

Full Council

Minutes of meeting held in Council Chamber, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE on 18 July 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Adrian Ross (Chair).
Councillors Graham Amy (Vice-Chair), Robert Banks, Matthew Bird, Liz Boorman, Roy Burman, Christine Brett, Julie Carr, Ciarron Clarkson, Chris Collier, Phil Davis, Sharon Davy, Johnny Denis, Lynda Duhigg, Stephen Gauntlett, Tom Jones, Isabelle Linington, Jim Lord, Sylvia Lord, James MacCleary, Sean MacLeod, Imogen Makepeace, Milly Manley, Ron Maskell, William Meyer, Zoe Nicholson, Emily O'Brien, Laurence O'Connor, Ruth O'Keeffe, Keira Rigden, Christine Robinson, Geoff Rutland, Richard Turner, Steve Saunders and Christoph von Kurthy.

Officers in attendance:

Robert Cottrill (Chief Executive), Kate Slattery (Solicitor), Sarah Lawrence (Committee Team Manager), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services), Jane Goodall (Environment Lead), Ola Owolabi (Deputy Chief Finance Officer - Corporate Finance) and Tim Whelan (Director of Service Delivery).

16 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2022.

RESOLVED – To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2022.

17 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adeniji, Bikson, Clay, Papanicoloau, Peterson and Wallraven.

It was noted that Councillors Banks, Macleod and O'Keeffe had been delayed and would arrive late.

18 Declarations of interest.

There were no declarations of interests.

19 Announcements.

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

Councillor Denis provided an update as Cabinet Member for Communities and Customers on the Council's response to the amber warning for extreme weather, working in conjunction with the Sussex Resilience Partnership for both residents and staff. Councillor Meyer, as Cabinet Member for Housing,

advised on the support being provided for residents and rough sleepers in terms of sunscreen, water and emergency accommodation, and also the longer term investment needed of insulation in Council properties to cope with seasonal extremes.

(Note: Councillor Banks joined the meeting during this item).

20 Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

21 Questions from members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

22 Petitions

There were no petitions.

23 Election of the Leader of the Council

The election of Leader of the Council had been triggered by Councillor Nicholson notifying to the Chief Executive her resignation as Leader of the Council with effect from 4 pm on 18 July 2022.

Two nominations were received for the position of Leader:

Councillor MacCleary, was proposed by Councillor Nicholson and seconded by Councillor Collier.

Councillor Linington, was proposed by Councillor Boorman and seconded by Councillor Davy.

The nominations were then put to the vote, with 20 votes for Councillor MacCleary and 13 votes for Councillor Linington, with one abstention.

In accepting his election as Leader, Councillor MacCleary thanked Councillor Nicholson for her leadership over the last year, and advised that he would retain the portfolio for regeneration and planning and his Cabinet would be unchanged as follows:

Councillor Zoe Nicholson – Deputy Leader and portfolio holder for finance

Councillor Stephen Gauntlett - Portfolio holder for planning and infrastructure

Councillor Julie Carr - Portfolio holder for recycling, waste and open spaces

Councillor Matthew Bird - Portfolio holder for sustainability

Councillor William Meyer - Portfolio holder for housing

Councillor Johnny Denis - Portfolio holder for communities and

customers

Councillor Ruth O’Keeffe - Portfolio holder for tourism and devolution

Councillor Chris Collier - Portfolio holder for performance and people

RESOLVED – That Councillor MacCleary be elected as the Leader of the Council and his Cabinet appointments be noted.

(Note – Councillor Macleod joined the meeting during the discussion of this item and was able to participate in the vote. Councillor O’Keeffe arrived at the end of this item and therefore was not in time to vote).

24 Urgent decisions taken by the Cabinet or Cabinet members.

In accordance with the Policy and Performance Procedure Rule 17, the Council received and noted the details of a decision which had been taken by the Leader of the Council under special urgency procedures, regarding the Council Tax Rebate Scheme and Council Tax Discretionary Rebate Scheme on 13 June 2022.

25 Recommendations from Cabinet and Committees

25a Waste and recycling services - fleet.

Councillor Carr moved and Councillor Bird seconded the recommendation of the report of the Director of Service Delivery, to seek approval for the cost of purchasing a second-hand fleet of recycling vehicles in the current financial year, on the basis that the proposal agreed in principle at Cabinet on 9 June 2022 would incur expenditure outside the budget framework set for 2022/23.

In a response to a question, Councillor Carr confirmed that the team was aware of the need for the provision of additional electric charging points and would be working to deliver them.

The recommendation was debated and received support from across the Council. The matter was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED -

That Full Council approves the release of funding (£720,000) within this financial year, 2022/23, in support of the immediate operational priority:

To make immediate purchase of second-hand recycling collection vehicles (RCVs), to replace six vehicles currently on hire, thus saving on significant hire costs that are presently being incurred.

25b Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22.

Councillor Nicholson (as Cabinet Member for Finance) moved and Councillor Ross (as Deputy Chair of Audit and Standards Committee) seconded the recommendation made by Cabinet on 13 July 2022 to approve the annual Treasury Management Report for 2021/22 and the 2021/22 prudential and

treasury indicators included in the Cabinet Report.

These proposals had received support from the Audit and Standards Committee and Policy and Performance Advisory Committee before being recommended by Cabinet and were debated and received support from all Councillors.

The matter was put to a vote and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2021/22; and
2. To approve the 2021/22 prudential and treasury indicators included in the Cabinet Report.

25c Approval of additional Licensing Fee 2022/23.

Councillor Robinson (as Deputy Chair of the Licensing Committee) moved and Councillor Macleod (as Chair of the Licensing Committee) seconded the recommendation to Full Council made by the Licensing Committee on 7 July 2022 to approve the licensing fee proposed for 6 monthly DBS check of £65, and which would come in effect in September 2022. This was an increase to cover the cost of administration.

It was emphasised that the intention over time was to encourage taxi drivers to use the Government online form for the DBS check which would save the taxi drivers money.

The matter was put to a vote and carried by 34 votes to 0 with 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: To approve the Licensing Fee of £65 for the 6 monthly DBS check.

26 Notices of motion.

26a Motion on Ukrainian refugees.

Councillor Brett moved and Councillor O'Brien seconded the motion in support of Ukrainian Refugees as set out on the agenda.

The motion was debated by the Council. There was a difference of opinion over whether the additional funding should be a separate fund which was ringfenced for use for Ukrainian refugees or not, and whether all of the proposals in the proposed motion were required. However, no formal amendments were submitted at the meeting. There was shared view across the Council on the need to do more to support Ukrainian refugees.

The motion was put to a vote and carried by 25 votes to 0, with 10 abstentions.

RESOLVED -

The Council resolves to ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Home Secretary and local MPs including the following:

1. A request for urgent clarification on the plan for refugees in our District once the initial six months ends.
2. To remind them that a system to support those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and honour the promise of sanctuary which has been given as well as acknowledge the commitment already made by those who have already opened their homes.
3. To request that they urgently seek a second tranche of placement hosts in the towns where many are already living, and children are being educated.
4. To take steps to support refugees looking to move into privately rented accommodation specifically increasing the Homeless Prevention Grant above the current level of £520K. This will enable the Lewes District Council Housing Needs Team to better address the emerging housing issues of this particular group of residents.
5. To increase the Local Housing Allowance to better reflect the costs of rents within Lewes District outside those in the Affordable / Social Rent sector in order to prevent a further deterioration in availability of suitable housing for all those in need of appropriate local accommodation.

26b Motion on Cost of Living.

Councillor Banks moved and Councillor Makepeace seconded the motion on the cost of living crisis, as set out on the agenda.

The motion was debated across the Council, and there were different views on how to tackle the crisis. However, no formal amendment was put forward to the meeting

The motion was put to a vote and carried by 22 votes to 0, with 13 abstentions.

RESOLVED –

This Council:

1. Recognises that more can be done and therefore declares a 'Cost of Living Emergency'.
2. It asks the Leader of the Council to write to Chancellor of the Exchequer to ask for Lewes District residents to get extra help and support by:
 - a) Immediately reducing the standard rate of VAT from 20% to 17.5% for one year, saving the average family £600.
 - b) Immediately restoring the Universal Credit supplement of £20 and doubling that uplift, which was cancelled by the Government in 2021;

and reverses the cuts to Working Tax Credit.

- c) Note the imposition of the 'Windfall Tax' on the super profits of oil and gas companies but raise the concern that this needs to be directed at those on the lowest incomes.
- d) Extending free school meals to all families.
- e) Urging the introduction of a price cap for LPG and heating oil under OFGEN regulation while supporting alternative heating such as air source heat pumps.
- f) Call on the Government to introduce a £25bn fund to enable Councils to insulate council homes and homeowner homes.

In addition, this Council will:

- a) Arrange a local Cost-of-Living Emergency Summit, with stakeholders, including Citizens Advice, Food Banks, Chambers of Commerce and Trade Unions and invite local MPs to attend this hybrid meeting.
- b) Develop a Food and Fuel Action Plan that clarifies and captures all actions tackling the Cost of Living of Crisis.
- c) Examine the potential for strengthening any technical advice on the use of renewable heating sources such as air source heat pumps instead of fossil fuels in advance of the Local Plan being developed.
- d) Request the Policy and Performance Advisory Committee to review the support that the Council has available to support those in council tax arrears.

27 Written questions from Councillors.

No written questions had been received for the agenda in accordance with Procedure Rule 12.

28 Questions to the Leader of the Council

One question was submitted by Councillor Saunders to the Leader, highlighting the concerns of residents in relation to the Clifton Road Development in Newhaven, and the use of longer hours of construction allowed by a change in Government rules, and the reported lack of appropriate consultation with local Councillors and residents on the changes. Councillor Saunders asked through the Leader, if the Lead Member for Planning and Regeneration could intervene to re-impose standard construction hours to the site, as well as advise what he had known about the situation and the petition that was presented to the Planning Applications Committee at its last meeting.

Councillor MacCleary responded that he was aware of this issue in his ward

and asked Councillor Gauntlett as Cabinet Member to respond. Councillor Gauntlett advised that he had not been informed of this matter but would investigate it with officers immediately and would respond in writing to Councillor Saunders.

29 Ward issues

No ward issues were raised by the deadline set out in the constitution.

30 Reporting back on meetings of outside bodies.

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

- Sussex Downs Line Steering Group – Councillor O’Brien
- LGA People and Places Board – Councillor O’Brien
- South East Councils – Councillor O’Brien and Councillor Denis
- Impact Seaford – Councillor Brett
- Citizens Advice – Councillor Makepeace
- Wave Leisure Trust – Councillors O’Connor and Denis
- Sussex Police and Crime Panel (PCP) – Councillor Denis
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Executive Board – Councillor Denis
- Community Safety Partnership- Councillor Denis
- Armed Forces Champion – Councillor Davy
- Greater Brighton Economic Board – Councillor Nicholson
- Team East Sussex (SELEP) – Councillor Nicholson
- South Downs National Park Authority Board (AGM, Seven Sisters Country Park “South Downs Commercial Operations Ltd” and Equity and Diversity Training for Elected Members) – Councillor Meyer
- Decarbonising Our Housing Stock (DOHS) – Councillor Bird
- South East Coastal Group – Councillor Bird
- Upper Ouse Flood Protection and Water Retention Works Working Group– Councillor Bird

Councillor Davy emphasised the importance of the Armed Forces Cadet Scheme for enabling the aspiration and future careers of young people, in particular for those who come from disadvantaged or non-academic backgrounds.

Councillor Macleod, apologised for not submitting a written report, but advised in his role as Mental Health Champion that the Taxi Trade had recently attending excellent mental health and suicide prevention training, with all five sessions fully booked.

31 Date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place at 6 pm on Monday 26 September 2022.

The meeting ended at 7.47 pm

Councillor Adrian Ross (Chair)