

COUNCIL

20 September 2021

Minutes of the Council meeting held at the Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 20 September 2021 at 6:30pm.

Committee Members present: Councillors B.J. Drayson (Chairman), J. Barnes, Mrs M.L. Barnes, C.A. Bayliss, J.H.F. Brewerton, G.S. Browne, T.J.C. Byrne, J.J. Carroll, C.A. Clark, S.J. Coleman, Mrs V. Cook, P.C. Courtel, G.C. Curtis, K.P. Dixon, B.J. Drayson (Chairman), Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, S.J. Errington, K.M. Field, A.E. Ganly, P.J. Gray, L. Hacking, K.M. Harmer (Vice-Chairman), J.M. Johnson, Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green, C.R. Maynard, A.S. Mier, M. Mooney, Rev H.J. Norton, D.B. Oliver, P.N. Osborne, S.M. Prochak, MBE, G.F. Stevens, R.B. Thomas, H.L. Timpe and J. Vine-Hall.

Advisory officers present: Chief Executive and Democratic Services Manager.

Also Present: 26 members of the public via the YouTube live broadcast.

C21/31. **MINUTES**

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 July 2021 as a correct record of the proceedings.

C21/32. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R.K. Bird, A.K. Jeeawon, L.M. Langlands and C.A. Madeley and the Assistant Director of Resources, Robin Vennard.

C21/33. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Drayson Agenda Item 12 – Personal Interest as a volunteer driver for the Bexhill Community Bus.

Field Agenda Item 12 – Personal Interest as an elected Member of East Sussex County Council.

Kirby-Green Agenda Item 12 – Personal Interest as an elected Member of East Sussex County Council.

Maynard Agenda Item 12 – Personal Interest as an Executive Member of East Sussex County Council.

Prochak Agenda Item 12 – Personal Interest in so far as her husband was Chairman of the local Campaign to Protect Rural England.

C21/34. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- The Chairman attended a reception held by Cllr Peter Pragnell, East Sussex County Council Chairman for East Sussex Mayors, Chairs and County Council Lead Members at Hendall Manor to mark the retirement of The Lord Lieutenant Sir Peter Field. The evening provided an opportunity to socialise with some of our surrounding authorities; it was noted that Cllr Pragnell was currently unwell, although improving, and Members wished him a speedy recovery.
- In July, the Chairman visited the charity Rye Harbour Sailability (RHS). A group of 25 volunteers who provided sailing lessons on the Rother in Rye Harbour to people with differing abilities. During his visit he met some of the volunteers, sampled a delicious bacon sandwich and spoke to some of the users. RHS was actively looking for new volunteers / users and had launched an appeal to raise £13,000 to purchase new equipment by organising fundraising events. The Chairman attended one of these events namely Opera for Late Summer at Winchelsea New Hall, where he met Cllr David Page, the Mayor of Winchelsea.
- In August, the Chairman officially opened and closed the 82nd Bexhill Open Bowls Tournament.
- On 22 August 2021, the Chairman welcomed Simon Corrello, Her Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex to a Bexhill Day (established in 1907) event organised by Bexhill Town Council.
- On 1 September 2021, the Chairman welcomed Andrew Blackman, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex and Myles Jenner, High Sheriff of East Sussex to a ceremony held by the former Bexhill Charter Trustees at the Town Hall. The two past Mayors presented certificates / awards to individuals and organisations to highlight contributions made to the town that the COVID-19 pandemic had prevented them from doing within their terms of office.
- On Wednesday 8 September 2021, the Chairman was invited to celebrate the launch of a new free App called 'A Rye Good Time' at the Mermaid Inn, Rye. By scanning the code on the coaster (beer mat), customers were able to find out what was happening in Rye. Arabella Ansar project led on the user-friendly App and development was supported by Visit 1066 Country and Rother District Council. The Chairman highly recommended the App and hoped that it would be replicated across the whole of the district.
- On 17 September 2021, the Chairman attended the official opening of the revamped 1066 Walk (31-miles from Pevensey Castle to Rye). The project was delivered by a number of individuals / organisations, led by Donna Hall, the Council's Cultural Development Officer and had received EU funding. The scenic and mediaeval landscape route was also enhanced by 10 of Keith Petit's amazing wooden sculptures based on scenes from the Bayeux Tapestry and from 'Landings' at Pevensey Castle to 'Beech Tree' in Rye.

- The Chairman highlighted the Council's event 'How to Age Well in the 21st Century' held at the De La Warr Pavilion on 14 September 2021. Attendees had the opportunity to hear about things to do, how to take care as you get older and participated in taster exercise sessions all of which were well received. He thanked all those involved and attended for making it a successful event. It was hoped that a road show version could be developed to spread the message across the whole of the district.
- Members were reminded that following a successful referendum held last week for the Battle Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2028, the extraordinary meeting of full Council scheduled to take place on Monday 18 October at 5.30pm would go ahead.
- The Chairman had exercised his discretion in favour of varying the order of business so that Agenda Item 9 was taken as the next item.

C21/35. **DE LA WARR PAVILION CHARITABLE TRUST**

It was moved, seconded and agreed that Council Procedure Rules 3.2 (a) (varying the order of business), 14.4 (content and length of speeches) and 14.5 (when a member may speak again) be waived for the duration of this item.

The Chairman of the Council welcomed Stewart Drew, Director and Chief Executive Officer of the De La Warr Pavilion (DLWP) Charitable Trust to the meeting who proceeded to present the annual report to Members. Members had been in receipt of a written report that set out in summary the activities and achievements of the DLWP Charitable Trust during the financial year 2020/21; the DLWP had been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting enforced closures and restrictions from March 2020.

Following the presentation Members asked a number of questions and congratulated Stewart Drew on the successes of the DLWP and his stewardship during the difficult pandemic period. The Chairman thanked Stewart Drew for his informative and interesting presentation.

C21/36. **MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

Pursuant to Paragraph 11 of the Council Procedure Rules the following oral question was put by Councillor Osborne and answered by Councillor Byrne.

Question: Are Alliance (Rother) Homes set up in competition with established house building companies locally and nationally?

If Alliance (Rother) Homes develop properties on this Council's land are there any safeguards that protect the 'low cost / shared ownership' properties going forward, i.e. will the properties remain as 'low cost' into the future or will the first user after a period of time be able to sell on into the open market?

Answer: Is Alliance Homes in competition? No. Admittedly, if you looked at the finance of Alliance Homes (Rother), you will know there is a drawdown facility on a project by project basis. As Rother has access

to finance at a low percentage that would, if that was passed on at the same percentage give Alliance Homes (Rother) a commercial advantage – but that is not going to happen. And in fact, the uplift in that percentage might, under some circumstances, almost provide a revenue stream. But the quick answer is no; we are not in any way intending Alliance Homes (Rother) to compete with outside building companies.

The second question is more interesting. Certainly on a scheme by scheme basis we will need to look at the overall financial model, and if some of that is open market housing and we sell it as open market housing at open market rates then it would not work to try and impose any sort of restriction on who can sell it on. However, you are talking about affordable or low cost; if it is affordable it comes under that category that will be bought by one of our registered providers. The registered providers can offer straight forward economical rent to people who come from our housing register or a variety of shared ownership deals. Those shared ownership deals do ramp up to full ownership over a certain length of time, but at the end of that length of time you are a house owner and you stand with all the other house owners and have the ability to cash in if you like on any price rise. That is not the reason for the scheme. The reason for the scheme is to get people on the housing ladder and to get people already benefitting from the rise in house prices as their percentage of ownership of that house goes up in price. So affordable no, low cost is more difficult. It will very much be on a project by project basis. Alliance Homes (Rother) has still got to make money so low cost will likely be in providing the right houses, with the right ecological safeguards, all the latest techniques but doing it as economically as possible so we can offer those for sale; and those that we do offer for sale if possible, I believe we can put a covenant on if we sell those on the open market as to how long you have to remain there before you can sell them on. Certainly that was done by the Conservative Government a long time ago, if you bought your Council house you could not immediately sell it on, so it strikes me there is that mechanism. In all honesty I do not know but it will be done on a scheme by scheme basis and again, we are not looking for Alliance Homes (Rother) to provide a cheap way of getting around the ordinary commercial realities and letting some people profit. I hope that is satisfactory.

C21/37.

REPORT OF THE CABINET ON MATTERS FOR DETERMINATION BY COUNCIL

1. It was moved by Councillor Oliver and seconded that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 September 2021 (the meeting scheduled for 26 July was cancelled), as set out in the Agenda be approved and adopted.
2. The Chairman of the Council having called over the report, the Minute was not reserved for discussion.
3. On the Motion of the Chairman of the Council, duly seconded, the Council approved and adopted the following report:

C21/38. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE ON DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET AS MATTERS OF URGENCY**

It was moved by Councillor Oliver and seconded that it be noted that there were no executive decisions taken by Cabinet as matters of urgency at its meeting held 6 September 2021.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

C21/39. **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Council had historically appointed a representative to the Rye Chamber of Commerce (RCC). However, in 2017, it was agreed that as the RCC was not meeting regularly and was semi-dormant, it was decided not to appoint a representative and it was removed from the list of outside bodies to which the Council appointed. RCC had been re-energised and therefore it was requested that Councillor Stevens be nominated to represent the Council with effect from 20 September 2021, expiring in May 2022.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Gennette Stevens be appointed as the Council's representative to the Rye Chamber of Commerce with immediate effect, until the end of the current civic year and be subject to reappointment in May 2021, in line with all other appointments to outside bodies and that attendance be designated as an approved duty.

C21/40. **POLITICAL GROUPS - REVIEW OF COMMITTEE SEATS**

Following two recent changes to the political groupings serving on the Council, consideration was given to the consequential changes to the allocation of committee seats following a review in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The allocation of committee seats and appointments thereto had been agreed with all Group Leaders and it was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED Nem con: That the allocation of committee seats and appointments thereto be as follows:

Audit and Standards Committee

Councillors J. Barnes, Mrs M.L. Barnes, P.C. Courtel, K.M. Harmer, A.K. Jeeawon, Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green, C.A. Madeley and R.B. Thomas.

Licensing and General Purposes

Councillors R.K. Bird, G.S. Browne, S.J. Coleman, G.C. Curtis, K.M. Field, L. Hacking, K.M. Harmer, J.M. Johnson, C.A. Madeley, A.S. Mier, R.B. Thomas and H.L. Timpe.

Substitutes: C.A. Bayliss, T.J.C. Byrne, P.J. Gray and Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors J. Barnes, J.J. Carroll, C.A. Clark, S.J. Coleman, Mrs V. Cook, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, S.J. Errington, P.J. Gray, C.A. Madeley, C.R. Maynard, M. Mooney and P.N. Osborne.

Substitutes: L.M. Langlands, G.F. Stevens and R.B. Thomas.

Planning Committee

Councillors Mrs M.L. Barnes, G.C. Curtis, S.J. Errington, A.E. Ganly, P.J. Gray, K.M. Harmer, J.M. Johnson, L.M. Langlands, C.A. Madeley, A.S. Mier, H.J. Norton, S.M. Prochak, G.F. Stevens, and J. Vine-Hall.

Substitutes: J. Barnes, H.L. Timpe and R.B. Thomas.

C21/41. MOTION TO COUNCIL - BUS SERVICES

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12 consideration was given to the following Motion for Council; it was moved by Councillor Bayliss and seconded by Councillor Prochak:

“That Rother District Council:

- a) acknowledges the importance of better bus services for meeting the priorities in the Environment Strategy, Economic Recovery Strategy, and Corporate Plan;
- b) endorses the specific recommendations in the Bexhill Better Buses campaign report and the Campaign for Rural England’s ‘Every Village Every Hour’ report;
- c) calls on parish and town councils to engage with East Sussex County Council as they develop their Bus Improvement Plan in response to the Government ‘Bus Back Better’ strategy; and
- d) requests that officers actively work with East Sussex County Council to ensure that their Bus Improvement Plans meets our corporate objectives.”

It was moved by Councillor John Barnes and seconded, that the Motion be amended by the following:

Deleting the words “and the Campaign for Rural England’s ‘Every Village Every Hour’ report” at b);

Replacing the words “corporate objectives” with “residents’ needs” at d).

The Amendment on being put was **CARRIED**.

It was moved by Councillor Vine-Hall and seconded, that the new substantive Motion be amended by the following:

Inserting the words “.... and takes into account the Campaign for Rural England’s ‘Every Village Every Hour’ report” at d).

The Amendment of being put was **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED: That the Motion on being put was declared **CARRIED**, as follows:

“That Rother District Council:

- a) acknowledges the importance of better bus services for meeting the priorities in the Environment Strategy, Economic Recovery Strategy, and Corporate Plan;
- b) endorses the specific recommendations in the Bexhill Better Buses campaign report and takes into account the Campaign for Rural England’s ‘Every Village Every Hour’ report;
- c) calls on parish and town councils to engage with East Sussex County Council as they develop their Bus Improvement Plan in response to the Government ‘Bus Back Better’ strategy; and
- d) requests that officers actively work with East Sussex County Council to ensure that their Bus Improvement Plans meets our residents’ needs.”

C21/42. **MOTION TO COUNCIL -SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12 consideration was given to the following Motion for Council; it was moved by Councillor Mrs Barnes and seconded by Councillor Browne that:

“This Council will ensure that, where a site changes hands after planning permission has been granted, the terms of any Section 106 agreement are adhered to and that the development continues to comply with the Council’s planning policies, and in particular Policy DHG1.”

It was moved by Councillor Prochak, and seconded by Councillor Byrne that the Motion be amended to read, as follows:

“The Council confirms it complies with the Council's planning policies and section 106 agreements and follows its legal advice.’

The Amendment on being put was declared **CARRIED**.

It was moved by Councillor John Barnes, and seconded by Councillor Browne that the new substantive Motion be amended by:

The insertion after the word “with” by the words “..... and will continue to comply with.....”.

The Amendment on being put was declared **LOST**.

RESOLVED: That the Motion on being put was declared **CARRIED**, as follows:

“The Council confirms it complies with the Council's planning policies and section 106 agreements and follows its legal advice.’

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 8.47 pm

