

Full Council

Minutes of meeting held in Council Chamber, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE on 24 July 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Ian Alexander (Chairman).

Councillors Lesley Boniface (Vice-Chair), Graham Amy, Lucy Agace, Janet Baah, Christine Brett, Christina Bristow, Julie Carr, Ciarron Clarkson, Graham Clews, Ezra Cohen, Chris Collier, Paul Davies, Johnny Denis, Nikki Fabry, Becky Francomb, Cathy Gallagher, Stephen Gauntlett, Freddie Hoareau, Olivia Honeyman, Paul Keene, Nick Kortalla-Bird, Christoph von Kurthy, James MacCleary, Imogen Makepeace, Wendy Maples, James Meek, Paul Mellor, Zoe Nicholson, Emily O'Brien, Laurence O'Connor, Christine Robinson, Isobel Sharkey, Mark Slater, Stella Spiteri and Daniel Stewart-Roberts.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Sarah Lawrence (Committee Team Manager), Kate Slattery (Head of Legal Services), Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Leigh Palmer (Head of Planning First) and Elaine Roberts (Committee Officer).

15 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to a correction to Minute 1, third sentence of the resolution should read 'in his speech of acceptance of his election, Councillor Alexander', not 're-election'.

16 Minute of Silence

Councillors Denis, Gauntlett and Baah paid tribute to former District and Lewes Town Councillor, Stephen Catlin who had sadly died on 4 June 2023.

The Council then held a minute of silence.

17 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Clay, Coupland, Keenan, Macleod and Saunders.

18 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19 Announcements

The Chair drew attention of the Council to the list of his engagements since the last Council meeting. There were no other announcements.

20 Urgent items

There were no urgent items to consider.

21 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

22 Petitions

There were no petitions to be considered.

23 Urgent decisions taken by the Cabinet or Cabinet members

There were no urgent decisions made since to last meeting to be reported to Full Council.

24 Member Attendance

The Chair advised that Councillor Coupland had recently been ill and was unable to attend meetings whilst he recovered. Councillor Nicholson moved and Councillor Brett seconded a proposal to approve his absence from Council meetings up to and including 19 February 2024.

This was put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously) - To approve the absence of Councillor Coupland from attendance at any Full Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meeting of Lewes District Council pursuant to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, due to his current ill health, for a period from 24 July 2023 up to and including 19 February 2023 (the date of the February Full Council meeting'.

25 Appointment of Standards Independent Persons

Councillor Gauntlett moved and Councillor Nicholson seconded the recommendations of the report of the Monitoring Officer to approve the appointment of two Independent Persons.

Councillor Gauntlett as the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee set out the interview process that had been carried out in conjunction with the

Monitoring Officer and the Chair of the Audit Committee of Eastbourne Borough Council, to put forward the recommendations to appoint Neil Robinson and Paul Cummins as the Independent Persons.

The recommendations were put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously) -

- (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; and
- (2) That Council record its thanks to Graham Branton for his service as outgoing Independent Person.

26 Recommendations from Cabinet

26a Local Development Scheme

Councillor O'Connor moved and Councillor Agace seconded the recommendation referred from the meeting of Cabinet held on 8 December 2022, in support of the adoption of the Local Development Scheme, which included the timetable for the development of the Local Plan.

Councillor O'Connor in moving this item set out the national context in which this scheme was being put forward, and the work that the Council had already carried out in preparation for the development of the Local Plan.

The recommendations were put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously) –

- 1) To adopt the revised Lewes Local Development Scheme 2023-2025 as set out at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report; and
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure to make minor changes within the Local Development Scheme where necessary.

26b Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23

Councillor Nicholson moved and Councillor MacCleary seconded the recommendation referred from the meeting of Cabinet held on 13 July 2023, in support of the approval of the Annual Treasury Management Report 2022/23.

It was noted that the report had been considered by the Audit and Standards Committee and the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee, prior to it

being recommended by Cabinet.

The recommendations were put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously) –

(1) To approve the Annual Treasury Management Report 2022/23 (the Cabinet Report); and

(2) To approve the 2022/23 Prudential and Treasury Indicators included in the report (Section 9.1)

27 Notices of Motion

27a Motion - To Support the Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill

Councillor Francomb moved the motion as amended, which had been circulated to all Councillors. This was seconded by Councillor Sharkey.

The motion was discussed by the Council and received support from across the Council.

During the discussion, Councillors highlighted that action on clean air and the climate went together. It was of concern that the current Government Air Quality Strategy fell short of advice on clean air from the World Health Organisation. It was noted that air quality was included as part of the Council's Climate and Sustainability Action Plan, and this and the Air Quality Action Plan would be refreshed soon. Councillors expressed concerns around air quality within parts of the district, including in the Air Quality Management Areas in Lewes and Newhaven, and actions needed to control air pollution from private enterprise. Members also wished for the County Council to provide additional cycle paths and other sustainable transport options, to reduce the reliance on cars.

Members of the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee advised that they had requested a specific panel to look at air quality in the district as part of the Committee work programme.

The motion was put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – In line with the Council's 4 year goal to achieve cleaner air the Council lends its support to the Clear Air Bill (Human Rights) Bill the Council agrees:

1. To welcome and support the principles of the Bill and ask the Leader of the Council to write to local MPs asking them to support the Clean Air Bill in Parliament and in public;
2. To call on the Government to bring forward publication of a revised Air Quality Strategy which aligns with current World Health Organisation guidance and provides funding to local authorities in line with identified local Air Quality requirements to ensure local air quality plans can be

- carried on year on year; and
3. To ask the Policy and Performance Committee to consider and review the Council's Air Quality Status Report on an annual basis.

27b Motion - South East Water

Councillor Bristow moved the motion as set out on the agenda and this was seconded by Councillor Boniface.

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

It was noted that the motion had arisen out of the experience of leaks and outages in the district and the need to hold South East Water (and Southern Water in parts of Lewes) to account for the provision of clean water.

The Council discussed the need for increased investment in water infrastructure to make the system resilient to provide clean water consistently, taking into account climate changes and increased development. The role of the preservation of soils and wetlands in water resilience was also highlighted, but this was in the context of the volume of clean water being lost through leakages.

The Council noted the ongoing actions arising from previous motions approved by the Council in relation to waste water and the 'rights of the river'. In addition, it was noted that Council Leaders across East Sussex were holding face to face meetings with leaders of both water companies on the issues being experienced locally.

The motion was put to a vote and carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Council:

1. Asks the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee to request the attendance of David Hinton or a member of the Senior Management Team of South East Water before the Committee to explain how it is going to become climate resilient and to seek answers on what future steps it is taking to improve resources and how much of its current old cast iron network has been replaced;
2. Declares a vote of no-confidence in South East Water; and
3. Declares a Water emergency and appoints a water champion to monitor the performance of both companies and to report back to the Full Council through an outside bodies report when appropriate.

28 Written questions from Councillors

No written questions had been received in accordance with procedure rule 12.

29 Questions to the Leader of the Council

One question was submitted by Councillor Brett to the Leader as follows:

“Many residents have been complaining that our cemeteries are neglected. Please can we clarify the regime for maintenance and grass cutting in Seaford and Lewes cemeteries, as we understand Denton has been inspected and a new regime proposed and please can we be assured that that the grass will be cut this week weather permitting?”

Councillor Nicholson confirmed that she would arrange for Councillor Brett to receive a full written response. Councillor Nicholson offered her apologies on behalf of the Council’s contractor and the Council to those people who had attended a grave and not been able to access it for one reason or another. She advised that the contractor had been struggling to keep up with the current regime and had been subject to a performance management review, and it is hoped that the service could catch up as quickly as possible. In addition, a review had been requested of the policy for all cemeteries, so that it was in step with what users wanted, taking into account the views of other stakeholders, such as wildflower groups.

30 Ward issues

There were no ward issues to be discussed.

31 Reporting back on meetings of outside bodies

The following reports had been received on outside bodies set out in the agenda and were noted:

- 3VA – Councillor Brett
- South Downs National Park Authority and Armed Forces Champion - Councillor Stewart-Roberts
- Newhaven Town Deal Board – Councillors Nicholson and Robinson
- Wave Leisure Trust – Councillor O’Connor
- Sussex Police and Crime Panel – Councillor Paul Keene

Resolved – To note the outside body updates.

32 Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next scheduled meeting of the Council was on 25 September 2023 at 6 pm.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Councillor Ian Alexander (Chairman)