Environment Agency and was considered to be acceptable and the floor space met the required standards. The Council had a duty to use land to deliver housing.

Councillor Morris put forward a proposal to approve the application in line with the officer's recommendation and the additional conditions set out in the officer's presentation. This was seconded by Councillor Dehdashty and was carried.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously) planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in the officer's report and presentation.

9 24 Hurst Road. ID: 230202

Variation of a condition 2 (Approved Plans) following grant of planning permission 26/10/2022(ref 220566) to include additional bedrooms to form 3no four-bedroom dwellings - **UPPERTON**

The application had been withdrawn by the applicant and was not considered by the Committee.

10 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Planning Committee was scheduled to commence at 6:00pm on Monday, 17 July 2023.

The meeting ended at 7.42 pm

Councillor Hugh Parker (Chair)



Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 13 June 2023 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair).

Councillors Margaret Bannister (Deputy-Chair), Peter Diplock, Robin Maxted, Jim Murray and Colin Swansborough.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Homira Javadi (Director of Finance and Performance (Section 151 Officer)), Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Tim Whelan (Director of Service Delivery), Becky Cooke (Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Kate Slattery (Head of Legal Services) and Sarah Lawrence (Committee Team Manager).

Also in attendance:

Councillor Penny di Cara (Opposition Deputy Leader), Councillor Nigel Goodyear (Shadow Cabinet member), Councillor Kshama Shore OBE (Shadow Cabinet member and Chair of Scrutiny Committee) and Councillor David Small (Shadow Cabinet member).

1 Former Cllr Barry Taylor

The Cabinet paid tribute to former Borough Councillor Barry Taylor, following the news of his death.

Barry was first elected to Eastbourne Borough Council on 12 August 1993, serving for 30 years until his decision not to stand for re-election in May 2023. He was also the East Sussex County Councillor representing the Meads Ward.

The Cabinet held a minute's silence in memory and sent their condolences to Barry's wife Christine and other members of his family and friends at this sad time.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

3 Apologies for absence

None were reported.

4 Declaration of members' interests

None were declared.

5 LGA Peer Challenge

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, detailing the report provided by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the council's response to the recommendations.

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge took place in September 2022. Thanks were expressed to the LGA and all who engaged in the process.

An executive summary of the Corporate Peer Challenge was detailed at section 2.3 of the report. The Cabinet described the report by the LGA into the council's performance as an incredible achievement and expressed thanks to all those involved in achieving the positive report. Further monitoring of the recommendations from the LGA and other external bodies would be considered by the cross-party Recovery and Stabilisation Member Board.

Visiting members, Councillors Goodyear and Shore, addressed the Cabinet on this item.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

To note the Local Government Association report and the council's response to its recommendations.

Reason for decision:

The LGA report is intended to provide the council with suggestions and advice that may help support future improvement.

6 Local Council Tax Reduction scheme 2024/25

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery, seeking their approval to commence the statutory consultation process that the Council would need to follow to make changes to the current Local Council Tax Reduction scheme.

Visiting member, Councillor Shore, addressed the Cabinet on this item.

Following comments raised, the Cabinet reiterated the importance of the equality, diversity, and inclusion aspect of the public consultation, particularly in relation to those hard-to-reach individuals, including the digitally excluded.

Resolved (Key decision):

That Cabinet, with the objective of implementing a revised Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/25:

(1) Authorise the Chief Finance Officer to enter into consultation with the major precepting authorities

(2) Authorise the Director of Service Delivery to produce a draft scheme that calculates a Council Tax Reduction of 100% of a person's council tax liability, removes the Minimum-Income Floor for the self-employed and removes the £5.00 minimum award

(3) On completion of the consultation and drafting authorised under (1) and (2) above, authorise the Director of Service Delivery to consult with other interested parties.

Reason for decisions:

Any billing authority wishing to revise its Council Tax Reduction scheme for the working-age must follow the statutory process as set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 2.34 pm

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair)

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Working in partnership with **Eastbourne Homes**

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room - Town Hall, Eastbourne on 10 July 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Kshama Shore (Chair).

Councillors Alan Shuttleworth (Deputy-Chair), Kathy Ballard, Ali Dehdashty, Nigel Goodyear, Amanda Morris, Hugh Parker and Robert Smart.

Officers in attendance:

Luke Dreeling (Performance Lead), Nick Peeters (Committee Officer), Becky Cooke (Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development), Linda Farley (Head of Customer First), Steven Houchin (Interim Deputy Chief Finance Officer (Corporate Finance)) and Parmjeet Jassal (Interim Head of Financial Planning).

Also in attendance: Anna Hastings (Project Manager – Innovative Flood Resilience) and Nick Claxton (Flood Risk Manager) East Sussex County Council.

1 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2023

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2023 were submitted and approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

2 Apologies for absence / declaration of substitute members

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lamb. Councillor Smart declared he was substituting for Councillor Lamb.

3 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 Parker, Smart and Dehdashty declared a personal interest in item 8 on the agenda – Blue Heart Project Update, as a result of their positions as Directors on the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board.

4 Questions by members of the public

There were none.

5 Urgent items of business

There were none.

6 Right to address the meeting/order of business

There were no requests to address the meeting and no changes to the order of business.

7 Blue Heart Project update

Anna Hastings, Blue Heart Project Manager and Nick Claxton, Flood Risk Management Team Leader, presented an update on the work of the Blue Heart Project. The following points were highlighted:

- As the lead local flood authority, East Sussex County Council has an interest in the management of surface and ground water flooding and management of flooding from ordinary water courses. ESCC was not directly involved in the management of sewage flooding resulting from the overflow of the 'foul network', as this was the responsibility of water companies. Coastal protection was the responsibility of borough and district councils with the Environment Agency monitoring coastal erosion.
- The Blue Heart Project had secured £4.4 million of funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as part of the Flood and Coastal Resilience Programme. The ethos of the programme was around innovative approaches and concepts with evidence gathering and the ability to test new methodology.
- The three themes looked at by the programme covered:
 - Improving the understanding of the water catchment
 - Engaging with communities and stakeholders
 - Creating a dynamic risk management system
- A key, early project, which dealt with removing surface water from Southern Water's network and had been successful was the Sustainable Urban Development System (SuDS) in Schools project. The project secured funding for 7 schools in Eastbourne, with a bid for funding for a total of 35 schools over a three-year period. A mixture of techniques was being used to reduce the amount of surface water going into Southern Water's system and improve water quality.
- The Blue Heart Project aimed to have a platform in place to forecast events that could result in significant flooding and provide mitigation. Trial sites had been installed with sensors in water courses and boreholes. A contract was being awarded for a further 52 sensors, which would significantly improve the data available.

During discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- The Blue Project approach to stakeholder engagement involved cross-

sharing of information. The approach was more community based and not reliant on traditional consultancy-based engagement.

- The data and modelling used by the Project was being shared with the planning teams at both Eastbourne Borough and Wealden District Councils. The Project was not involved with the special planning, however, ESCC as the lead flood authority was a statutory consultee on planning matters and was kept up to date with the work of the Blue Heart Project.
- The Blue Heart Project was a partnership that included decision making authorities with responsibility for water. The mandate for the project was to deliver change. The evidence gathered in the current stages of the project would help inform the second and future stages of the project. Southern Water was contributing to the Project and the SuDS already mentioned were preventing surface water entering the combined sewer system – it was suggested that Southern Water be invited to discuss its work the Committee.
- ESCC as the lead local flood authority, did comment on most planning applications. Recommendations would look to ensure that development did not create flood-risk, either at the development site or elsewhere. It was in the interest of developers to retain water in permeable areas as far as possible onsite, and SuDS was a component of this. The imminent integrated surface water and Fluvial model would contribute to the Local Plan process.
- Concern was expressed by Members that the level of investment into the project should be producing more focused results with a greater impact. Members were also concerned at the lack of investment by Southern Water in existing infrastructure, and the increased pressure resulting from development. Additionally, Members questioned the operations of the Environment Agency and the lack of direct deliverables or real solutions following the provision of funding. Members strongly suggested that a scheme which looked at the separation of rainwater from sewage and the separation of the combined system must be a key deliverable. Members agreed that Southern Water should be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to explain what work it was undertaking to upgrade infrastructure, particularly in Eastbourne.
- The Blue Heart Project was innovation based and limited by the terms of the funding provided by Defra, which involved starting with case studies, and providing evidence and new knowledge to look for additional schemes that could become part of the Project. The Project was looking at the partnership as a vehicle to seek further funding.
- The integrated model being progressed by the Project would provide a baseline that could then be used to measure rainfall run-off. The SuDS in School was part of this work – approximate volume calculations would be provided.

Resolved to note the update from the Blue Heart Project and request that:

- 1) The Blue Heart Project provide an update in the future on its progress; and
- 2) Southern Water be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss ongoing issues with combined sewer overflows and their impact on water quality in Eastbourne and the coastal areas.

8 Scrutiny Work Programme

The Chair, Councillor Shore, introduced the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and asked Members if there were areas or issues that they wished to be included for future scrutiny. Members requested that the following items be considered:

- A report presented by the Consultants on Licensable Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's)
- An update on the Council's Ground Maintenance Contracts
- An update on potholes and the condition of roads in the Borough

Resolved to note the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

9 Corporate Performance quarter 4 - 2022-2023

Luke Dreeling, Performance Lead, presented the report which provided an update on the Council's performance against Corporate Plan priority actions, performance indicators and targets for the fourth quarter of the year 2022-23.

During discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- It was confirmed that the performance indicators for the Planning Service were based on National targets. Members noted that the targets were being met.
- With regard to the Corporate Plan Progress Update and the Council's approach to Commercialisation and increasing Revenue, an interim follow-up assessment had been undertaken in April 2023 by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and although a written response had not yet been provided, CIPFA acknowledged that the Council had a project plan in place and advised that the Councils' direction of travel was acceptable.
- The newest members of the Customer Contact Team started in May and were undergoing a lengthy training programme – there remained two vacancies in the Team. Improvements were due to be made to the digital assistant 'Ellis' which it was anticipated would improve the level of service provided. The performance levels for the first quarter of 2023-2024 were similar to those in quarter 4 of 2022-2023.

- Any staff working remotely who may have issues with Wi-Fi bandwidth were receiving support to ensure that Internet connections were as reliable as possible. The cost-of-living crisis had resulted in far more complex enquiries which in turn meant lengthier calls and more time required for noting the calls once they had finished. Requested changes were also being actioned as part of the process.
- Members questioned the length of time taken to both note the details of the more complex calls and then action any changes, and that these factors could be contributing to longer wait times.
- The digital assistant, Ellis, was handling 25 percent of out-of-hours contact, resulting in a reduction of those types of calls during the day. Ellis was being used to handle a small proportion of calls for enquires that were not the responsibility of the Council. A project was due to be launched that would allow the chatbot to respond to more basic, frequently asked questions that would speed up response times. The system would include key words that would result in the caller being transferred to the appropriate Team, to speak to an adviser.
- The average speed of answer for June was 388 seconds and 404 seconds for the whole of the first quarter. The figures for the longest waiting times could be provided. A call-back facility was included as part of the phone system, however, given the current capacity, it was not being utilised at this time.
- Qualitative rather than quantitative checks were being focused on. Members were able to sit with the Team if they wished to enable them to see real time interactions.

Resolved to note the report.

10 Revenue and Capital Outturn - 2022-2023

Steve Houchin, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, presented the report which provided an update Members on the provisional outturn for 2022/23. During discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- The report was being brought before Members to ensure that due process was being followed and Members were being provided with adequate opportunities to scrutinise the detail in the report.
- The Council's budget was revised on a quarterly basis, allowing a good understanding of where the Council's finances were due to land. With regards to the Capital Programme, it was not unusual with local government financing for there to be slippage. The Council was attempting to indicate its financial position upon the Budget being approved by the Full Council, in February 2024. A new Officer Board had been established that will look to review the Capital Programme and attempt to mitigate slippage. The review

would also look at what programmes the Council wished to continue with from year-to-year.

- Further detail would be provided on the current rates of actual interest charged and the current rates of interest charged for the Council's short-term debts.
- The areas and types of items that would need adjusting through the delegated authority requested would be any errors identified during the external audit. The provisions made would form part of the external auditor's report. It would allow the adjustment to be made at the point at which the errors were highlighted. The figures involved would not be known until the errors were identified.

Resolved to note the report.

11 **Stability and Growth Programme**

Jo Harper, Head of Business Planning and Performance and Becky Cooke, Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development, presented the report which sought to inform Members of the Stability and Growth programme, which replaced the previous Recovery and Stabilisation programme in driving improvement and efficiency within the council. During discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- A range of options was available in terms of how the venues at the Devonshire Quarter would be run. The options included going out to procurement, leasing or retaining management of the venues in-house. It was important that the option chosen involved people with the right skills and knowledge.
- The measures in the report related solely to the Congress Theatre and Devonshire Park and did not apply to conferencing more widely. Members were assured that the Company being worked in partnership with to improve the offer in the Devonshire Quarter, had some experience in the conferencing sector.
- Once the follow-up Assurance Review response was provided, a report on the Council's response to both the LGA Peer review and the CIPFA review would be provided to the Scrutiny Committee, ahead of the Cabinet.

Resolved to note the report.

12 **Sovereign Centre Arrangements**

Becky Cooke, Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development, presented the report which asked Members to consider future operation and interim management arrangements for the Sovereign Centre. During discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- A number of Members felt that a five-year business plan should be provided prior to any level of delegated authority being agreed.
- It was confirmed that the work carried out through reviewing and compiling a business case would be to ensure that the Council would be no worse off financially and that an agreement with Wave Leisure would be reached, that allowed the Council to receive a percentage of any profits from new memberships. Wave Leisure was a charitable organisation and would look to return any profits back into the business.
- It was confirmed that a future update could be provided to the Committee.

Councillor Smart proposed the following amended recommendation (2) for the Cabinet's consideration and was seconded by Councillor Goodyear.

- 2) That Cabinet does not agree delegated authority for the Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Tourism & Culture to negotiate and conclude detailed arrangements with Wave, including authorising the signature of all associated Documentation until a Business Plan over a five-year period, with agreed objectives and priorities, highlighting the financial implications for the Council, is provided to the Cabinet.

Members voted 3 in favour and 5 against the proposed amended recommendation and the proposal fell.

Councillor Shuttleworth proposed the following amended recommendation (2) for the Cabinet's consideration and was seconded by Councillor Morris.

- 2) Agree delegated authority for the Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Tourism & Culture, once a full business case is understood and considered to be satisfactory, to negotiate and conclude detailed arrangements with Wave, including authorising the signature of all associated documentation including a Business Plan with agreed objectives and priorities.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

Resolved to note the report.

13 Forward Plan of Decisions

The Chair, Councillor Shore, presented the Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions. Members requested that the following reports be included on the agenda for the Committee's meeting on the 11 September 2023.

- Corporate performance - quarter 1 - 2023/24
- Housing Delivery & Asset Update

Resolved to note the Forward Plan of Cabinet Decisions.

14 Date of the next meeting

Resolved to note that the date of the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Monday 11 September 2023, in the Court Room, Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4UG.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

Councillor Kshama Shore (Chair)