

COUNCIL

31 January 2022

Minutes of the Council meeting held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 31 January 2022 at 6:30pm.

Committee Members present: Councillors K.M. Harmer (Vice-Chairman), J. Barnes, Mrs M.L. Barnes, C.A. Bayliss, R.K. Bird, J.H.F. Brewerton, J.J. Carroll (in part), C.A. Clark, S.J. Coleman, Mrs V. Cook, P.C. Courtel, G.C. Curtis, K.P. Dixon, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, S.J. Errington, K.M. Field, A.E. Ganly, P.J. Gray, L. Hacking, A.K. Jeeawon, Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green, L.M. Langlands, C.A. Madeley, C.R. Maynard, A.S. Mier, Rev H.J. Norton, D.B. Oliver, S.M. Prochak, MBE, R.B. Thomas and H.L. Timpe

Parish Council Representative: Mrs W.M. Miers.

Advisory Officers in attendance: Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Democratic Services Officer.

Also Present: 1 member of the public in the Council Chamber and 14 members of the public via the live webcast.

C21/47. MINUTES

The Vice-Chairman was authorised to sign the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 20 September 2021 and 18 October 2021 as correct records of the proceedings.

C21/48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.S. Browne, T.J.C. Byrne, B.J. Drayson (Chairman of the Council), J.M. Johnson, M. Mooney, P.N. Osborne, G.F. Stevens and J. Vine-Hall.

C21/49. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

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

Maynard Agenda Item 7 – Personal Interest in CB21/55 as an elected Member of East Sussex County Council.

C21/50. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

In the Chairman of the Council's absence, the Vice-Chairman made the following announcements on his behalf:

- On 22 October 2021, the Chairman opened the Bexhill Art Society's Annual Exhibition at the De La Warr Pavilion. The first exhibition was held in 1961. The Chairman chose his favourite piece, which was first to be sold and presented the awards.
- On Remembrance Day, the Chairman was joined on the Town Hall steps by many Councillors and officers for a 2-minute silence at 11:00am.
- The Chairman was invited by the Rye Branch of the Royal British Legion to lay a wreath on behalf of Rother at the Remembrance Service in Rye on Sunday 14 November 2021.
- On Wednesday 1 December 2021, the Chairman accompanied by Cllr James Bacon, the Mayor of Hastings switched on the Christmas lights in Westfield. £16,000 was raised and donated to St. Michael's Hospice. Since 2015, Westfield Christmas Lights had donated almost £110,000 to the St. Leonards Hospice.
- Unfortunately, as a result of the pandemic, the School's Carol Service and the Bexhill Choral Society Christmas Concert were both cancelled.
- The Chairman wished Members, officers, business owners and residents a better and safer 2022.
- Condolences were extended to Lisa Cooper, Democratic Services Manager whose mother had recently passed away.

C21/51.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. Pursuant to Paragraph 10 of the Council Procedure Rules the following question was put by Mr Bernard Brown and answered by Councillor Dixon.

Question: It was reported to both Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and Cabinet that there is already a £474,000 shortfall in the Financial Stability Programme (FSP) outcomes for the current year, Year One of a five-year plan.

A key part of the FSP is savings to Rother's budget by devolving substantial discretionary services to Town and Parish Councils. It is understood that negotiations with Bexhill Town Council (BTC) will be undertaken in the financial year 2022/2023 with savings to Rother becoming realised in 2023/2024.

The Mid Term Financial Plan reported on at OSC has a savings forecast from the FSP for 2023/24 of £2,137,000.

How much of this £2,137,000 is forecast to come from the devolution of discretionary services to BTC?

Answer: The answer is clearly set out in Appendix A of the Medium Term Financial report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on 22 November 2021 and 13 December 2021 respectively but for clarity, the Council estimates that savings of £1,660,000 will be delivered through devolution to Parish and Town Councils, or other suitable community groups. It should also be noted that this includes services in some rural parishes as well as in Bexhill. That process has

recently begun and at this stage of engagement it is too early to update on progress, but that will be reported through the regular financial updates to Members in due course.

Supplementary Oral Question: At Cabinet, Councillor Dixon said without qualification, public conveniences will be maintained. If the cost to the parish and town councils of devolution of discretionary services is too great and they refuse to take them, how will this be dealt with in the financial stability plan? If the councils think it is too onerous, what is plan B for dealing with this?

Answer: I apologise if you do not think we have answered the question sufficiently and just a note on that, we cannot actually divide out Bexhill from the rest of the district as some of the contracts are just district wide they are not specified into various parishes. Clearly that work will have to be done as we get further down this programme. In relation to public conveniences, no decision has been made about what we are going to do, there is some work going on at the moment to see if we can upgrade and actually charge, particularly in places like Camber where there are lots of tourists. Unfortunately, I am not able to answer this question at the moment, it is not this administration's intention to close toilets, where the public do not want toilets closed. We do have to find a better way of paying for it because it is quite a drain between £400,000 and £500,000 per year on the Council's finances. Clearly since we do not have any Government help anymore, no Government grant, no settlement, we have got to manage to get our books balanced. It is a difficult subject, but it is something we are determined to solve over the next year or so.

C21/52.

REPORT OF THE CABINET ON MATTERS FOR DETERMINATION BY FULL COUNCIL

1. It was moved by Councillor Oliver and seconded that the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 4 October 2021, 8 November 2021, 13 December 2021 and 10 January 2022, as set out in the Agenda be approved and adopted.

2. The Vice-Chairman of the Council having called over the reports, the following Minute(s) was reserved for discussion:

13 December 2021	CB21/55 and CB21/56
10 January 2022	CB21/66

3. On the Motion of the Vice-Chairman of the Council, duly seconded, the Council approved and adopted the following reports, with the exception of the Minute(s) reserved for discussion:

CB21/39 – Updated Statement of Community Involvement
CB21/48 – Street Litter Binrastructure and Draft Litter Strategy for Rother
CB21/57 – Designation of Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer

C21/53. **RESERVED MATTER**

Cabinet – 13 December 2021

CB21/55 – COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME – OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION TO PROPOSED CHANGES

CB21/56 – NEW COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY GOVERNANCE AND THE PROPOSAL FOR APPORTIONMENT OF STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY FUNDS

Cabinet – 10 January 2022

CB21/66 – UPDATED LOCAL PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED: That Minute CB21/55, CB21/56 and CB21/66 be approved and adopted, as submitted.

C21/54. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE ON DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET AS URGENT MATTERS**

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 meetings held 4 October 2021, 8 November 2021, 13 December 2021 and 10 January 2022.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

C21/55. **REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

1. It was moved by Councillor Jeeawon and seconded that the report of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 6 December 2021, be approved and adopted.
2. The Vice-Chairman of the Council having called over the report, no Minutes were reserved for discussion.
3. On the Motion of the Vice-Chairman of the Council, duly seconded, the Council approved and adopted the following report:

AS21/36 – Appointment of External Auditors

C21/56. **POLITICAL GROUPS - REVIEW OF COMMITTEE SEATS**

Following a change 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, Mrs V. Cook and H.L. Timpe.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 7:06pm.