

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL held at COUNTY HALL, LEWES on TUESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2014 at 10.00 am.

Present Councillors Barnes, Belsey, Bennett, Bentley, Birch, Buchanan, Butler, Charlton, Clark, Daniel, Davies, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Earl, Elkin, Ensor, Forward, Galley, Glazier, Hodges, Howson, Keeley, Lambert, Maynard, O’Keeffe, Phillips, Pragnell, Pursglove, Rodohan, Scott, Sheppard, S Shing, Shuttleworth, Simmons, Standley, Stogdon, St Pierre, Taylor, Tidy, Tutt, Ungar, Wallis, Webb, Whetstone and Wincott.

28 Minutes of last meeting

28.1 RESOLVED – to confirm the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 15 July 2014 as a correct record.

29. Apologies for absence

29.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blanch, Field, and D Shing

30. Chairman's Business

IRENE CAMPBELL

30.1 The Chairman announced that Irene Campbell was retiring in December after 11 years with the Council. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman thanked Irene for her contribution to Council services, including the Library and Registration Services

CHAIRMAN'S ACTIVITIES

30.2 I have attended a number of engagements since the last County Council meeting including: several events to commemorate the first world war including: a concert by Lewes, Glynde and Beddingham Brass band, the Mayor of Brighton & Hove’s Drumhead and Interfaith service, a commemorative service in Peacehaven, the Mayor of Eastbourne’s service of remembrance, a public commemoration at the Redoubt Fortress, the Mayor of Newhaven’s reception and service, the unveiling of the Royal Sussex Regiment World War One memorial in Priez, France, the Army Benevolent Fund Soldiers’ Charity Gala event and the Battle of Britain service at the invitation of the Eastbourne Branch of the Royal Air Force. I attended visits by The Prince of Wales to Coronation Meadow, near Battle and the Duke of Edinburgh to the Bowles Rock Centre and I attended the Queen’s Award ceremonies. I also attended a service to mark the 72nd anniversary of the Dieppe Raid. The Vice Chairman also attended a number of events The Vice Chairman and I have undertaken a total of 37 engagements since the last County Council meeting

PRAYERS

30.3 The Chairman thanked the Major Ivan Oliver for leading the prayers before the meeting.

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PETITIONS

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

Councillor Birch	- calling on the County Council to introduce a 20 mph speed limit and statutory lorry ban (north of Clinton Road) in Frederick Road, Hastings
Councillor Butler	- calling on the County Council to retain the 123/145 bus service
Councillor Elkin	- calling upon the County Council to look into the situation that allows parking to take place opposite the junction of Anchorage Way and Pacific Drive, Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne creating a situation that is unsafe
Councillor Galley	- calling upon the County Council to consider implementing a 40 mph speed limit on the A26 at Rose Hill, Isfield
Councillor Tutt	- calling on the Council to introduce traffic calming measures in St Philips Avenue, Eastbourne
Councillor Wallis	- calling upon the County Council to save badgers in East Sussex from culling

31 Questions from Members of the Public

31.1 There were no questions from members of the public

32. Declarations of Interest

32.1 The following member declared a personal interest 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 Galley	Chair of Ashdown Forest Board of Conservators	Cabinet report, paragraph 3	No

33. Reports

CALLOVER

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

Cabinet (22 July and 16 September meetings) - paragraph 1

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Cabinet (15 October meeting)	- paragraph 1
Governance Committee	- paragraph 1
Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development	- paragraph 1
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee	- paragraph 1

NON-RESERVED PARAGRAPHS

33.2 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.

34. Cabinet Reports – Reserved Paragraphs

34.1 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 1 of the Cabinet report (15 October 2014 meeting) with the report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Glazier moved the remaining reserved paragraph of the Cabinet's reports.

34.2 The motion was CARRIED after debate.

35. Governance Committee – Reserved paragraph – Reporting of Council meetings

35.1 Councillor Glazier moved the reserved paragraph of the Governance Committee's report.

35.2 The motion was CARRIED after debate

36 Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development – Notice of Motion: Loneliness Partnership Project

36.1 Councillor Glazier moved the reserved paragraph of the Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development report.

36.2 The motion was CARRIED after debate

37. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – Reserved paragraph

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF EARLY YEARS ATTAINMENT

37.1 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 1 of this report with paragraph 1 of the Cabinet's report (15 October 2014 meeting).

37.2 Councillor S Shing moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee report.

37.3 Councillor Glazier moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Cabinet's report. The motion, including the recommendations, was CARRIED after debate.

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

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38. Questions from County Councillors

ORAL QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

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

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
Councillor Lambert	Councillor Maynard	Enforcement action in relation to parking outside schools
Councillor Tutt	Councillor Maynard	Policy in relation to the parking of caravans on the highway
Councillor St Pierre	Councillor Glazier	Possible financial risks for local authorities in relation to the future support for elderly expatriates who return to the UK
Councillor Webb	Councillor Bentley	Customer satisfaction following changes to adult social care packages
Councillor Hodges	Councillor Maynard	Parking regulations in relation to vehicles parking on verges of roads with a metalled surface
Councillor Davies	Councillor Tidy	Arrangements to support victims, prosecute perpetrators and prevent child exploitation
Councillor Charlton	Councillor Tidy	Policies in relation to looked after children
Councillor Whetstone	Councillor Maynard	Introduction of a new speed limit of 40mph on the A26 at Heron's Ghyll
Councillor Daniel	Councillor Maynard	Introduction of de-criminalised parking in Bexhill and Rother
Councillor S Shing	Councillor Maynard	Possibility of including Willingdon in the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order banning parking on footways or verges at locations across East Sussex
Councillor Butler	Councillor Maynard	Data collection in relation to traffic calming measures in Rodmell
Councillor Ungar	Councillor Maynard	Commissioning of companies to undertake repairs to the highway

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

38.2 Two written questions were received from Councillor Tutt for the Lead Member for Resources. The questions and answers are attached to these minutes.

WRITTEN QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question by Councillor Tutt to the Lead Member for Resources

Please can you provide an update on the current status of all contingency sums set aside for the Bexhill Relief Road

Answer by the Lead Member for Resources

The budget for the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road approved by Cabinet in July 2013 contained two contingency sums.

The first was an estimate of the likely cost of remedial works to stabilise the railway cutting between Ninfield Road bridge and Glovers Lane bridge. A sum of £2.0m was included, following the landslip that occurred in January 2013, as an estimate of the cost of necessary engineering works. The contractor and ESCC geotechnical advisers have agreed a cost effective solution which includes soil nailing along the side slopes of the cutting and the construction of a sheet piled retaining wall alongside the road. As such the contingency sum allocated at the Cabinet meeting in July 2013 will be utilised in accordance with the resolution from Cabinet in July 2013 the release of this contingency requires Capital Board approval.

The second contingency sum was a 2.5% Director's contingency which equates to £2.7m. Good progress has been maintained on the project and traffic has now been diverted on to the first 1.1km of the newly completed section of link road between the A259 and Elva Way in Sidley to enable Ninfield Road bridge to be demolished and rebuilt. The risks associated with the project are many and varied and there are another eight months of construction including another winter. We are currently reviewing risks for the remaining construction period. Specifically the archaeological work has been more extensive than originally planned due to the number and importance of a range of finds including prehistoric flint scatters and associated wetland remains (such as worked timber) and Romano-British iron working furnaces. The flint scatters, which represent unique information about individual groups living in the Link Road landscape over six thousand years ago are time-consuming and costly to excavate. Any release of this 2.5% contingency will be subject to approval by Capital Board in accordance with Cabinet resolution, once these costs have been finalised.

Reporting expenditure on the Bexhill Hastings Link Road, or other capital projects, will be reported through the quarterly monitoring process at Cabinet.

2. Question by Councillor Tutt to the Lead Member for Resources

Please can you inform the Council of the total amount written off by East Sussex County Council as bad debt over the past 10 years?

Answer by the Lead Member for Resources

A report by the Chief Operating Officer to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources meeting on 6 May 2014 dealt with fifty-four accounts of over £2,500 which, having

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been reviewed, were agreed for formal write-off in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. These debts, totalling £616,651.90 are in addition to the total write-off for the year including amounts less than £2,500 totalling, £146,098.12, this brings the total for 2013/14 to £762,750.02.

It is evident that the recession has impacted on debtors and their ability to pay. The requests to pay in instalments has continued to increase during the last year and the Council is mindful of the pressures that individuals are facing and recognise that it is likely that this impact will continue in the coming year. The table below shows performance and debt write-off over the last 10 years. An improvement programme is underway to ensure that the corporate process is streamlined. Additionally, a number of issues in relation to outstanding debts, identified during the initial review, will also be addressed.

Like all local authorities, some income becomes uncollectable and to allow for this the accounts of the council have also always included a "provision for bad and doubtful debts" which recognise that a proportion of outstanding debtors at year end may not be collected.

Performance History

Financial Year	Total Debtors £m	Provision for bad and doubtful debts		Write-offs		Write-offs as a % of income collected %	Net Improvement/ (decline) in financial position* £m
		£m	% of debtors	No. ***	£m		
2013/14	17.3	0.98**	5.7	645	0.76	0.20	(0.10)
2012/13	11.5	0.76	7.2	445	0.36	0.10	0.06
2011/12	13.6	0.87	6.4	281	0.28	0.08	(0.19)
2010/11	13.2	0.70	5.3	335	0.26	0.08	(0.23)
2009/10	8.9	0.42	4.7	431	0.31	0.15	(0.08)
2008/09	10.9	0.46	4.2	301	0.19	0.11	(0.24)
2007/08	14.8	0.23	1.6	183	0.18	0.09	0.29
2006/07	10.6	0.30	2.8	549	0.40	0.20	0.38
2005/06	14.5	0.55	3.8	965	0.53	0.30	0.11
2004/05	13.3	1.12	8.4	-	0.07	0.06	-

*Total provision (£m) and write-offs (£m) compared to previous year

**Estimate only as actual not calculated until 6th May 2014

***The number includes the under £2,500 write-offs