
EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL held at COUNTY HALL, LEWES on TUESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2011 at 10.00 am.

Present Councillors Barnes, Belsey, Bennett, Bentley, Birch, Daniel, Dowling, Elkin, Ensor, Fawthrop, Field, Freebody, Freeman, Gadd, Glazier, Harris, Healy, Heaps, Howson, Hughes, Jones, Kenward, Lambert, Livings, Lock, Maynard, O’Keeffe, Ost, Pragnell, Reid, Rogers OBE, Scott, D Shing, S Shing, Simmons, Sparks, Stogdon, St Pierre, Stroude, Taylor, Thomas, Thompson, Mrs Tidy, Tidy, Tutt, Waite, Webb and Whetstone.

52. Minutes of Last Meeting

52.1 RESOLVED - to confirm the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 7 December 2010 as a correct record.

53. Apologies for absence

53.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Rodohan.

54. Chairman's Business

OFSTED INSPECTION

54.1 On behalf of the Council the Chairman expressed thanks and congratulations to all involved in the Council’s services for safeguarding vulnerable children at risk and for children who are in care which had been judged as good with some outstanding elements according to a recent Ofsted report. This is a wonderful achievement at a time of increasing child protection referrals and the number of children in care.

STONEWALL INDEX

54.2 The Chairman announced that the County Council had been named as the best local authority employer for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in a national index published by Stonewall. The Council climbed 10 places to seventh in this year’s index. On behalf of the Council the Chairman thanked all staff who looked after the needs of lesbian and gay staff, customers and services users.

CENSUS DAY

54.3 The Chairman reminded councillors that Census Day was on 27 March 2011 and every household in England and Wales must complete a census questionnaire. Census statistics are vital to help plan for the future and they help government decide the allocation of resources to public services. The local knowledge and understanding of councillors could make a big difference to how people feel about and respond to the census.

MINUTES

EAST SUSSEX MUSIC SERVICE

54.4 On behalf of the Council the Chairman passed congratulations to all involved in the East Sussex Music Service which had recently been described as outstanding by the Federation of Music Services

CHAIRMAN'S ACTIVITIES

54.5 I have attended a number of engagements since the last County Council meeting including: visiting the Schools' Library and Museum Service staff at Hammonds Drive, Eastbourne, Bibliographic Support Team in Lewes, the Sanctuary Housing Project in Hastings, the new Library at Wadhurst, attending the Crowborough Mayor's Carol Service, the High Sheriff's Judicial Service in Lewes, the National Talking Newspapers & Magazines as a volunteer for the 12 Volunteering Days of Christmas, a Citizenship Ceremony in Eastbourne and the Managers' Leadership Briefing at Winter Garden, Eastbourne at which I presented the Excellence Awards. I hosted the annual Christmas Civic Reception at the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne and a meeting of senior members of the Council's Learning & Schools Effectiveness team with a representative of the French Embassy to discuss language teaching in East Sussex schools. The Vice Chairman attended East Sussex Music Service Concert 'The Great Big Sing' at the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, the Carol Service at HM Prison, Lewes, the Care for the Carers AGM and the Mayor of Brighton & Hove's charity Musical Evening at the Royal Pavilion. He presented the Buy With Confidence awards in Eastbourne and has also generously attended a number of events with me.

CHINESE NEW YEAR

54.6 The Chairman indicated that the Chinese New Year began on 3 February and that this year was the year of the Rabbit. The Chairman wished all present a very happy Chinese New Year.

PRAYERS

54.7 The Chairman thanked the Reverend Ierotheos Georghiou for leading the prayers before the Council meeting.

PETITIONS

54.8 The Chairman informed the Council that immediately before the meeting he had received petitions from members as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Councillors Howson and Livings | - calling upon the County Council to consider the extension of the no parking double yellow lines in Telscombe Cliffs Way |
| Councillor O'Keefe | - calling on the County Council to provide pedestrian crossing or crossings in Mountfield Road, Lewes |
| Councillor O'Keefe | - calling on the County Council to preserve a prior agreement for residents of Prince Edward's Road and King Henry's Road, Lewes to park on the crossovers |

MINUTES

in these roads.

Councillor Scott - calling on the Council to reconsider proposed amendments to the concessionary fares scheme

Councillor Thompson - calling for the County Council to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph on Port Road, Eastbourne and that traffic calming Measures be introduced on this road

55 Questions from Members of the Public

55.1 Copies of a question asked by Jonathan Coe of Hastings and the answer by Councillor Lock (Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment) are attached to these minutes.

56 Declarations of Interest

56.1 The following members declared personal interests in items on the agenda as follows:

| <i>Member</i> | <i>Position giving rise to interest</i> | <i>Agenda item</i> | <i>Whether interest was prejudicial</i> |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Councillor Barnes | Parish Council nominee on the Etchingam Trust and as a Trustee of Etchingam under 5's | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Belsey | Trustee of Age Concern | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Daniel | Holder of a bus pass | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Elkin | Member of Eastbourne Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Field | Husband is the Business Manager at a special school at which agency placements are made | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Freeman | Chairman of the Seaford Seniors Forum | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |

MINUTES

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|----|
| Councillor Glazier | Non executive Director of Hastings and Rother PCT | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Harris | Member of Eastbourne Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Healy | Trustee of Age Concern | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Heaps | Member of Eastbourne Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Jones | President of ARC | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Livings | Member of the Peacehaven and Telscombe Housing Association | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Lock | Member of Hastings Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Maynard | Leader of Rother District Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor O'Keeffe | Member of Lewes District Council and son received a placement through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Pragnell | Member of Hastings Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Sparks | Member of Wealden District Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Taylor | Member of Eastbourne Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |

MINUTES

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----|
| Councillor Thompson | Member of Eastbourne Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Mrs Tidy | Member of Wealden District Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Tutt | Member of Eastbourne Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |
| Councillor Waite | Member of Hastings Borough Council | Cabinet report, paragraph 1 | No |

57. Reports

CALLOVER

57.1 The Chairman of the County Council, having called over the reports set out in the agenda, reserved the following paragraphs for discussion:

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Cabinet | - paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 |
| Children's Services Scrutiny Committee | - paragraph 1 |
| Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee | - paragraph 1 |
| Sussex Police Authority | - paragraphs 1 and 5 |

NON-RESERVED PARAGRAPHS

57.2 On the motion of the Chairman of the County Council, the Council ADOPTED those paragraphs in the reports of the Committees that had not been reserved for discussion.

58 CABINET REPORT – RECONCILING POLICY AND RESOURCES

58.1 Under Standing Order 23, the Council agreed that the speeches of the Leaders of the three political groups (or their nominees) on paragraph 1 of the Cabinet's report should be extended beyond five minutes.

58.2 Councillor Livings moved 'to put the question' and a recorded vote on was requested and taken. The motion was CARRIED, the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE MOTION

Councillors Barnes, Belsey, Bennett, Bentley, Dowling, Ensor, Elkin, Fawthrop, Freebody, Gadd, Glazier, Howson, Hughes, Jones, Kenward, Livings, Lock, Maynard, Pragnell, Reid, Stogdon, Stroude, Taylor, Thomas, Mrs Tidy, Tidy and Waite

MINUTES

AGAINST THE MOTION

Councillors Birch, Daniel, Field, Freeman, Harris, Healy, Heaps, Lambert, O’Keeffe, Ost, Rogers, Scott, D. Shing, S Shing, Sparks, St Pierre, Thompson, Tutt and Webb

ABSTENTIONS

Councillor Simmons

58.3 The following amendment was moved by Councillor Tutt and seconded:

“Approve the revenue budget estimates for 2011/12 as set out in Annex E of Appendix 2, subject to the following changes:

| | <u>£000</u> |
|---|-------------|
| <i>(a) <u>Base budget changes</u></i> | |
| <i>(i) Delete planned base savings on Footway Maintenance (maintain at current levels)</i> | 400 |
| <i>(ii) Extend the reach of Targeted Youth Services on an ongoing basis</i> | 1000 |
| <i>(iii) Seek to provide core services at Children’s Centres</i> | 193 |
| <i>(iv) Delete planned savings in Educational Psychology Service (maintain at current levels)</i> | 318 |
| <i>(v) Delete planned savings in Behavioural and Attendance Services (maintain at current levels)</i> | 218 |
| <i>(vi) Provide additional targeted support for vulnerable young people and seek to raise Educational Attainment</i> | 100 |
| <i>(vii) Provide enhanced support for those with Special Educational needs disabilities</i> | 76 |
| <i>(viii) To help support directly provided services for older people and those with learning difficulties (This helps mitigate the planned budget savings)</i> | 735 |
| <i>(ix) Provide ongoing core funding for a Welfare Benefits take up campaign</i> | 100 |
| | <hr/> |
| <i>Cost p.a.</i> | <u>3140</u> |

MINUTES

Financed by

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| <i>(i) On going reduction in the amount the Council spends on publications. (Equivalent to approximately 25% of estimated current spend)</i> | <i>(120)</i> |
| <i>(ii) Ongoing reduction in the amount spent on the hire of External venues. (Equivalent to approximately 15% of the estimated current spend)</i> | <i>(80)</i> |
| <i>(iii) Ongoing reduction in the amount spent on temporary/agency staff and consultants. (Equivalent to approximately 15% of the estimated current spend)</i> | <i>(1440)</i> |
| <i>(iv) Additional ongoing savings, generated in 2011/12 onwards, from "South East 7" working</i> | <i>(1000)</i> |
| <i>(v) Additional ongoing savings, generated in 2011/12 onwards, on property expenditure</i> | <i>(500)</i> |
| | <hr/> |
| | <i><u>(3140)</u></i> |

£000

(b) One Off Changes

| | |
|--|-------------|
| <i>(i) In respect of potholes, to provide additional funding for a programme of permanent patching</i> | <i>1325</i> |
| <i>(ii) In respect of footways, to enhance the repair programme</i> | <i>1100</i> |
| <i>(iii) In respect of renewable energy, to extend the existing programme to enable a step change in the reduction of the carbon footprint, to save energy costs and to boost private sector employment</i> | <i>500</i> |
| <i>(iv) In respect of elderly persons' bus passes, to maintain current terms and conditions (i.e. retention of the 9.00 am start time), and to allow wider consultation and negotiation with bus operators on the future operation of the Scheme</i> | <i>325</i> |
| <i>(v) To provide funding for supported bus services for a further 12 months to enable full exploration of options for services in rural areas</i> | <i>250</i> |

MINUTES

| | |
|--|-------|
| <i>(vi) To provide transitional funding to voluntary Groups seeking to deliver services on behalf of the public sector</i> | 1500 |
| | _____ |

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Total one-off costs</i> | <u>5000</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|

Financed by

| | |
|---|--------|
| <i>(i) Use of Departmental underspends to be carried forward from 2010/11</i> | (4000) |
|---|--------|

| | |
|--|--------|
| <i>(ii) Use of E-Government reserves</i> | (1000) |
| | _____ |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| | <u>(5000)</u> |
|--|---------------|

58.4 A recorded vote on Councillor Tutt's amendment was requested and taken. The amendment was LOST, the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE AMENDMENT

Councillors Field, Freeman, Harris, Healy, Heaps, Lambert, O'Keeffe, Ost, Rogers, D. Shing, S Shing, Sparks, St Pierre, Thompson and Tutt

AGAINST THE AMENDMENT

Councillors Barnes, Belsey, Bennett, Bentley, Dowling, Ensor, Elkin, Fawthrop, Freebody, Gadd, Glazier, Howson, Hughes, Jones, Kenward, Livings, Lock, Maynard, Pragnell, Reid, Stogdon, Stroude, Taylor, Thomas, Mrs Tidy, Tidy, Waite and Whetstone

ABSTENTIONS

Councillors Birch, Daniel, Scott, Simmons and Webb

58.4 The following amendment moved by Councillor Birch and seconded was LOST:

Replace 1.7 (3) with the following:

"Approve the revenue budget estimates for 2011/12 as set out in Annex E of Appendix 2, subject to the following changes:

£000

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>(a) Delete planned base savings on Footway maintenance</i> | 400 |
|---|-----|

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <i>Financed by an assumed base reduction in the budget required for reactive maintenance; made possible by the increased capital investment in Highways</i> | <u>(400)</u> |
|---|--------------|

MINUTES

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <i>(b) Reduce savings on Targeted Youth Support to take the number of people supported up to 1000</i> | 400 |
| <i>Increase the planned mitigation of the disabled respite service by a further £400,000 (i.e. on top of the £300,000 recommended by the Cabinet)</i> | 400 |
| <i>Delete the savings on Children's Centres</i> | 400 |
| <i>Recue the saving on Educational Psychology</i> | 100 |
| <i>Reduce the savings on behaviour/attendance</i> | <u>100</u> |
| | 1400 |
| <i><u>Financed</u> by further ongoing reductions in the annual contribution to the Waste Reserve</i> | <u>(1400)</u> |
| <i>(c) Establish a one off fund to help voluntary organisations who provide support and advice to young people</i> | 250 |
| <i><u>Financed</u> by a top sliced reduction in the total of departmental underspends to be carried forward into 2011/12</i> | <u>(250)</u> |

58.5 The following motion moved by Councillor Reid, to adopt paragraph 1 of the Cabinet report was CARRIED:

(1) approve the Capital Programme in relation to schemes in progress or about to start and those to start in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and to note the schemes provisionally included in the capital Programme in future years as set out in Annex A of Appendix 1;

(2) note the prudential indicators as set out in Annex D of Appendix 1;

(3) approve the revenue budget estimates for 2011/12 as set out in the revised version of Annex E (previously circulated and tabled at the meeting) of the commentary on the Revenue Budget circulated to all members (Appendix 2) which includes the use of budget flexibility set out in paragraph 37 of Appendix 2;

(4) in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to agree that:

(i) the amount calculated by East Sussex County Council as its net budget requirement for the year 2011/12 is £358.120m;

(ii) the amount calculated by East Sussex County Council as the basic amount of its council tax (ie for a band D property) for the year 2011/12 is £1158.30 and represents a 0% increase on the previous year;

(5) The borough and district councils be advised of the relevant amounts payable and council tax in other bands in line with the Regulations and to issue precepts accordingly in accordance with the Agreed schedule of instalments.

59. Cabinet Report – Reserved paragraphs

59.1 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 2 and 3 of the Cabinet report with the reports of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee and Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee respectively.

59.1 Councillor Jones moved the reserved paragraphs of the Cabinet’s report.

59.2 The motions were CARRIED after debate.

60 Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee – Reserved paragraph

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ATTAINMENT IN MATHEMATICS AT KEY STAGE 2

60.1 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 1 of this report with paragraph 2 of the Cabinet’s report.

60.2 Councillor Ensor moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee report.

60.3 Councillor Elkin moved the adoption of paragraph 2 of the Cabinet’s report. The motion, including the recommendations, was CARRIED.

60.4 The motion to adopt paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee’s report, including the recommendations, was CARRIED on the basis that implementation would be in accordance with the recommendations of the Cabinet.

61 Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee – Reserved paragraph

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ROAD SAFETY

61.1 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 1 of this report with paragraph 3 of the Cabinet’s report.

61.2 Councillor Stogdon moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee report.

61.3 Councillor Lock moved the adoption of paragraph 3 of the Cabinet’s report. The motion, including the recommendations, was CARRIED.

61.4 The motion to adopt paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee’s report, including the recommendations, was CARRIED on the basis that implementation would be in accordance with the recommendations of the Cabinet.

MINUTES

62. Questions from County Councillors

ORAL QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

62.1 The following members asked questions of the Lead Cabinet Members indicated and they responded:

| Questioner | Respondent | Subject |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| Councillor Birch | Councillor Elkin | Government's Free School Policy |
| Councillor Daniel | Councillor Elkin | Legal challenge in relation to the Building Schools for the Future programme |
| Councillor Livings | Councillor Lock | Planned transport hub in Newhaven |
| Councillor Thomas | Councillor Lock | Consultation by utility companies with local councils, residents and councillors prior to proposed work on highways |
| Councillor Scott | Councillor Elkin | Future of children's centre services and buildings in Hollington area |
| Councillor D Shing | Councillor Jones | Salary bandings of chief officers |
| Councillor S Shing | Councillor Lock | Claims against the County Council in relation to highways and footpaths. |
| Councillor Barnes | Councillor Lock | Review of traffic and speed in the North West Rother area |

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

62.2 Written questions were received from Councillors Lambert and Tutt for the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development, from Councillors Ost and O'Keeffe for the Lead Member of Adults and Children's Services and from Councillor O'Keeffe for the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. The answers are attached to these minutes.

63. Report of the Sussex Police Authority

63.1 Members commented on paragraphs 1 and 5 of the Sussex Police Authority's report and Councillor Jones, the nominated spokesperson for the Sussex Police Authority, responded.

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 14.45 pm

The reports referred to are included in the minute book

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1. Question from Jonathan Coe, Hastings, East Sussex

Given the welcome Transport policy statement agreed by Cabinet (25 January 2011) that no savings will be implemented without the benefit of public consultation and a full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and the summary of EqIAs which show the need to '*identify and assess*' the '*potential to cause adverse impact or discrimination*' in relation to passenger transport in Hastings/Rother, will the Lead Member update the council on the cuts implied in two recent bus service consultations, in particular, confirm:

a) that the £ 50,000 cut to supported services planned for 2011/12 [implied in the consultation which was due to enter stage 2 on January 24] and confirm

b) that the withdrawal of the concessionary fare scheme between 09.00 and 09.30 weekdays which was due to have been discussed on 31 January and now moved to March

have now both been deferred and will not take place in the current budget round, and tell us what he now intends to do with these policies?

Response by Councillor Lock

a) The £50,000 saving from the Hastings and Rother bus service is a two-year saving that was approved by Cabinet on 25 January and is now subject to County Council approval. At this stage we can only estimate the potential savings to be made as part of the Hastings and Rother review of supported bus services, although we propose to save at least £50,000 over the next 2 years (2011/12 and 2012/13) through changes to service times and frequencies, efficiency savings in tender prices and the withdrawal of some services.

We are consulting the public and other interested organisations about our detailed proposals for supported bus services in the Hastings and Rother areas, including some services in Wealden and Lewes, and will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment for our detailed bus service proposals following this consultation. The results of the two stage consultation and final recommendations for services in Rother and Hastings will be considered at the Lead member for Transport and Environment meeting on 18 April.

b) Following an extensive consultation process for the proposed withdrawal of the concessionary fare scheme between 09.00 and 09.30 weekdays, the results and recommendations of this consultation will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 March 2011. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the proposed removal of the discretionary early starts, and will be posted on the County Council's website.

WRITTEN QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question by Councillor Lambert to Councillor Jones, Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

Whilst potential savings which may be identified through the work of the South East Seven are to be welcomed, it is also important to ensure that procurement opportunities for local firms are not lost as this may have a detrimental effect on the local, East Sussex economy. How will the County Council ensure that economies of scale are balanced against offering contract opportunities for local firms who may not be able to provide the geographical coverage of large or national firms?

Answer by Councillor Jones

Procurement has a fundamental role to play in helping the Council to deliver both savings and new / improved services and we are committed to collaborating with other authorities, for example through the South East Seven, in this endeavour. In some cases that collaboration inevitably will mean aggregating spend and contracting with regional or national suppliers in order to get the best deal for local Council Tax payers. But we are also committed to supporting the local economy and providing a level playing field for local firms who wish to do business with the Council. We recognise that there is potentially a tension here but we are working to ensure an appropriate balance.

We have already taken a range of actions to ensure that our procurement practices provide a level playing field for local businesses, especially the small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which dominate our local economy. These include:

- the publication of a “How to do business with the Council” supplier guide on our website and establishing a link with Sussex Enterprise to provide advice to local businesses;
- becoming one of the first councils in England to establish a procurement portal on our website to enable all companies, including SMEs to view tender opportunities and express interest electronically (this is now available via the South East Business Portal).
- launched, with Brighton and Hove City Council, an initiative called “Build East Sussex” (BES) which aims to promote opportunities for local SMEs to win business with our main property construction contractors. The initiative has been a great success with over 450 firms now registered and over 160 tender opportunities logged so far on the BES website. Regular network events are held to help local SMEs meet our main contractors and also to improve their skills and capacity to tender for opportunities.

In addition Councillors have recently conducted a scrutiny review of the Council’s procurement with local SMEs and made a series of recommendations for improvement in both transparency and simplicity which are being implemented.

2. Question by Councillor Tutt to Councillor Jones, Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

I am told that at the Whole Council briefing on 20 January, in front of other County Councillors and officers of all levels, you launched into a personal verbal attack on me for my non attendance. Is this true?

You will be aware that this briefing session was not something that could be scheduled as part of the calendar of meetings. The date offered clashed with a prior commitment that I had to attend the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership meeting. This is a meeting with both public sector partners and community representatives, which included a discussion about the financial pressures on all organisations. It is a forum that the County Council supports. The County Council's own representative was unable to attend this meeting as he chose to attend the County briefing, leaving me as the only elected representative present. This was also the meeting of the Partnership where the Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year are appointed. I had been nominated for the role of Vice Chair and accepted this appointment at this meeting.

In light of my other commitment, if your answer to my first question is "yes", will you now withdraw your comments and apologise for the same?

Answer by Councillor Jones

No

3. Question by Councillor Ost to Councillor Glazier, Lead Member for Adults and Children's Services

The Director for Adult Social Care has recently informed us of the outcome of a prosecution of this authority, under the Health and Safety at Work Act, following an incident in one of our day centres.

Given the length of time that this case has taken to come to court, could the Lead Member tell us if he knows of any similar challenges to this authority in preparation and awaiting determination, and can he reassure members that he is kept informed of 'incidents in service', and of likely resulting changes to our procedures, well ahead of the conclusion of any legal process?

Answer by Councillor Glazier

There are no similar challenges to this authority in preparation or awaiting determination. As Lead Member I am kept informed of all of all significant incidents and of resulting changes to procedures before the conclusion of any legal process. In relation to the current proceedings, the Department implemented the Improvement Notice served by the Health and Safety Executive within one month of the incident taking place, and swiftly instigated a broader Management Review across all its learning disability services.

4. Question by Councillor O’Keeffe to Councillor Lock, Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Given that it is possible for parking on the verge and pavement to be prohibited in Hastings what would be necessary to achieve this in Lewes as well?

Answer by Councillor Lock

Parking on verges and pavements is also prohibited in Lewes; there is no difference between the two parking schemes. Officers are aware of particular trouble spots in the town and have asked NSL to increase their patrols in these areas. As part of the Lewes parking review, we will be looking at whether there is a need for more loading bays and short term parking bays so that traders and businesses have sufficient legitimate spaces for loading and unloading. There are sufficient resident permit parking bays across the town that residents should not have to park on verges and pavements. Where there are areas with particular parking difficulties, residents have an opportunity through the parking review to advise us of these situations.

5. Question by Councillor O’Keeffe to Councillor Glazier, Lead Member for Adults and Children’s Services

Could the Lead Member inform us of the progress being made towards the use of online payments for music tuition by the East Sussex Music Service and could he ensure us that the need for a corporate approach is not delaying the availability of this service? The Music Service has a high level of financial independence and the availability of an online payment facility will not only help maintain this independence, but improve it, which is extremely important in the current financial climate

Answer by Councillor Glazier

A Council/SAP online payments project began in May last year to establish feasibility and costs for paying SAP invoices online. The project identified an approach which would be usable by other services, including the Music Service, for their online payments. An offer has been made for the Music Service to take part in the development and implementation of this corporate system. Development work for the system is due to start this month and is expected to take around 5 months to complete.

The alternative non-corporate approach which was also investigated last year would cost the music service around £20k and would take a similar time – it would still require the development an interface with the corporate finance system. At the time it was investigated, the Music Service did not have the resources to progress a non-corporate solution. As well as being more cost effective to the Music Service to implement the Council solution, the work to complete the project will benefit other parts of the Council, and provide a standardised online payment facility for residents. In addition, demands on ICT resources are high and commissioning a bespoke solution for the Service is unlikely to mean a solution is implemented in a shorter timescale”.