

## Full Council

**Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 20 November 2024 at 6.00 pm.**

### **Present:**

Councillor Candy Vaughan (Mayor).

Councillors Nick Ansell, Margaret Bannister, Colin Belsey, Daniel Butcher, Penny di Cara, Andy Collins, Ali Dehdashty, Peter Diplock, Christina Ewbank, Nigel Goodyear, Stephen Holt, Jane Lamb, Jim Murray, Hugh Parker, Pat Rodohan, Teri Sayers-Cooper, Kshama Shore, Alan Shuttleworth, David Small, Robert Smart, Colin Swansborough and Jenny Williams.

### **Officers in attendance:**

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

### **29 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2024**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25 September 2024 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **30 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.

### **31 Mayor's announcements.**

The Council received a list of all the Mayor's engagements carried out since the last Full Council meeting.

Of her events, the Mayor highlighted in particular the Civic Harvest Festival which collected 267.3 kg of food for the foodbank, the Eastbourne Remembrance Parade and Service which was attended by the Lord Lieutenant and many local people including lots of children, and the Children in Need event which had raised over £4k. In addition, the Mayor praised the work of Sarah at the Dementia Café at Christ the King Church, which she had been able to visit recently.

**32 Notification of apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ballard, Mayes, Maxted and Morris.

Councillor di Cara had given her apologies for the first part of the meeting and arrived at 6.45 pm during the discussion of agenda item 8a.

**33 Public right of address.**

There were three public speakers who had registered to speak on Agenda Item 8a 'Motion – Sovereign Leisure Centre' and the Mayor advised that she had used her discretion to allow for more than one public speaker per item. They were:

- Mr Ian Phelps
- Mr Hugh Graham
- Mr D Demissie

The Mayor advised that she would invite the speakers to come forward to speak at the start of the item, and they would have 3 minutes each.

**34 Order of business.**

In order to prioritise the items with the most public speakers and attendees, the Mayor took agenda Item 8a (Motion on Sovereign Leisure Centre) first, before all other agenda papers.

**35 Motions.****35a Motion - Sovereign Leisure Centre**

Councillor Shore moved and Councillor Goodyear seconded the following motion, as set out on the agenda:

'The Council resolves to ask the Cabinet to explore all options to keep all the facilities at the Sovereign Leisure Centre open.'

Councillor Holt proposed and Councillor Bannister moved an amendment as follows:

'This Council resolves to ask **Scrutiny Committee** to explore all **further** options to keep the **existing** facilities **of** the Sovereign Leisure Centre open.'

Councillor Smart proposed and Councillor Small seconded a second amendment as follows:

'This Council resolves to ask the Cabinet to explore all options to keep all the facilities at the Sovereign Leisure Centre open.

**In particular by marketing the opportunity widely to all potential operators in parallel with current discussions with Wave Leisure, and**

**To keep all facilities open until the most satisfactory long term future is determined.'**

The Council heard from each of the public speakers in turn:

- Mr Ian Phelps, who suggested that the Council market test the centre and move it to an external provider with greater buying power for day to day costs, and to make a series of invest to save decisions, including installation of pool covers and use of AI to monitor pool usage and profile staffing levels and opening times to when the pool costs were at break even or in profit.
- Mr Hugh Graham, who advised that he had been a member of the Eastbourne Leisure Trust for 16 years up until 2020, which had developed a business plan for the Sovereign Centre to attract external investment and increase membership. He expressed his disappointment with the current position of the centre, and that the trustees' work might be lost.
- Mr D Demissie, who promoted the importance of swimming for public health and for children to learn to swim, including both in the gala pool and wave pool.

The motion and each amendment were debated together and in full by the Council, and members thanked the public speakers for their contributions.

In moving the first amendment to refer the matter to Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Holt clarified that this would not halt the Cabinet decision, but that nothing irreversible would be done in relation to the pool until the Scrutiny Committee had considered the matter.

The first amendment was put to a vote and carried.

**Resolved (by 15 votes to 7) -**

That this Council resolves to ask Scrutiny Committee to explore all further options to keep the existing facilities of the Sovereign Leisure Centre open.

(As Councillor di Cara arrived in the meeting midway through the discussion at 6.45 pm, she was unable to take part in the vote).

**36 Matters referred from Cabinet or other council bodies.**

**36a Local Employment and Training Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

Councillor Swansborough moved and Councillor Holt seconded the recommendation referred from the meeting of Cabinet held on 13 November 2024, in support of the approval of the Local Employment and Training Supplement Planning Document (SPD). Councillor Murray, at the request of Councillor Swansborough, explained the changes that had been made to the supplementary planning document as he had been working with officers on the changes in his previous role.

The referral document and the report considered by Cabinet was set out in an agenda supplement.

The report was discussed by the Council. Councillor Smart asked questions in relation to whether this would have a negative impact on Eastbourne, and queried a comment made by the Chamber of Commerce on the consultation. Councillor Holt advised that developers were supportive of the document and investment in skills and training but advised that he would provide a full written response to the question. He suggested Councillor Smart write to the Chamber of Commerce directly on its comments.

The proposal was then put to a vote and carried.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

To adopt the Local Employment and Training Supplementary Planning Document.

### **37 Discussion on minutes of council bodies.**

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

Planning Committee – 17 September 2024  
Audit and Governance Committee – 24 September 2024  
Cabinet – 13 November 2024

Councillor Smart and Councillor Shore spoke on minute 30 of Cabinet on 13 November 2024 in relation to the 'Strategic Finance Programme'.

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

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) – That the minutes be accepted.

### **38 Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 26 February 2025.

The meeting ended at 7.34 pm

Councillor Candy Vaughan (Mayor)