

Full Council

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 18 May 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Pat Rodohan (Mayor).

Councillors Helen Burton (Deputy Mayor), Josh Babarinde, Margaret Bannister, Colin Belsey, Penny di Cara, Sammy Choudhury, Peter Diplock, Jonathan Dow, Tony Freebody, Stephen Holt, Jane Lamb, Robin Maxted, Paul Metcalfe, Md. Harun Miah, Colin Murdoch, Jim Murray, Amanda Morris, Alan Shuttleworth, Robert Smart, Colin Swansborough, Steve Wallis, Barry Taylor, David Tutt and Candy Vaughan.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Homira Javadi (Chief Finance Officer), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Joanne Stone (Principal Planning Solicitor).

1 Election of Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Burton, started the meeting in order to undertake the first item of business.

It was proposed by Councillor Bannister and seconded by Councillor Swansborough that Councillor Pat Rodohan be elected as Mayor for the municipal year 2022/23.

It was accordingly:-

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That Councillor Pat Rodohan be elected Mayor for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Councillor Rodohan then signed his declaration of acceptance of office as Mayor and took the chair. In his speech of acceptance, the Mayor advised that he would be raising money for two charities in 2022/23, Eastbourne and District Mencap and Eastbourne Foodbank.

2 Notification of apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kshama Shore and Rebecca Whippy.

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).

Councillor Holt declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 14, Corporate Plan 2020-24 Refresh, as an employee of Your Eastbourne Bid, which was mentioned in the plan.

Councillors Belsey, di Cara, Morris and Shuttleworth declared personal interests in respect of agenda item 16b, Motion - New Hospital for Eastbourne, as members of the East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). As members did not want to fetter their discretion on any future decision by HOSC, all left the meeting for this item.

Councillors Babarinde, Tutt and Smart declared personal interest in respect of agenda item 16b, Motion - New Hospital for Eastbourne, as members of the 'Save the DGH Group'.

Councillor Freebody declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 16a, Motion - Cost of Living Emergency, as the Suicide Prevention Programme Lead for NHS Sussex Partnership (as he made reference to the impact of debt on the suicide risk in adults experiencing mental health problems).

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2022

The minutes of the last meeting held on 23 February 2022 were considered for adoption. Councillor Smart advised that he did not consider the minutes to be complete but did not propose any specific amendments and indicated he would not vote against them. Councillor Tutt raised a point of order, that this item should only be used to vote on accuracy and any amendments.

The Mayor put the minutes to a vote and accordingly, it was:

Resolved (unanimously) – That the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 23 February 2022 be approved as an accurate record.

5 Appointment of Deputy Mayor.

It was proposed by Councillor Burton and seconded by Councillor Shuttleworth that Councillor Candy Vaughan be appointed as the Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2022/23.

It was accordingly: -

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That Councillor Candy Vaughan be appointed as the Deputy Mayor for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Councillor Vaughan then signed her declaration of acceptance of office as the Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor thanked the outgoing deputy mayor, Councillor Burton for her work and her support over the last year.

6 Investiture of the Mayor's Consort.

The Mayor announced that his wife, Barbara Rodohan, and his daughters in law, Jan Dobbins-Rodohan and Val Rodohan, would act as Mayor's Consorts for the municipal year 2022/23.

7 Mayor's Chaplin - Notification of Appointment

The Mayor reported that Reverend Mike Blanch would serve as the Mayor's Chaplain for the municipal year 2022/23.

8 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor drew members' attention to the list of his and the Deputy Mayor's activities from March to May 2022, that were set out on the agenda.

The Mayor thanked all those who had supported his charities during the year, in particular the charity ball, which had raised upward of £10k for the charities.

The Mayor advised that he had recently attended the launch of the Queens Green Canopy Project, and thanked Lord and Lady Lucas for taking on this important project and leading it forward.

Finally, the Mayor highlighted two conferences he had attended over the weekend had praised the facilities at the Welcome Building and Winter Gardens, and the benefits of Eastbourne as a whole.

9 Executive Arrangements

Councillor Tutt as Leader of the Council advised that the Councillors appointed to the Cabinet for 2022/23 were as follows:

Councillor Tutt – Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Local Strategic Partnership.

Councillor Holt – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Financial Services

Councillor Bannister – Portfolio Holder for Tourism and Culture Services

Councillor Shuttleworth – Portfolio Holder for Direct Assistance Services

Councillor Swansborough – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Place Services and Special Projects

Councillor Whippy – Portfolio Holder for Disabilities and Community Safety

Councillor Tutt thanked all members who had served on Cabinet during 2021/22 for their hard work.

In addition, Councillor Tutt 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.

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 Tutt proposed and Councillor Smart seconded the recommendations set out in the report and appendices, subject to a correction advised by Councillor Smart to the membership to the Grants Task Group from Councillor di Cara to Councillor Murdoch. In addition, he advised, for information, that Councillor Shore was the Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

1. To approve the proposed number and allocation of seats and nominations as set out in Appendix 1;
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 appointments are made 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. To approve the appointments to serve on Outside Bodies in accordance with the names listed in Appendix 1, subject to the correction advised to the Grants Task Group and Shadow Cabinet;
4. That Neal Robinson and Graham Branton be re-confirmed as the Council's Standards Independent Persons for the municipal year;
5. To note the appointment of Stephen Gilbert as a co-opted audit independent member to the Audit and Governance Committee for a 4-year term until May 2026; and
6. 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 Confirmation of the Calendar of meetings for 2022/23

Councillor Tutt moved and Councillor Smart seconded the ratification of the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23, as set out on the agenda.

In seconding, Councillor Smart advised that he would hope to see an update on the implementation of the CIPFA recommendations and financial position in July, but if not he would request that an additional Full Council meeting to be called in September for that purpose.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23 be approved.

Note - At the end of this agenda item, the Council held a ten-minute adjournment to allow for the Civic Guests to leave the meeting.

12 Public right of address.

On the resumption of the meeting, the Mayor confirmed that three public speakers had registered, who would be invited to speak at the start of the relevant agenda items:

- Gaynor Sedgwick would speak to present the petition under Item 13.
- Karey Whitmore (from Friends of Eastbourne Seafront) would speak on Item 14 - Corporate Plan.
- Howard Wardle (from Eastbourne Foodbank) would speak on Item 16(a) - Motion on Cost of Living Emergency.

13 Petitions

Gaynor Sedgwick (Chair of the Save Eastbourne Bandstand Group) presented to the Council a petition signed by 2,319 members of the public asking that:

“Members of Eastbourne Borough Council and their officers:

1. Prioritise the immediate need of the Bandstand above other projects for any appropriate funding opportunities that arise.
2. Set up a planned, ongoing, increased and realistic annual maintenance budget and programme of works for the Bandstand with the aim to repair, restore and re-open the Bandstand.”

Prior to debate, the Council’s Solicitor provided legal advice on the options available to the Council under its Petitions Scheme but confirmed that accepting the proposed action in full was not possible at this meeting. This was because it related to a budgetary decision recently made by Council, had legal and financial implications, and must be determined within the context of a budget setting process.

The Council welcomed the petition, and thanked Gaynor Sedgwick for presenting it. The Council then debated the matter, and the options available.

Following the debate, Councillor Tutt moved and Councillor Holt seconded a proposal that ‘The petition be taken as a bid to the Capital Programme for 2023/24’.

This was put to a vote and declared carried:

RESOLVED (By 22 votes to 0, with 3 abstentions) –

That the petition be taken as a bid to the Capital Programme for 2023/24.

14 Corporate Plan 2020-2024 - Refresh

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, proposing a refreshed edition of the current corporate plan in the light of the Covid pandemic and the recommendations of the CIPFA assurance review.

Councillor Tutt proposed and Councillor Holt seconded the recommendations

in the report for the adoption of the revised plan.

The Council then heard from the public speaker, Karey Whitmore (from Friends of Eastbourne Seafront). She requested in particular that the Friends of Eastbourne Seafront Ltd and Save Eastbourne Bandstand Group be named as delivery partners in the plan.

The Council then debated the refreshed Corporate Plan. As part of the debate it was noted that in the final bullet point under 'Promote Inclusion and address deprivation' on page 14, the words after 'access' had been omitted, and should read 'Promoting financial independence by improving access *to education, training and employment*', and this would be corrected in the final version.

Councillor Tutt agreed to amend his proposal, to include additional wording in the Plan that "the Council will work with any charity or community interest company (CIC) that has an interest in elements of the Corporate Plan", and this was agreed by the seconder.

This was put to a vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED (By 22 votes to 0, with 3 abstentions) – To approve the refreshed Corporate Plan for the period 2022 to 2026, subject to the inclusion of the words "The Council will work with any charity or community interest company (CIC) that has an interest in elements of the Corporate Plan".

15 Annual Pay Policy Statement 2022-23

The Council considered the report of the Assistant Director for HR and Transformation recommending the adoption of the Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2022-23. Councillor Swansborough proposed and Councillor Tutt seconded approval of the report recommendations.

RESOLVED (unanimously) – That the updated Pay Policy Statement be approved, and be published on the Council's website.

16 Motions.

16a Motion - Cost of Living Emergency

Councillor Babarinde moved and Councillor Burton seconded the following motion as set out in the agenda papers:

"This Council notes that:

- On 1 April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 54%.
- In light of the increased energy price cap, the average standard tariff energy bill will increase by £693 per year. The average pre-pay meter energy bill will increase by £708 per year (Ofgem, 2022).
- On 6 April 2022, the Government increased National Insurance by 1.25 percentage points, which is projected to cost the average

Eastbourne family an additional £108 per year.

- The Government has suspended the pensions ‘triple lock’ for 2022/3, meaning that Eastbourne’s 25,806 pensioners will see a rise of 3.1% this year (instead of 8.3% under the triple lock formula). This year, this will cost an Eastbourne Resident on the full new state pension an average of £487, and an Eastbourne Resident on the full basic state pension an average of £373 (TUC, 2022).
- In 2021/22 Eastbourne Foodbank distributed food parcels at a rate of 17,440 per 100,000 people, the highest rate in the country (Trussell Trust, 2022).

This Council therefore declares a ‘Cost of Living Emergency’ and calls on the Government to:

1. Immediately impose a ‘Windfall Tax’ on the super profits of oil and gas companies and use this to take an average of £600 off an Eastbourne Resident’s energy bills this year.
2. Immediately reduce the standard rate of VAT from 20% to 17.5% for one year, saving the average Eastbourne household a further £600 this year.
3. Immediately re-introduce the pensions triple lock to support Eastbourne’s pensioners.”

Councillor Freebody moved and Councillor Lamb seconded an alternative motion:

“This Council notes that:

- On 1st April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy cap by 54%.
- Additionally – and in this same timeframe – food prices and fuel are rising caused by global inflation post pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine.
- National Insurance contributions are set to increase to fund the response to the Covid NHS backlog and new investment in adult social care.

This Council, therefore, recognises the unprecedented financial pressures that all our residents will face in the incoming year, and notes with serious concern, that for those with low or insecure income, these pressures could prove overwhelming.

This Council also recognises that it has a part to play and in response, the Council will:

1. **PUSH UPTAKE OF PENSION CREDIT IN EASTBOURNE**
Using its data, communication channels, local partnerships – and any other resources as appropriate – amplify Government publicity and the MP’s local work to maximise the take-up of Pension Credit in Eastbourne.
2. **HELP PREVENT HOMELESSNESS AND TOXIC DEBT**
Reviewing its processes around arrears and evictions for

Eastbourne rate payers and Eastbourne Homes tenants. Building on the work to proactively engage with residents at risk and identifying affordable payment plans.

3. ESTABLISH A COST OF LIVING EMERGENCY FUND

Ringfencing a percentage of asset sale proceeds to establish a local cost of living emergency fund. The Council has evaluated its extensive £40m property holdings portfolio as part of its response to government bail-out requirements.”

The Council then heard from the public speaker, Howard Wardle (from Eastbourne Foodbank), on the impact of the current cost of living crisis on the demand on Eastbourne Foodbank.

The Council then debated the motion and the alternative motion.

The alternative motion was put to a vote by a show of hands and declared lost by 8 votes to 17.

The original motion was then put to the vote by a show of hands and declared carried.

RESOLVED (By 17 votes to 0, with 8 abstentions) –

This Council notes that:

- On 1 April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 54%.
- In light of the increased energy price cap, the average standard tariff energy bill will increase by £693 per year. The average pre-pay meter energy bill will increase by £708 per year (Ofgem, 2022).
- On 6 April 2022, the Government increased National Insurance by 1.25 percentage points, which is projected to cost the average Eastbourne family an additional £108 per year.
- The Government has suspended the pensions ‘triple lock’ for 2022/3, meaning that Eastbourne’s 25,806 pensioners will see a rise of 3.1% this year (instead of 8.3% under the triple lock formula). This year, this will cost an Eastbourne Resident on the full new state pension an average of £487, and an Eastbourne Resident on the full basic state pension an average of £373 (TUC, 2022).
- In 2021/22 Eastbourne Foodbank distributed food parcels at a rate of 17,440 per 100,000 people, the highest rate in the country (Trussell Trust, 2022).

This Council therefore declares a ‘Cost of Living Emergency’ and calls on the Government to:

1. Immediately impose a ‘Windfall Tax’ on the super profits of oil and gas companies and use this to take an average of £600 off an Eastbourne Resident’s energy bills this year.
2. Immediately reduce the standard rate of VAT from 20% to 17.5% for one year, saving the average Eastbourne household a further £600 this year.
3. Immediately re-introduce the pensions triple lock to support Eastbourne’s pensioners.

17 Motion - New Hospital for Eastbourne

Councillor Babarinde moved and Councillor Tutt seconded the following motion as set out in the agenda papers.

“This Council notes that:

- In October 2020, the Government pledged a brand new hospital for Eastbourne.

This Council calls on:

- The Government to honour its promise of a brand new hospital for Eastbourne.
- East Sussex NHS Hospitals Trust to share its ‘Building for our Future’ Strategic Outline Case for Eastbourne’s brand new hospital with the Save the DGH Campaign Group for constructive scrutiny without delay.”

Councillor Smart moved and Councillor Metcalfe seconded an alternative motion:

“This Council welcomes the Government’s commitment to provide a new hospital in Eastbourne and calls on East Sussex NHS Hospitals Trust to:

- Use this “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity” to design state-of-the-art facilities catering for all core services and,
- Share its “Building for our future” Strategic Outline Case for this new hospital with the “Save the DGH Campaign Group” (and other relevant bodies) for constructive scrutiny without delay.”

Councillor Babarinde read out a statement from Liz Walke, the chair of the Save the DGH Group.

The Council debated the motion and the alternative motion together.

The alternative motion was put to a vote by a show of hands and declared lost by 5 votes to 14, with 2 abstentions.

The original motion was put to the vote by show of hands and declared carried.

RESOLVED (By 15 votes to 0 with 6 abstentions) –

This Council notes that:

- In October 2020, the Government pledged a brand new hospital for Eastbourne.

This Council calls on:

- The Government to honour its promise of a brand new hospital for Eastbourne.
- East Sussex NHS Hospitals Trust to share its ‘Building for our Future’ Strategic Outline Case for Eastbourne’s brand new hospital with the Save

the DGH Campaign Group for constructive scrutiny without delay.

(Note - Councillors Belsey, di Cara, Morris and Shuttleworth left the room during the discussion of this item, having declared personal interests, and not wishing to fetter their discretion to take part in any future discussions on this matter at the East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

18 Special Urgency Decisions by Cabinet Members

The Council formally noted the decision made by the Leader under special urgency powers since the last meeting in relation to the 2022/23 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief scheme, made on 28 February 2022, in accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules.

19 Discussion on minutes of council bodies.

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

- Audit and Governance Committee – 2 March 2022
- Cabinet – 21 March 2022
- Planning Committee – 22 March 2022 and 19 April 2022

No questions were asked in relation to the minutes.

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

RESOLVED – That the minutes be accepted.

20 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the date of the next scheduled meeting was 20 July 2022 at 6 pm.

The meeting ended at 8.42 pm

Councillor Pat Rodohan (Mayor)