

**COUNCIL**  
31 July 2023

Minutes of the Council meeting held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 31 July 2023 at 6:30pm.

Committee Members present: Councillors Mrs V. Cook (Chair), R.B. Thomas (Vice-Chair), J. Barnes (MBE), Mrs M.L. Barnes, C.A. Bayliss, A.E. Biggs, S. Burton, T.J.C. Byrne, F.H. Chowdhury, C.A. Clark, S.J. Coleman, B.J. Coupar, C.A. Creaser, G.R.M. Delany, B.J. Drayson, A.E. Ganly, N. Gordon, P.J. Gray, T.O. Grohne, L. Hacking, A.P. Hayward, A.K. Jeeawon, T.M. Killeen (MBE), Mrs E.M. Kirby-Green, M.C. Legg, C.R. Maynard, R.A. McCourt, S.B. McGurk, A.S. Mier, D.B. Oliver, P.N. Osborne, C. Pearce, S.M. Prochak (MBE) (remote), A. Rathbone Ariel, J. Stanger, H.L. Timpe and C.J. Winter.

Advisory Officers in attendance: Interim Chief Executive, Interim Deputy Chief Executive, Director – Place and Climate Change and Democratic Services Manager.

Also Present: 18 members of the public in the Council Chamber and 23 members of the public via the live webcast.

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**C23/25. MINUTES**

The Chair was authorised to sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 May 2023 as a correct record of the proceedings.

**C23/26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Field.

**C23/27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Lorna Ford Agenda Item 13 – Prejudicial Interest as proposed substantive Chief Executive.

Kirby-Green Agenda Items 12 and 14 – Personal Interest as an elected Member of East Sussex County Council.

Maynard Agenda Items 12 and 14 – Personal Interest as an elected Executive Member of East Sussex County Council.

Thomas Agenda Item 9 – Personal Interest in as Chair of the Council's Housing Company.

**CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- The Chair reported with much sadness the death of former Councillor David Vereker, who had served as a Councillor from 1999 to 2015 and been Chairman of Council in 2004-05. Councillors Mrs Eleanor Kirby-Green and Carl Maynard paid tribute to David Vereker and the Chair closed with some recollections provided by Councillor Sue Prochak; Members then stood for a minute's silence in respect.
- It had been lovely to meet all the new Councillors at training and meetings and around the coffee table, and the Chair commended all for their commitment, absorption of Council rules and procedures; many experienced Councillors also attended, and it was good to be reminded of standing orders and codes of conduct as this new term begun.
- Both the Chair and Vice-Chair attended the big summer sing at the De La Warr pavilion where 200 schoolchildren filled the stage with their smiles and waves and the auditorium with their voices for an hour's concert as part of Bexhill Festival of Music; the Chair was fortunate to attend the last night too, in a packed auditorium joining the flag wavers and singing with patriotic gusto!
- The Chair attended the Polish War Memorial Day at Netherfield as the Mayor of Battle and felt this was something that Rother should be represented at in the future.
- In June, the Chair was away in the Holy Land working with a school in Ramallah in Palestine and she was grateful that Councillor Thomas was able to represent Rother on the Council's behalf at events.
- On her return, the Chair had a meeting with Mr Richard Bickersteth, High Sherriff of East Sussex to discuss issues facing Rother, but in particular those in Rural Rother and those involving young people's groups. He was keen to meet and open discussions about issues in Wards and Members were invited to contact the Chair if they would like either of them to attend events, present awards, or meet with leaders.
- The Chair attended the reception at Buxted Park Hotel at the invitation of Peter Pragnell, the Chairman of East Sussex County Council, wearing both her chains. These events were so useful for networking and getting to know issues and events and some inspirational ideas that affected and benefitted those in our neighbouring towns and districts.
- Another such event was the Bishop of Chichester's reception held in a marquee in the palace gardens. The Chair attended one on the Monday, in a personal capacity as a holder of the Award of St Richard. Sadly, the Chair was so delayed by traffic in Worthing that she missed the second one.
- Undoubtedly, the highlight so far was the event instigated by Councillors Coleman and Stanger to invite the school council of All Saints CE primary school to visit the Town Hall Chamber. Councillor Thomas also attended and assisted with a lively debate inspired by the children's desire to improve Sidley. The Chair feared her job was at risk of a takeover by one young lady who sat in the chair and with great authority banged the gavel!

- The Vice-Chair reported that in the absence of the Chair, he deputised for the Chair and had attending the following events:
  - The first was, Sudwells, an example of the green industry in rural Rother. The company manufactured permeable paving made from repurposed materials, including plastics generally considered hard to recycle. The event marked to move from a manual to a machine-based process, enabled in part by a grant from this Council; exactly the kind of business that the Council's climate emergency policy sought to encourage.
  - The second visit also featured Sudwell. The company generously donated its product to form the base of two play areas at Demelza, a charity which helped children with serious or life-limiting conditions, along with members of their families. The charity did stupendous work to help its clients at critical points, bringing joy and pleasure into their young lives.
  - Another group whose lives were marred by circumstances beyond their control was refugees. As part of refugee week, he attended a celebration in Sevenoaks of the contribution that compassionate and welcoming communities can make to the lives of refugees. Heartwarming testimony, the effective, well organised, focus, support on people who had suffered through no fault of their own, and this was another group supported by Rother.
  - His next visit was to Little Gate Farm, a charity which helped young people with special needs, especially but not exclusively, autism. He heard stories of children so badly traumatised, they'd become elected mutes, but had so flourished in the creative environment, the safe environment that they'd been able to become self-sufficient and gain paid employment. Another organisation supported by Rother.
  - The last function, which he attended very briefly, was the force's charity, ABF. What was most impressive was the sufficiency and speed in getting help to those in need. By working through local organisations, it aimed to provide help in a matter of days. In conclusion, these visits impressed upon the Vice-Chair just how much goodness there was in the district and world. Just how much compassion there was, how much caring for the planet and its inhabitants, especially those who were most in need and how Rother District Council was often in the background, knitting the community together and enabling these organisations to function and flourish.
- The Chair was pleased to announce that Little Gate Farm in Beckley was her charity of the year and information had been provided for Members. The Chair intended to arrange a visit for all Members to discover more and hear about the amazing work they did supporting young people into employment.
- They were celebrating their 10th anniversary at a black-tie dinner and dance event at the Cooden Beach on the 14 October and the Chair hoped some may join her at a table or two to support their fund raising.

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

1. Pursuant to Paragraph 11 of the Council Procedure Rules the following question was put by Mr Marvin Elliott and answered by Councillor Rathbone Ariel.

**Question:** Now that the Council elections have taken place, could I please bring to your attention The Climate Change Committees (CCC)' 2023 report?

In the 2023 report, Lord Deben states that "Our confidence in the achievement of the UK's 2030 target and the 5th and 6th Carbon Budgets has markedly declined from last year".

Following on from some calculations I sent you previously. The report says that UK greenhouse gas emissions were 450 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2022. I believe this equates to 25,029,000,000m<sup>3</sup> of CO<sub>2</sub>.

In Lord Deben's letter to the Prime Minister, he states that "During his eleven-year term as Chairman, his Committee have held the Governments' feet to the fire on tackling Climate Change. It is their role to ensure the Government make good on legal commitments. His final assessment - Failure to act decisively!

In the Executive Summary the CCC says "recent experience on societal change following the pandemic has shown that substantial changes to behaviours are possible, although these have not been due to climate policy. It is essential that policies are implemented now, especially on home energy use. Information alone is not sufficient - it must be accompanied by implementation of policies that both make low-carbon choices easy, attractive and affordable."

If the UK Government has failed to fulfil its legal requirements, do the public have a moral right to question the legal validity of Council Tax payments when their District Council have declared a Climate Emergency?

**Answer:** As part of the Council's commitment to the climate change agenda and our Net Zero ambitions we recruited two new Climate Officers. The Green Team was established and set to work on projects to promote Climate Awareness and Action amongst staff, such as developing a Workplace Environment Policy and measuring and addressing staff travel emissions. In November 2022 the Council participated in a "Couch to Carbon Zero Sprint", a 10 day initiative to promote lifestyle changes that support Net Zero.

Other environmental projects and initiatives in 2022/23 include:

- Creating an Urban Forest 1066 report detailing the number and condition of trees in Bexhill, along with a Tree Planting Strategy for Bexhill. The Council and our partners also planted 250 trees and 1,500 Whips.
- The Council's Community Grants application forms have been updated to include environmental considerations and impacts,

£15k was ringfenced from the 2023/24 Community Grants Scheme for Reduce, Re-use and Recycle Grants.

- £500k from the CIL Climate Emergency Bonus Fund was awarded to the Village Halls Energy Project which will reduce the carbon emission of Community Halls across Rother.
- By January 2023, 95 households in the District had installed solar arrays via the Solar Together group purchase schemes that took place in 2020 and 2021. A further round took place in Spring 2023 and attracted a record number of registrants.
- In March we began an audit of 24 of the Council's larger green rural assets, with a view of providing a biodiversity baseline and future recommendations for their management to achieve ecological improvements.
- The Council has assessed the feasibility of installing electric vehicle charging points in Council owned carparks. Seven carparks are viable and a supplier has been procured.
- The Council's 'Rother Reduce Reuse Recycle Grants Scheme' has been launched.
- Climate Mitigation and Adaptation are key to the new Local Plan development and the Corporate Plan recognises the Climate Emergency as a key priority.

Officers are working on a refresh of the Environment/ Climate Strategy and the Climate Action Plan will be published later this year but the above demonstrates the Council is not waiting for the Action Plan and is already delivering Climate Action.

The Council made a pledge, to support the Council's aspirations as follows;

'Pledge to do what is within our powers, to make Rother District carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions.'

The pledge is not legally binding and there is no direct correlation with council tax setting.

The Council is using its powers to reduce emissions and will continue to do so.

This task could be progressed more quickly if there was more specific funding available, but the Council continues to access external funding wherever possible whilst also identifying internal resources to help take forward this vitally important agenda.

2. Pursuant to Paragraph 11 of the Council Procedure Rules the following question was put by Mr. Bernard Brown and answered by Councillor Oliver.

**Question:** In view of the apparent failure of accountability and Governance of matters relating to the Rother District Council's Blackfriars Project will the leader tonight, no less than seven months since he was first asked the question, tell residents how much the infrastructure and Spine Road project will now cost to

complete, how this compares to the original budget, why this overrun has taken so long to be reported and why the governance of the project as well as the Governance of the Rother DC Housing Company Ltd has been allowed to apparently completely fail?

**Answer:** Firstly, I do not accept that the governance of either the project nor the Housing Company has failed. The Cabinet report earlier this month made clear the significant economic challenges that have been faced whilst trying to deliver this project. The project has brought forward a site that has remained undeveloped for decades and will still deliver 200 much-needed new homes in Battle, a significant success for this Council. Whilst we have indicative costings for the infrastructure element of the scheme these are yet to be confirmed within the context of the wider project. A full paper will be coming to Cabinet in the coming months which will outline, to the public, the full costs of the scheme, and any funding requirement from the Council.

**Supplementary Oral Question:** Thank you for the reply, I regret it's not very informative, however. In the last few months, for at least two months, the Companies House register, which deals with recording of legal changes to directors, has been un-updated. In that time, we've had Directors leave the company and join the company. I find it somewhat surprising that it's only today that the Companies House register has been updated to record the two ex-Councillors who have left the company. These are all legal requirements, they are part of legal governance and they have not been performed. The Service Level Agreement, which was supposed to delineate between the Council and the Housing Company, has been unprepared and unpublished for 21 months. It's reported that £3 million pounds has been given from the Council to the Housing Company, but without any legal agreement. So much for governance. In February it was disclosed, the spine road and infrastructure costs were £15.8 million, £3.6 million over budget. Independent expert informed opinion calculates it is now £19.5 million. Even with the most drastic changes to housing design, the project is likely to have substantial loss and at the moment, the project has been deemed not viable (that's from paragraph 4 of the report to the Cabinet). I ask the Leader to revisit his answer, will you now accept there have been serious legal failures in governance and would he just tell the public what are the forecasts for the spine road and infrastructure, if it happens. Maybe he can just confirm the estimated costs are £19.5 million with a projected loss in excess of £5 million.

**Answer:** Thank you very much indeed for that further question. I'm really not in a position with this attention to detail to actually answer you now, Mr. Brown, but I will, after this meeting, ensure that those matters are attended to with a matter regarding governance and the matter with regard to the overspend, so perhaps we can correspond and I'll come back to you at a later date.

3. Pursuant to Paragraph 11 of the Council Procedure Rules the following question was put by Mr. Gary Curtis and answered by Councillor Oliver.

**Question:** Blackfriars Project - because the Council, through Cabinet, has deployed the tactic of making items exempt and thereby avoiding public scrutiny, my question relates primarily to data contained in the public report to Cabinet on 17 July.

It is clear, that by the end of the financial year 2023/24 at least £8m, and possibly £10m will have been provided to the Housing Company. The report does not say where these funds will come from, how much will come from reserves and how much by borrowing, or what the costs will be in terms of interest, and where this cost will rest in the short, medium and long term future.

Will the Leader of the Council clarify in clear and simple terms where this money will come from, how much the financing will cost and how and when will it be repaid?

**Answer:** There is an £80 million provision within the capital programme for loans to the Housing Company over future years for various potential schemes, including Blackfriars, which has been in the capital programme for a number of years now and has previously been approved. The proposal was always to fund this provision through borrowing.

The loans and interest payments will be funded by the Housing Company and covered by the disposal of the homes as they are completed and as such there is no direct impact on the Council's finances in terms of funding this provision.

In terms of the actual borrowing undertaken by the Council to facilitate this development, we will endeavour to minimise borrowing costs to the Housing Company wherever we can by exploring the best sources of funding available at the time they are required, whilst also minimising the length of time funding is provided for based on cash flow requirements which will help to keep borrowing costs for the Company as low as possible.

**Supplementary Oral Question:** I would like to thank the Leader for his response. I have a supplementary question. The Leader reconfirmed in his answer that all funding for the Housing Company and the Blackfriars project will come from borrowing. I would ask him to clarify his answer further. In the report to Cabinet, it says £4 million has been advanced to cover sunk costs, the report says another £4 million will be required by the end of this financial year, a minimum total of £8 million. For clarification, has the current £4 million been borrowed and, if so, from what source? When the confidential business plan was approved by the Council Public Works Loan Board interest rates were less than 1.5%. Currently they are in excess of 5%. Can the Leader confirm the financing costs for planned expenditure to April 2024, at £8 million of borrowing has increased by £280,000 from £120,000 to £400,000.

Assuming extremely effective cashflow management is achieved and speculative reduction in interest rates to 3.75% from August 2024, it is estimated there will be a minimum increase in financing costs of the project of £2.475 million. This is equivalent to £12,375 per housing unit. In the public interest, will this matter be referred for urgent attention by both the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Standards Committees? Thank you.

**Answer:** I think you'll find that the information that you're seeking will come out on our next report that is due in the coming months, hopefully September, but it may be slightly later than that, but I think you'll find that the information that you're requiring will be covered off in that report.

4. Pursuant to Paragraph 11 of the Council Procedure Rules the following question was put by Mrs Sharon Blagrove and answered by Councillor Timpe.

**Question:** Recently, in a bid to make cut backs RDC have been removing flowers from areas in the town such as the town hall square, grassing it over to save on gardening costs.

It is also planned to do the same in the Garden of Remembrance at Bexhill Cemetery.

I have today submitted a petition with approximately 800 signatures to the council showing the public are not happy about this at all. The petition will ask the council to re-think this as it also impacts wildlife when flowers are taken away.

Please can the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services explain the rationale for this decision?

**Answer:** To support in reducing the Councils budget deficit, whilst also considering environmental impact and biodiversity, in May this year the Council discontinued planting seasonal bedding plants in several locations around Bexhill. A small area of bedding in the Cemetery's Garden of Remembrance was included in this. In total these changes are forecast to save the Council around £47k per annum.

Traditional seasonal bedding in the district is now confined to the war memorials, the roadside entrances to Bexhill and a reduced area in Manor Gardens.

Whilst annual bedding plants can create an attractive floral display, they have very little wildlife value, a negative environmental impact in terms of the associated production process and waste, and the displays, which are generally short lived, are labour intensive to maintain and require large amounts of water.

In the Garden of Remembrance, rabbit damage was a common occurrence. Where the Garden of Remembrance is concerned, RDC proposes to plant spring flowering bulbs in the coming autumn both in the former bed locations and elsewhere within the garden.



Additionally, the large rose bed which is sparsely planted will be enhanced with a selection of plants to create a permanent display requiring significantly less on-going maintenance and offering a food source for pollinators. It's considered that rather than detracting from the setting, this will in fact enhance the area.

Elsewhere in the town where the bedding has been discontinued RDC proposes to introduce a variety of different perennial wildflower mixes. This is a more sustainable approach both environmentally and financially to providing attractive floral displays which so many residents and visitors to the town enjoy.

**Supplementary Oral Question:** Thank you for the reply to my question Councillor Timpe. It was fairly worrying to see you declare that bedding plants have no value to wildlife. This is certainly not the view of R H S or other wildlife authorities, including Sir David Attenborough. The rabbits have lived in that cemetery longer than the current tenants but suddenly, they seem to be part of the reason for removing flowers. Bexhill is in decline in many ways and it is sad to see our once pretty little town and cemetery have the flowers removed. They've been much joy to residents and visitors alike, so my question is, in two parts. Number one, must the town's people just roll over and accept this move by RDC, because, whilst we all understand hard times can mean making changes, that would be necessary, we are also mindful of the amount of money that has been wasted on projects such as the Town Hall redevelopment plans at a cost of £700,000 plus along with other vanity projects. I'm sorry to take it that way, but you know, we're being told that you're making cuts, you'll make it, you will save in £47,000 pounds, we realise the Council is £3 million pound in deficit, how are you going to make the rest of that up? That is my question in full, thank you.

**Answer:** I'm not sure I quite understand whatever questions they were there. I can't respond to questions that don't relate to the cemetery and your concerns about that. I've answered specifically what we're doing, that's all I can say, Madame Chairman.

At the conclusion of the public question time scheme the Chair adjourned the meeting for five minutes to allow a public disturbance in the Council Chamber to be removed from the meeting room.

C23/30.

## **MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

1. Pursuant to Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules the following oral question was put by Councillor Osborne and answered by Councillor Timpe.

**Question:** Councillor Hacking and I attended a rather hostile meeting at Camber Parrish Council the other week. Can the Cabinet Member for tourism confirm that the £30 fixed rate that currently applies to both Central and Old Lydd Road car parks in Camber during the summer season, will be thoroughly reviewed at the seasons' end in early September and depending upon the

outcome of that review, can the Council confirm as soon as possible the proposed charging structure for the summer season in 2024.

**Answer:** Thank you Councillor Osborne, the simple answer is yes.

**Supplementary Oral Question:** I thank the Councillor for the concise answer, which I was expecting. I am disappointed that after the meeting we had I sent emails to senior Councillors but didn't get a response which was unfortunate. I did get a response from Mr Hook. It would have been nice and helpful if we could have rescinded the decision and looked at it again, the weather is awful, that may be affecting visitor numbers, the forecast for the next fortnight is pretty rubbish as well and then there are only a couple of weeks left. So we have literally only got 31 days until it reverts back to the winter charging and I just think we are really missing out. It is dead down there, there is no one there at all. The weather's bad, but you are not going to pay £30 to spend all day in the rain. It is a difficult one.

**Answer:** We will await the outcome of the review.

2. Pursuant to Paragraph 12 of the Council Procedure Rules the following oral question was put by Councillor Hacking and answered by Councillor Timpe.

**Question:** As part of the dog consultation that closes today, please can you confirm that the Council understands the following considerations when reviewing dog control in Camber:

Houses in front of the Suttons have access to median high tide on their deeds so legally cannot be prevented from walking their dogs on the beach.

Additional dog control measures would put more pressure on beach staff who are already at capacity.

Charities such as the Dogs Trust currently walk dogs from Broomhill car park and the proposed changes would prevent this.

**Answer:** There is an answer, but I don't have it in front of me, but I do know that the Suttons has been noted, as has the Dogs Trust, and the Broomhill has been noted by Richard Parker-Harding. As far as everything else goes, I think we just wait for the consultation results, which will be shared, and then we can have a look at how the public have responded.

C23/31.

## **REPORT OF THE CABINET ON MATTERS FOR DETERMINATION BY COUNCIL**

1. It was moved by Councillor Oliver and seconded that the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 12 June and 17 July 2023, as set out in the Agenda be approved and adopted.

2. The Chair of the Council having called over the reports, none of the Minutes were reserved for discussion.
3. On the Motion of the Chair of the Council, duly seconded, the Council approved and adopted the following reports:

CB23/04 – Net Zero Pledge for UK100 Membership  
CB23/14 – Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring  
Draft 2022/23 Outturn  
CB23/15 – UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity  
Fund  
CB23/16 – 1066 Country Marketing

**C23/32.       AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT ON  
ETHICAL STANDARDS MATTERS**

It was moved by Councillor Drayson and seconded that the Annual Report of the Audit and Standards Committee as set out within the Agenda be received.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received.

**C23/33.       APPOINTMENT OF COMPANY DIRECTORS TO THE COUNCIL'S  
HOUSING COMPANY**

Following the local elections held in May 2023 and the resignation of an existing Director, replacement elected Member representatives were required to be appointed to the Council's Housing Company's Board of Directors.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the resignation from the Board of Rother DC Housing Company of Councillor Charles Clark and former Councillors Lynn Langlands and Paul Courtel be noted; and
- 2) Councillor Beverley Coupar to be appointed as Company Director of Rother DC Housing Company Ltd to serve for a period of three years.

(Councillor Thomas declared a personal interest in this matter as Chairman of the Council's Housing Company and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

**C23/34.       CHANGE IN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.6 Council was notified of a change in Membership on the Audit and Standards Committee; Councillor Sue Burton had been replaced by Councillor Gray.

**RESOLVED:** That the change in Committee Membership for the Audit and Standards Committee be noted.

C23/35. **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BEXHILL MARITIME AND RURAL SERVICES NETWORK**

Consideration was given to Member Representative appointments to Bexhill Maritime and Rural Services Network and to add these bodies to the list of outside bodies to which formal appointments were made.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) Bexhill Maritime be added to the Council's list of outside bodies to which formal appointments are made;
- 2) Rural Services Network be added to the Council's list of outside bodies to which formal appointments are made; and
- 3) Councillor Timpe be appointed to Bexhill Maritime and Councillor Oliver, with Councillor Prochak as substitute, be appointed to the Rural Services Network with immediate effect, up until the end of the current civic year, be subject to reappointment in May 2024 in line with all other appointments to outside bodies and to designate attendance thereat as an approved duty.

C23/36. **APPOINTMENT TO HASTINGS AND BEXHILL RENAISSANCE (SEASPACE LTD)**

Consideration was given to a Member Representative appointment to Hastings and Bexhill Renaissance Ltd, following the resignation of Councillor Jeeawon who had been appointed at the Annual Council meeting who was no longer able to take up the position.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor C.A. Bayliss be appointed to Hastings and Bexhill Renaissance Ltd (SEASPACE) in place of Councillor Jeeawon for the remainder of this civic year, expiring in May 2024 and that attendance thereat be designated an approved duty.

(Councillors Mrs Kirby-Green and Maynard each declared a personal interest in this matter as elected Members of East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

C23/37. **APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Members received the recommendations of the Senior Officer Appointments Panel and Leader of the Council to appoint Lorna Ford as the Council's Chief Executive and a consequential recommendation to designate Joe Powell as the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer (MO) until such times as an external Interim MO could be appointed. The Leader thanked those Members who had been involved in the

process and was delighted to recommend the appointment of Lorna Ford as the Council's new Chief Executive.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the recommendation made by the Senior Officer Appointments Panel at the meeting on 26 July 2023 to appoint Lorna Ford to the position of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service for Rother District Council be approved, with immediate effect;
- 2) Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Regeneration be designated as Interim Monitoring Officer; and
- 3) the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to appoint an external Interim Monitoring Officer (to replace Joe Powell) in due course, until a permanent appointment can be made.

(Lorna Ford declared a prejudicial interest in this matter and left the Chamber during the consideration thereof).

C23/38. **MOTION TO COUNCIL**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, consideration was given to the following Motion moved by Councillor John Barnes and seconded by Councillor Gordon:

"The Council asks the Executive to ensure that the five pitches allocated in the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan for Gypsies and Travellers at Watermill Lane, two of which already have outline planning permission, are brought into use within the next 18 months."

**RESOLVED:** That the Motion on being put was declared **LOST**.

(Councillors Mrs Kirby-Green and Maynard each declared a personal interest in this matter as elected Members of East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof and abstained from voting).

**CHAIR**

The meeting closed at 8:07pm.