

Outside Bodies – Reports from Councillors

The following updates have been received from Councillors since the last meeting in relation to the outside bodies to which they have been appointed by Full Council.

	Outside Body	Councillor	Update
1	ESCC Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)	Christine Brett	<p><u>Date of meeting:</u> 22 September 2022</p> <p><u>Business discussed:</u> The minutes have not yet been published. The following reports were presented, and questions were asked, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital handovers – There was a big concern regarding waiting times in ambulances, especially at the Royal Sussex. There are discharge delays. It was noted that last year the Committee was told that overseas staff (as well as local staff) would be recruited to help with community care roles for Adult Health and Social Care staffing shortage. But there was still nowhere near enough (potential 3K shortfall). Visas take time etc. Noted that some block care home space had been purchased to help with this. Agreed that access to GPs and to community nurses must be improved to avoid the need to go to A and E. Also, need to work harder on admission avoidance strategies. • South East Coast Ambulance Foundation NHS Trust (SEC Amb) Quality Care Commission (CQC) report. Concerns raised over the reported bullying culture, and the need to focus on a cultural change. The Trust has put strategies in place, and hope to be out of special measures in 12-24 months • Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) report Questions were asked about the numbers on waiting lists and treatment patterns. There has been some progress, but not all data was available. Once again, recruitment and staffing was a problem area. • Cardiology and Ophthalmology refiguration The panels for these have been hearing evidence over the few months and the

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			outcomes of decisions will be given at the next HOSC on 15 December.
2	Wave Leisure	Laurence O'Connor	<p>Attended two Board and two Health and Safety meetings</p> <p>In the six months to September, overall income was higher than forecast and expenditure less than forecasted, making for a more positive year to date financial position.</p> <p>Membership increases were slightly below forecast but it is anticipated that 100% of pre-pandemic levels will be achieved by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Wave's Swim School (learn to swim) membership already exceeds pre pandemic levels which again is very encouraging.</p> <p>Participation levels have bounced back after the quieter summer months with 72,000 recorded for the month of September.</p> <p>Wave has re-commenced the consideration of applications for free access to sports facilities for those who compete at a national and international level.</p> <p>Wave has continued to deliver in line with maintenance responsibilities and has made a number of investments, for example, a new gym in Downs Leisure Centre and a new functional training area in Lewes Leisure Centre. In addition, work has commence on the "Destination Newhaven" Town's Fund Project at Newhaven Fort which will ensure £5.7 million of investment works across a number of projects, one of which is protecting and preserving the heritage of this scheduled ancient monument.</p> <p>Wave continues to be exposed to the recruitment challenges faced by others within the Hospitality and Leisure Sector. This impacts directly on the number and type of activities being provided.</p> <p>Moving forward, in line with all businesses, Wave will be exposed to the increase in utilities costs which will present a host of new challenges.</p>

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			<p>Thanks are extended to staff during the exceptional heat experienced over the summer and for their continued support in such difficult times.</p> <p>Staff Rep meetings with the CEO and Head of People and Culture continue.</p>
3	Armed Forces Champion	Sharon Davy	<p><u>10th September</u> - As the Armed Forces Champion for Lewes District Council, I had the privilege of being invited to the 90th Annual Reunion of the Royal Sussex Regimental Association lunch on Saturday 10 September, held in Lewes Town Hall. The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11 gave a sombre note and I was honoured to be with veterans as we came together to mourn her death, as well as toasting our new King: His Majesty King Charles III. Our cadets from all over Sussex were in attendance.</p> <p><u>28th September</u> - I attended the East Sussex Armed Forces Champion meeting at County Hall in person, others took part via TEAMS. One of the topics was the Employer Recognition Scheme. Currently Lewes District Council are bronze award holders. I reiterated my wish for the Council to achieve silver status. It was an opportunity for me to promote our Cadets and suggested that an event is organised for all Armed Forces Champions to meet in person.</p> <p>Also discussed was – Meeting the Duty. To endorse the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by the Armed Forces and their extended family.</p>
4	South Downs National Park Authority	William Meyer	<p><u>SDNP Authority:</u> Despite the contested election of Vanessa Rowlands as the new Chair of the Authority, at the AGM in July, there have been no notable strategic changes to report regarding the overall direction and governance of the Authority.</p> <p>The greatest challenge continues to be the ongoing squeeze on budgets impacting all National Parks across England, something local authorities have been working to overcome for many years. Nevertheless, current financial pressures are a growing challenge to many National Parks, not least in their statutory</p>

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			<p>planning duties and the SDNPA is no exception. This situation has the potential to impact upon those parts of Lewes District Council that are within the planning boundaries of the Park. I continue to take a close interest in and oversight of the planning department, paying particular attention to the day to day interface between the SDNPA's planning function and that of Lewes District Council (LDC).</p> <p>Any significant changes in the planning relationship and operational functionality the SDNPA and LDC are, however, managed (and reported) by other Cabinet colleagues and Senior Officers as the hosting relationship between the SDNPA and LDC continues to evolve and develop.</p> <p><u>General Comments:</u> As the local Lewes District Council Member at the Park since 2019, my general opinion and impression of the South Downs National Park Authority as it has entered upon its second full decade since its creation in March 2010, is that the governance system based in Midhurst remains a work in progress. This is neither a new nor a surprising statement as this particular issue was highlighted by the Glover Report published in the autumn of 2019. The problems identified were partly recognised in the subsequent work undertaken by the SDNPA after 2020. Members looked at various ways of mitigating concerns about diversity and overall representation at Board and Sub Board level at the Park Authority. As a result, Members resolved to appoint three new co-opted members, to the Policy and Resources Committee from 2021. Whilst this has not been a straightforward process, the third and final new member was officially appointed by Members at the live-streamed National Park Authority Board meeting on 20th October.</p> <p><u>South Downs Commercial Operations / Seven Sisters Country Park</u></p> <p>Having entered my final six months at the Park Authority as the Lewes District Council Member, I have concluded that my remaining time will be best spent supporting the challenging environment confronting the Seven Sisters</p>

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			<p>Operating Company – South Downs Commercial Operations where I have acted as a Director since the beginning of 2021.</p> <p>The headwinds the Company faces are no different, nor are they any more surprising, than those confronting many small businesses given the overall state of the wider national economy. However, the commercial challenges facing the Seven Sisters Country Park must be set in the wider context of the current financial environment faced by the SDNPA as the only shareholder and the ultimate guarantor.</p> <p>Whilst the Company has been successfully trading at arm’s length from the SDNPA for over 12 months, delays and difficulties beyond the control of the Board of Directors / South Downs Commercial Operations have meant that some anticipated income streams have yet to come online. In particular, the new tourist accommodation I have written about in previous reports, together with the camp site at Foxholes, has yet to open.</p> <p>However, both the cottages and the camp site will be open after Easter 2023, following the completion of the extensive refurbishment and refit. The works required there, at this isolated site, have taken place against a challenging and inflationary environment and one that has impacted heavily on the construction sector as a whole.</p> <p>Whilst these delays have created additional headwinds for the new organisation, Directors remain confident that when the Company is fully operational across the whole of the Seven Sisters County Park in 2023, the lasting results of the original decision to purchase the Country Park from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as long ago as 2019, will be proved to have been prescient. The benefits will be equally long lasting for the nearby residents of LDC, the wider public and especially the flora and fauna of this unique and beautiful place.</p> <p>Detailed operational issues are commercially sensitive, but in line with the operating agreement established between the Directors and the SDNPA, reports on Company</p>

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			performance are submitted to the Authority Board on a regular basis. These meetings are live-streamed and open to any member of the public who may wish to attend in person.
5	Lewes Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)	Imogen Makepeace	<p>New members of staff have been recruited and are now in place. Sarah Archer replaces Jackie Wiles and a new Money Advisor replaces Emma Bateman.</p> <p>CAB/LDC relationships meeting 29 September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAB reports that appointments are taking longer- over 30 minutes, twice as long as previously. Consequently, waiting times for phone calls is extended. • This is because issues are ever more complex. We now have 10% inflation; rents continue to rise, and fuel debts have overtaken Council Tax as no.1 debt. This is partly because the positive effects of 100% Council Tax Rebate moving Council Tax debt down the list as other debts rise up. <p>At the Cost of Living Summit – 27 October CAB presented a case study of how the discrepancy between Local Housing Allowance for a person under 35 years (1 bedroom with shared facilities) £428 pm is inadequate when the cheapest available rented accommodation in the District is £650pm.</p> <p>CAB is able to provide limited face to face appointments mostly in Newhaven, some in Lewes at Southover House. These are predominantly for people who struggle to access support by online, or phone. They will often be time consuming and complex support needs.</p> <p>Face to face support is essential to include people who are digitally excluded. This is a demographic that continues to be underestimated; there are many reasons why people do not access online support including some that are on the increase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>economic</u> (budgetary restrictions on equipment and Wi-Fi/phone charges)

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>mental health</u> (as stress and anxiety build, the patience and resilience to navigate unfamiliar online platforms decreases). <p>The news that the LDC telephone line to Grant Support is to be made a free phone number is very welcome.</p> <p>Advisors at CAB are experiencing increasing numbers of calls, that are longer, and involve more complex problems. Key areas of concern are expected to be benefits, energy and housing.</p> <p>This inevitably leads to a need for more volunteers and more staff to manage them.</p> <p>Note from the CAB CEO: <i>“We are in urgent need of recruiting more volunteers to work as Advisors. But we need very capable individuals who can commit to at least half a day a week (ideally 1 day) for 1 year. Potential volunteers need to commit to undertaking our training and ongoing CPD in their role. We are aiming to increase our volunteer base by 25 people in the next 6 months. Any suggestions or support with this would be most welcome. We have applied for some additional funding to support us to extend our trainers hours to support with both extended volunteer training provision and volunteer support.”</i></p> <p>The AGM will be on 10th November, too late for reporting on here, but will be reported verbally at the meeting if appropriate.</p>
6	Sussex Downs Line Steering Group (formerly Seaford to Brighton Line)	Emily O'Brien	<p>Date of meeting: 16/9/22</p> <p>Business discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates from station partners and GTR including that Diversity Lewes now a station partner in Lewes; Seaford 'Your Station your community' bid; possible bike hub e-charging in Falmer. • Exciting new on Bishopstone community hub finally completed (lovely community room available for hire and for community groups). I also attend the official opening on 4 November.

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			Decisions made: N/A
7.	LGA People Places Board (NB this is an LGA appointment)	Emily O'Brien	<p>Date of meeting: 8/11/22</p> <p>Business discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Board discussions on LGA Levelling up locally inquiry plus LGA retrofit asks. I also attended for the Board a DEFRA round table on Green Jobs, plus a pre-meet on green jobs BEIS green jobs delivery group (which have since been invited to attend, likely late November). I was appointed as the Board's Green Jobs Champion. <p>Decisions made: As above.</p>
8.	South East Councils Executive	Emily O'Brien	<p>Date of meeting: 14/10/22</p> <p>Business discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting of the executive. Presentation by Roy Millard, Head of the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM). <p>Decisions made: n/a</p>
9.	South East Councils SE Summit	Emily O'Brien	<p>Date of meeting: 19/10/22</p> <p>Business discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing together of SE councils and stakeholders. I was a panellist in a session discussing Levelling Up in the South East Opportunity to question new local government minister Paul Scully who committed to announcement on housing targets 'within 2 weeks' (he was sadly out of a job the next day). <p>Decisions made: n/a</p>
10	Team East Sussex (TES)	Zoe Nicholson	<p><u>Date of Meeting:</u> 17th October 2022</p> <p><u>Business discussed:</u></p> <p>Funding Programme Update – Getting Building Fund (GBF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were updated on the SELEP GBF pipeline for which there was an unallocated balance of £3.3175m, as a result of two programmes being removed

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			<p>from the programme. East Sussex received bids from 5 GBF projects which were assessed and ranked into a priority order for consideration by the SELEP Strategic Board on 21st October.</p> <p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts and Boroughs confirmed that their UKSPF Investment Plans were submitted by 1st August deadline. As yet, they have not received any further information from Government. <p>Growing Places Fund (GPF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SELEP currently holds £10m in GPF pot, so they intend to open a new GPF future round in the new year. This will be an opportunity to bid for loan funding. <p>Strategic Transport Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates were provided on the Strategic Road Network (SRN); the rail network; Gatwick North Runway; the Active Travel Programme; major projects; EV infrastructure, Transport for the South East, Local Plans; and the planned engagement for the new LTP. <p>Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Sussex would be allocated £41.4m towards a range of projects set out in the BSIP to be spent by March 2025. <p>Evolution of LEPs – the future of TES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A paper was presented which set out the roles and responsibilities of TES with an explanation of the position in regard to the LEP functions being devolved over the next few years.
11	Newhaven Town Deal Board	Zoe Nicholson	<p><u>Dates of Meeting:</u> 16th September 2022</p> <p><u>Business discussed:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board discussed the Better Journeys for All business case. The Board made the decision not to approve the business case. The Board then discussed the options available to reallocate the Better Journeys for All funding to ensure the budget is retained for Newhaven and the

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			need for the Board to submit a Project Adjustment Request to Government.
12	Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB)	Zoe Nicholson	<p><u>Date of meetings:</u> 15th September and 18th October 2022</p> <p><u>Business discussed:</u></p> <p>Away Day Session on 15th September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main areas covered were around the current and future focus of the Board and the governance arrangements. There was also a discussion around devolution. <p>Board Meeting on 18th October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports on the following were considered – economic outlook for Greater Brighton; Greater Brighton retrofit taskforce; Greater Brighton 10 Pledges Annual Update; and Greater Brighton Investment Programme.