

Full Council

Minutes of meeting held in Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams on 17 September 2020 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Adrian Ross (Chair).

Councillors Christine Brett (Vice-Chair), Sam Adeniji, Graham Amy, Robert Banks, Nancy Bikson, Matthew Bird, Liz Boorman, Roy Burman, Julie Carr, Roy Clay, Chris Collier, Phil Davis, Sharon Davy, Johnny Denis, Lynda Duhigg, Stephen Gauntlett, Tom Jones, Isabelle Linington, Jim Lord, Sylvia Lord, James MacCleary, Sean MacLeod, Milly Manley, Ron Maskell, William Meyer, Joe Miller, Zoe Nicholson, Emily O'Brien, Laurence O'Connor, Ruth O'Keeffe, Nicola Papanicolaou, Julian Peterson, Keira Rigden, Christine Robinson, Steve Saunders and Christoph von Kurthy.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Catherine Knight (Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services) and Sarah Lawrence (Senior Committee Officer).

14 Welcome

The Chair of the Council advised that this meeting was being held remotely on Microsoft Teams in accordance with published government regulations.

15 Period of Silence

Prior to the start of the formal business, the Chair of the Council invited members to hold a short period of silence in memory of Councillor Ian White who had passed away since the last meeting of the Full Council.

16 Introductions and Apologies for absence

The Chair invited members to introduce themselves for those watching or listening to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Makepeace and Councillor Rutland.

17 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made in relation to the items on the agenda.

18 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2020

Resolved – To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on

20 July 2020.

19 Announcements

The Chair advised that a list of his engagements as Chair of the Council since the last meeting were set out in the agenda, and these were noted.

There were no other announcements.

20 Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

21 Vacant Seats on Council

The Chair of the Council advised that as a consequence of the death of Councillor Ian White and the resignation of Councillor Phil Boorman, there were now two vacant seats on the Council. It was noted that these seats could not be filled at this time, as coronavirus legislation had postponed all elections until May 2021.

22 Questions from members of the public

No questions had been received from members of the public.

23 Petitions

No petitions had been received.

24 Urgent decisions taken by the Cabinet or Cabinet members

There had been no urgent decisions taken by Cabinet or Cabinet Members.

25 Notice of motion - Hidden Disabilities

Councillor Sean Macleod moved and Councillor Milly Manley seconded a motion as follows:

“We call on the Council:

- To officially recognise the Hidden Disabilities sunflower;
- To actively promote what it stands for and its importance in breaking stigma;
- To help promote Hidden Disabilities sunflower to local businesses and encourage them to formally look at recognising it; and
- To promote that the Council offices are Hidden Disability friendly and promote the sunflower on its buildings so people can identify the Council as Hidden Disability friendly.”

Councillor Macleod and Councillor Manley each spoke to the motion, and other members spoke from across the Council in support.

Councillor Duhigg suggested that the scheme should be promoted in Town and Parish Council offices. It was agreed that District Councillors who were also Town and Parish Councillors could raise this with their own Town or Parish Councils.

Councillor Jones asked to move an amendment with an additional bullet point: 'To promote the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme directly to Parish and Town Councils and supported by individual town and parish councillors.' Councillor Macleod and Councillor Manley agreed this amendment could be incorporated into the motion, without the need for a formal vote.

Councillor Adeniji asked in the motion that the fourth bullet point be amended, 'to ensure' rather than 'promote' that the Council Offices are Hidden Disability Friendly. Councillor Macleod advised that he would not wish to include this in the motion, as there would need to be a budgetary assessment of this before it could be put forward. However, he considered that officers as part of the current motion would make every opportunity to help those wearing the sunflower to have a positive experience in the offices. Councillor Adeniji accepted that there was no need for a further amendment on this basis.

Councillor Saunders asked if the new bullet point 5 proposed by Councillor Jones could be amended to read: "To actively promote and encourage Town and Parish Councils and their members to similarly recognise the scheme". Councillor Macleod and Councillor Manley agreed that this amendment could be included into the motion, subject to the inclusion of the County Council. This was endorsed by both Councillor Saunders and Councillor Jones.

This was put to the Council and agreed.

Resolved: That the Council agrees:

- To officially recognise the Hidden Disabilities sunflower;
- To actively promote what it stands for and its importance in breaking stigma;
- To help promote Hidden Disabilities sunflower to local businesses and encourage them to formally look at recognising it;
- To promote that the Council offices are Hidden Disability friendly and promote the sunflower on its buildings so people can identify the Council as Hidden Disability friendly; and
- To actively promote and encourage Town and Parish Councils and East Sussex County Council and their members to similarly recognise the scheme.

26 Proposal for a Joint Staff Advisory Committee and Joint Appointments and Appeals Committee

Councillor Linington, as Chair of the Employment Committee, moved the recommendations set out in the report for the appointment of a Joint Staff Advisory Committee and Joint Appointments and Appeals Committee, subject to these arrangements also being approved by Eastbourne Borough Council.

The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Collier, as the Cabinet Member for Performance and People.

The recommendations were put to the Council and agreed.

Resolved:

- 1) To approve the Terms of Reference for a new Joint Staff Advisory Committee to replace the Employment Committee as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, to come into effect when also approved by Eastbourne Borough Council Full Council;
- 2) To approve the Terms of Reference for a Joint Appointments and Appeals Committee as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, to come into effect when also approved by Eastbourne Borough Council Full Council;
- 3) To delegate to the Assistant Director - HR and Transformation and Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services authority to make the necessary consequential changes to the Constitution, Scheme of Delegation and HR Policies as set out in Appendix 3, and to delegate specific functions to the Assistant Director – HR and Transformation in accordance with paragraphs 1.1 to 1.3 of Appendix 3 to the report; and
- 4) That appointments be made to the Committees as set out in report paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 including:
 - a. That Councillor Collier (Cabinet member), Councillor Linington (opposition member) and Councillor MacCleary be appointed as representatives on the Joint Staff Advisory Committee for 2020/21, in accordance its Terms of Reference; and
 - b. That the Joint Appointment and Appeals Committee be called as and when required by the Assistant Director – HR and Transformation in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

27 Written questions from Councillors

The Chair of the Council advised that four written questions had been received from members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12 and had been published in an agenda supplement.

- a) Question 1 - Councillor Macleod asked a question to the Leader of the Council, as set out in the agenda supplement, in relation to test and trace provisions in the area.

Response - Councillor MacCleary passed the question to Councillor Nicholson. She responded that she had discussed great concerns over the lack of test and trace capacity in the area with the Director of Public Health and felt that the current private sector provision with the lack of lab capacity was letting communities down. She agreed to recommend that the Leader writes to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on this issue, but also said that she wanted, through the Outbreak Control Group for East Sussex and the Health and Wellbeing Board, to meet with regional NHS and public health leaders to agree what action could be taken locally.

Councillor Macleod advised he did not wish to ask a supplementary

question.

- b) Question 2 - Councillor Manley asked a question to the Leader of the Council, as set out in the agenda supplement, with regard to the lack of funding allocated to Lewes cycling and walking groups from the Emergency Active Travel Fund.

Response - Councillor MacCleary advised that the Council had engaged with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and was very disappointed that the District schemes had not received funding, but he confirmed he would continue to look for opportunities for future bids to ESCC. Councillor MacCleary asked Councillor Bird to respond in detail. Councillor Bird outlined the details of the funding process on Tranche 1 and 2 and the process by which the Council had drawn up its bids, including consulting with a walking and cycling forum with input from Sustrans and the National Park Authority. He was very disappointed to have had the schemes rejected and felt this was a lost opportunity. He advised that the schemes that had been accepted for the Active Travel Fund were improvements to the Falmer to Woodingdean Cycle path and a number of school street improvement, only one of which was in Lewes, and some drop kerbs improvements.

Councillor Manley advised she did not wish to ask a supplementary question.

- c) Question 3 - Councillor Manley asked a question to the Cabinet Member for Recycling, Waste and Open Spaces, as set out in the agenda supplement, in relation to addressing litter on the A27 and other trunk roads, and steps already taken with the Department for Transport.

Response - Councillor Carr responded that the latest update from the Department for Transport (DfT) stated that in order to transfer to Highways England (HE) responsibility for the clearance of litter along HE-managed Trunk Roads, HE must raise a formal request to the Secretary of State for the transfer of litter clearance responsibility. To date, HE had not objected to the proposal and AOne+ (Highways England's contractor) was supportive. In the interim, street cleansing team resources had been reallocated to enable two teams to take advantage of any litter picking opportunities which did arise on the A26 and A27 sections in the District. There were currently no road closures on the A26 or A27 scheduled before Christmas, but the team were ready should closures be notified. In addition, it was understood HE was investigating new technology to help identify littering offences, but this could be a shared cost.

Councillor Carr suggested that, following on from the Council's motion of 25 February 2019 which requested that the DfT transfer responsibility of litter clearance responsibilities from local authorities to HE, that she write to Highways England to ask it to progress the transfer of responsibility by raising and pursuing a request with the Department for Transport.

As a point of order, Councillor O’Keeffe advised that she would advise Councillor Carr of any closures of the A26/A27 that she was notified of as a County Councillor.

Councillor Manley advised she did not wish to ask a supplementary question. Councillor Carr offered to provide a full copy of her response to Councillor Manley.

- d) Question 4 - Councillor Clay asked a question to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure, as set out in the agenda supplement, in relation to how the Council was responding to the Government consultation on changes to the planning system.

Response - Councillor O’Brien confirmed she had also been contacted by residents with concerns about the proposals, including the binding target of the number of houses to be developed per year, the new zoning system of growth, renewal and protection which took away some of the local say on development, the changes to infrastructure payments which enable community facilities to be funded as part of developments, and a rise in the threshold above which developers must provide affordable housing from 10 to around 40 homes, which would result in a significant reduction in affordable housing. Councillor O’Brien confirmed that the Council would be providing a full and robust response. In addition, Officers were setting up a session for all Councillors to be informed of the proposals, so that their thoughts could be incorporated in the response to Government.

Councillor Clay advised he did not wish to ask a supplementary question.

28 Questions to the Leader of the Council

The Chair of the Council advised that he had received three questions to the Leader as follows:

1. Question from Councillor Denis:

“I note that the Department for Transport recently announced those successful applicants to the Restoring Your Railway Fund, the railway and station re-opening scheme, which will award up to £50,000 to successful applicants from a £500M pound pot to help develop a clear business case towards actual re-opening. Congratulations to all those who got through this round of funding. What this also revealed is those schemes which did not get through. This included the most recent proposals to re-open the Lewes – Uckfield line - a much needed link which would not only ease pressure on the existing network but make more sustainable travel options available to more people across the region. This is hugely disappointing.”

“Would the Leader agree that this approach to rail investment is hardly the much heralded ‘Reversing Beeching’, rather it is a missed opportunity for our District and the wider region? And would he be minded to ask the Minister on behalf of the whole Council to take forward the Lewes-Uckfield link at the next opportunity?”

Response - Councillor MacCleary agreed that this was disappointing news. The administration was committed to encouraging investment in sustainable transport networks including rail. He confirmed he would write as the Leader of the Council to the Government Minister as requested.

2. Question from Councillor Adeniji:

“Following the recent statement on the proposed Seaford Health Hub, according to the statement Lewes District Council has helped the two Seaford GP surgeries to secure a viability study of the Dane Road site for delivering new GP premises. Is the Leader able to share the viability report/study with any interested Seaford District Councillor and will the Leader agree to keeping all Councillors updated on any progress on this matter?”

Response - Councillor Nicholson responded at the Leader’s request. She advised that following the recommendations by the Council’s Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet decision, the Council had worked with NHS partners and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on the feasibility of Dane Road building and car park. The Council’s role was to support the CCG to complete the piece of work, so it was not the Council’s report, but she would find out from partners if it could be shared publicly. She confirmed that if the Council was engaged in any further discussions with the Seaford practice, she would keep Members updated.

3. Question from Councillor Linington

“I recently received a leaflet in the post - 'Celebrating a year in the life of Environment First'. Whilst supporting the wish to acknowledge the excellent work of Environment First, it seems an unwarranted use of council taxpayers’ money to produce these leaflets. I'd like to know how many of these leaflets were printed and at what cost; to whom were they sent; and why couldn't the leaflet be sent as an attachment to an email and/or put on the Council's website so saving the cost of printing and posting.”

Response - Councillor MacCleary responded that the booklet was developed as an internal document to thank the Neighbourhood First Team, including the Waste and Recycling Team, for their contribution in the community during the Covid 19 crisis and recently in cleaning up Seaford Beach. Councillor MacCleary advised that the booklet was produced internally, from existing resources, and that spare copies had been sent to Councillors with other post, so at no additional cost. However, he confirmed he would provide a full breakdown of the costs to Councillor Linington. At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Carr added that the booklet included a reproduction of the many notes/compliments that were left for the team during the Covid 19 crisis.

29 Reporting back on meetings of outside bodies

Four Councillors had provided reports on the outside bodies to which they were appointed by Full Council, as set out in the agenda:

- 1) Councillor MacCleary had provided a written update in relation to Team East Sussex and Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). He advised that the Council was playing a central role in the recovery programme being undertaken by the LEPs. He invited any Councillors to email him with any questions they had around the recovery strategies.
- 2) Councillor Brett had provided a written update in relation to Impact Seaford. As a further update, she advised that the Splash Point repairs were proceeding well, but that there had not been time to put in the necessary road closures/permissions to take part in the national car free day on 22 September, but it would be revisited in 2021.
- 3) Councillor Macleod had provided a written update in relation to the Joint Action Group. He advised that since his update locations had been identified for Samaritan signs to be erected in key locations along the coast. He would continue to look at ways to promote Childline in those locations, and would monitor the progress of this endeavour.
- 4) Councillor O'Brien had provided a written update in relation to the Seaford to Brighton Line Stakeholder Group.

30 Ward issues

There were no ward issues reported.

31 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of Full Council was scheduled to take place on 23 November 2020 at 6 pm.

The meeting ended at 7.25 pm

Councillor Adrian Ross (Chair)