

Minutes of the Council meeting held at the Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 25 September 2017 at 6:30pm.

Present: Councillors: Mrs M.L. Barnes (Chairman), Lord Ampthill, A.K. Azad, J. Barnes, G.S. Browne, R.C. Carroll, C.A. Clark, G.C. Curtis, P.R. Douart, K.P. Dixon, S.H. Earl, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, S.D. Elford, R.V. Elliston, K.M. Field, T.W. Graham, I.R. Hollidge, Mrs B.A. Hollingsworth, Mrs J.M. Hughes, I.G.F. Jenkins, G.P. Johnson, J.M. Johnson, B. Kentfield, M.J. Kenward, Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green, C.R. Maynard, M. Mooney, D.B. Oliver, P.N. Osborne, J. Potts, Mrs S.M. Prochak, C.J. Saint, G.F. Stevens and M.R. Watson.

Advisory officers present: Executive Director of Resources, Executive Director of Business Operations, Service Manager – Finance and Welfare and Service Manager – Corporate and Human Resources.

Also present: 2 members of the public.

C17/33. **MINUTES**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10 July 2017 as a correct record of the proceedings.

C17/34. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R.K. Bird, J.J. Carroll, A.E. Ganly and Mrs S. Hart.

C17/35. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of interest were made by Councillors in the Minutes as indicated below:

Azad	Agenda Item 7 (CB17/25) – Personal interest in so far as he is a local business owner.
J. Barnes	Agenda Item 7 (CB17/16) – Personal Interest in so far as he is a Member of East Sussex County Council.
Earl	Agenda Item 7 (CB17/16) – Personal Interest in so far as he is a Member of East Sussex County Council
Elford	Agenda Item 7 (CB17/16) – Personal Interest in so far as he is a Member of East Sussex County Council.
Hollidge	Agenda Item 7 (CB17/16) – Personal Interest in so far as he runs a club from Bexhill Leisure Centre.

C17/36. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 1) The Chairman announced that she had represented the Council at the following events:
 - The Wealden District Council Chairman's Civic reception at Herstmonceux Castle, this event was also in support of two charities, the JKP project and Wealden Works.
 - East Sussex Youth Orchestra's performance at the De La Warr Pavilion in support of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.
 - Bexhill Carnival where the Chairman had the pleasure of presenting the prizes for the winning floats.
 - A service at St Michaels Church in Bexhill to commemorate the bravery and heroism of the many young men who participated in the Battle of Britain. Also in attendance were young cadets from the RAF, of which some were about the same age as those who flew Spitfires and Lancasters in 1940, often after only experiencing a few hours of flying time.
- 2) The Chairman had held her Civic Service in her church in Etchingham which was attended by the Deputy Lieutenant. She thanked both Reverend Ian Morrison and officers for organising the service and thanked her fellow Members who had attended.
- 3) The Chairman reminded Members that training in Data Protection would be taking place after the Council meeting and urged all Members to stay for the briefing.

C17/37. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was noted that the member of the public, Adrie van der Meer, who had submitted a question to Council, was not in attendance. The written question and answer were therefore noted and dealt with in his absence

1. Pursuant to Paragraph 10 of the Council Procedure Rules the following question was put by Adrie van der Meer and answered by Councillor Mrs Hughes.

Question – Is there a record of empty commercial and residential premises across the District, the state they currently are in, whether they are public or private owned and if they are habitable. And if there is a way that the council can monitor this record, what powers does the council have to repurpose these properties so the community can benefit from them once again?

Answer: The Council's Revenues Team has records of residential and business premises that are empty, however we rely on the property owner/occupier to inform the Council that the property is empty. The Council also becomes aware of empty properties when there have been

issues around non-payment of business rates or council tax. Officers carry out inspections to verify that a property is in fact empty, particularly where a relief from council tax or business rates has been claimed and where the property has been empty for a considerable time. The property record does not specifically identify whether the property is in public or private ownership.

With regard to powers to bring properties back into use, the Council can use compulsory purchase powers to acquire vacant properties using its general wellbeing powers under the Local Government Act 2002; and there are powers under the Housing Act to enforce Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's). Both of these options can only be used in limited circumstances and are also cumbersome, costly and time-consuming to enforce. In the case of EDMO's, a third party operator would be needed to manage the letting of the property as the Council does not own its own housing stock.

The Council also has powers under the Planning Act and other legislation to require property owners to carry out repairs to derelict properties, or carry out works where there are public health risks evident. These may apply to both empty and occupied properties.

C17/38. REPORT OF THE CABINET ON MATTERS FOR DETERMINATION BY COUNCIL

1. It was moved by Councillor Maynard and seconded that, the reports of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 and 25 September (there were no recommendations to Council at the meeting held on 31 July 2017), as set out in the Agenda be approved and adopted.
2. The Chairman of the Council having called over the reports, the following Minute was reserved for discussion:

Cabinet 25 September 2017

CB17/25

3. On the Motion of the Chairman of the Council, duly seconded, the Council approved, adopted and received the following report, with the exception of the minute reserved for discussion:

- Development of the Former Bexhill High School Site (CB17/16)

C17/39. RESERVED MATTERS

Cabinet – 4 September

CB17/25 – Business Rates – Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme

RESOLVED: That Minute CB17/25 – (Business Rates – Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme) be approved and adopted.

**C17/40. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE ON DECISIONS TAKEN
BY CABINET AS MATTERS OF URGENCY**

It was moved by Councillor Maynard and seconded that it be noted that no urgent decisions had been taken by Cabinet at its meeting held on 31 July, 4 September and 25 September 2017.

CHAIRMAN

The Council rose at 6:40pm

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