

**Committee:** East Sussex County Council

**Date:** 19 June 2001

**Title:** Meeting of East Sussex County Council held at 10.30 am at Pelham House, St Andrews Lane, Lewes, East Sussex

**Subject:** Minutes

**Attendance:** Bagshawe Barnes Bentley Birch Bridger Chartier Daniel Dowling Dyason Ellis Field Freeman Gadd Garvican Glazier Mrs Healy Mrs Hopkinson Lock Jones Kramer Mrs Leigh Livings Martin McPherson Murphy Neighbour Reid Rogers Scott Shing Simmons Skilton MBE Slack Stevens Mrs Stroude Thomas Tidy Tunwell Tutt Vickers Mrs Waite Webb Whetstone Woodall

## **2 Election of Chairman**

2.1 Councillor Stevens (Chairman of the County Council in the Chair).

2.2 The following motion was moved by Councillor Jones and seconded

to elect Councillor Tunwell to serve as Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

2.3 There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Councillor Tunwell elected as Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year. Councillor Tunwell made a declaration of acceptance of office and took the Chair.

2.4 Councillor Tunwell (in the chair).

2.5 Councillor Tunwell thanked the Council for the honour they had bestowed on him in electing him as Chairman.

## **3 Vote of Thanks**

3.1 The Chairman paid tribute to the way in which Councillor Stevens had carried out his duties as Chairman of the County Council over the last year. He had brought his own style to the charring of meetings and he had been successful in diffusing potentially difficult situations through his good humour and tolerance.

3.2 In his capacity as Mayor of Eastbourne the Chairman had seen Councillor Stevens performing his role at various social functions. He had conducted himself in the best traditions of East Sussex and had won many friends for the County Council during his term. The Chairman presented Councillor Stevens with a past Chairman's badge as a reminder to him of his term of office.

3.3 Councillor Stevens congratulated the Chairman on his election and thanked him for his kind remarks. He expressed particular thanks to Councillor McPherson for her valuable support as his Vice-Chairman. She had undertaken a significant proportion of the duties and had performed them impeccably. He also thanked the officers who had assisted him for their help and professionalism.

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#### 4. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

4.1 The following motion was moved by Councillor Bagshawe and seconded  
to appoint Councillor Thomas to serve as Vice-Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

4.2 There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Councillor Thomas appointed as Vice-Chairman and Councillor Thomas made a declaration of acceptance of office and took his seat as Vice-Chairman.

4.3 Councillor Thomas thanked the Council for appointing him to this position.

#### 5 [Minutes of Last Meeting](#)

5.1 RESOLVED - to confirm the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 3 April 2001 as a correct record.

#### 6 **Notice by Returning Officer of Election of County Councillors**

6.1 The Council received the notice by the Returning Officer certifying the election, on 7 June 2001, of County Councillors for the various electoral divisions.

#### 7 **Chairman's Business**

##### *WELCOME*

7.1 The Chairman welcomed all members to this the first meeting of the County Council following the elections. He particularly welcomed the eleven members who had been elected for the first time.

##### *VOTE OF THANKS*

7.2 The Chairman referred to the fact that those Councillors who were not seeking re-election had received a vote of thanks at the last Council meeting. Four members (former Councillors S Murphy, Skinner, Wallis and Wilcock) had been unsuccessful in the recent elections and the Council joined with the Chairman in expressing appreciation for the contribution they had made to the work of the County Council over the last four years.

##### *HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS*

7.3 On behalf of the Council, the Chairman expressed congratulations to the following people who had received awards in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours. Brian Ramsay, Resident Manager of Millington Court, Uckfield, a private sheltered housing scheme, had received an MBE for service during the floods. Hugh Burnett had received an OBE for services to the community in Newhaven. He had been heavily involved in initiatives to regenerate Newhaven, including the negotiations for the sale of the Port and had also chaired the Business Enterprise Hub initiative. George Hammond, a Senior Divisional Officer in the East Sussex Fire Brigade, had received the Queen's Fire Service Medal.

## **4 MINUTES**

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7.4 The Chairman would be writing to each of them on behalf of the Council.

*JILL MARTIN*

7.5 The Chairman referred to the recent death of Jill Martin, a County Councillor for Seaford from 1985 to 1989. The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect.

*PETITION*

7.6 The Chairman informed the Council that immediately before the meeting Councillor Stevens had received a petition from Councillor Barnes seeking implementation of proposals for parking restrictions in Mill Rise, Robertsbridge to deter parking by commuters.

### **8 Reports of Committees**

8.1 Councillors Tunwell and Skilton declared non-substantial personal interests in the items relating to Public Transport and Home to School Transport as non-executive directors of Eastbourne Buses.

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

Appointments Panel	-	1, 2, 3 and 5
Cabinet	-	2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12 and 13
Social Services Committee	-	2 and 3
Scrutiny Committee for the Learning County	-	1 and 2
Scrutiny Committee for a Safe Community	-	1
Sussex Police Authority	-	5

### **NON-RESERVED PARAGRAHS**

8.3 On the motion of the Chairman of the County Council, the Council ADOPTED the reports of the Committees and the Appointments Panel set out in the agenda (including the recommendations) with the exception of those reserved for discussion.

### **9 APPOINTMENTS PANEL'S REPORT - RESERVED PARAGRAPHS, CABINET REPORT, PARAGRAPH 2**

9.1 The Council considered together the Appointments Panel's report and paragraph 2 of the Cabinet's report.

9.2 Councillor Rogers moved the adoption of paragraph 2 of the Cabinet's report.

Appointment of Members to Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Other Bodies

9.3 Councillor Jones moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Appointments Panel's report.

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9.4 The following amendment moved by Councillor Birch and seconded was LOST –

to delete the words in sub-paragraph 1.14 (1) (a) and to replace them with:

“to increase the size of the Audit Scrutiny Committee to seven”

9.5 The following amendment moved by Councillor Rogers and seconded was CARRIED –

to delete sub-paragraphs 1.14 (1) (3) and (4) and to substitute:

“(3) to appoint Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the five new scrutiny committees (10 places in all), the appointments to be made in accordance with the political proportionalities set out in the table in paragraph 4.2 of the Appointments Panel’s report (page 6), that is six places to be filled by the Conservatives, three by the Liberal Democrats and one by the Labour Group.”

9.6 The following amendment moved by Councillor Bridger and seconded was LOST –

“to add a new sub-paragraph (7) to paragraph 1.14 (1) of the Appointments Panel’s report:

“to recognise the unsatisfactory nature of the political balance provisions in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which result in fewer committee places being allocated to the Labour Group on the County Council despite the fact that it continues to have seven members on the Council, the same as before the elections.”

9.7 The motion to adopt paragraph 1 of the Appointments Panel’s report (including the recommendations as amended in paragraph 9.5 above), was CARRIED.

*[A schedule of the members appointed to Committees is included in the minute book.]*

#### Size and Portfolio of the Cabinet

9.8 Councillor Jones moved the adoption of paragraph 2 of the Appointments Panel’s report (including the recommendations) and the motion was CARRIED.

#### Members’ Allowances Scheme

9.9 Councillor Jones moved the adoption of paragraph 3 of the Appointments Panel’s report.

9.10 The following motion moved by Councillor Birch and seconded was CARRIED –

to add a new sub-paragraph (g) to the recommendations in paragraph 3.2 of the Appointments Panel's report:

“to divide the payments to Opposition Group Spokespersons provided for in the Members' Allowances Scheme between the two Opposition Groups proportionately, in the ratio of 5 to the Liberal Democrat Group and 2 to the Labour Group.”

9.11 The motion to adopt paragraph 3 of the Appointments Panel's report, (including the recommendations as amended in paragraph 9.10 above) was CARRIED.

*[A schedule of the members appointed to committees and panels covered by agenda item 12.1 and dealt with in paragraph 4 of the Appointments Panel's report is included in the minute book.]*

Joint Committee to make Appointments to Sussex Police Authority

9.12 The following motion was moved by Councillor Jones and seconded:

to adopt paragraph 5 of the Appointments Panel's report subject to the deletion of the words “one member from each Group” and the substitution of “two members from the Conservative Group and one member from the Liberal Democrat Group to reflect the proportionality rules”.

9.13 The motion was CARRIED.

Local Government Act 2000 – New Constitution

9.14 The Council voted separately on recommendation 2.52 (2) (b) and this was approved with no member voting against.

9.15 The Council then approved the remainder of paragraph 2 of the Cabinet's report (including the remaining recommendations in paragraph 2.52) as amended by the report of the Appointments Panel, including the amendment in paragraph 9.5 above.

## **10 Appointment of Leader of the Council (and Chairman of the Cabinet)**

10.1 Councillor Jones was proposed as Leader of the Council (and Chairman of the Cabinet). The motion was seconded and, there being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Jones appointed as Leader of the Council (and Chairman of the Cabinet) for the ensuing year.

## **11 Appointment of Deputy Leader of the Council (and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet)**

11.1 Councillor Bagshawe was proposed as Deputy Leader of the Council (and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet). The motion was seconded and, there being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Councillor Bagshawe appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council (and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet) for the ensuing year.

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**12 Appointment of Members of the Cabinet in addition to the Leader and Deputy Leader**

12.1 Councillors Glazier, Murphy, Reid, Simmons and Tidy were proposed as the members of the Cabinet, in addition to the Leader and Deputy Leader. The motion was seconded and, there being no other nominations, the Chairman declared these five Councillors appointed as members of the Cabinet for the ensuing year.

**13 Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Social Services Committee**

13.1 Councillors Jones and Bagshawe were proposed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Social Services Committee respectively for such period as the Council has such a Committee. The motion was seconded and, there being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Councillors Jones and Bagshawe appointed to these positions.

**14 Portfolios to be allocated by the Cabinet to its Members**

14.1 It was proposed and seconded that the following portfolios be allocated by the Cabinet to its members for 2001/02:

Chief Executive's Office and Economic  
Development  
Community Plan and E-Government  
Corporate Resources  
Education  
Community Services  
Social Services and Health  
Transport and Environment

14.2 The motion was CARRIED.

*[The allocation of places on the committees listed in agenda item 10 to political groups and the appointment of members had been dealt with on the report of the Appointments Panel.]*

**15 Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees and the Planning and Highways Sub-Committee**

15.1 The following members were proposed as Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Committees and Sub-Committee indicated for the ensuing year and the motion was seconded:

		<b>Chairman</b>
Regulatory Committee	-	Councillor Dyason
Planning & Highways Sub-Committee	-	Councillor Dyason
Audit & Best Value Scrutiny Committee	-	Councillor Tutt
Community Services Scrutiny Committee	-	Councillor Bentley

## 8 MINUTES

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Education Scrutiny Committee	-	Councillor Livings
Social Services Scrutiny Committee	-	Councillor Webb
Transport & Environment Scrutiny Cttee	-	Councillor Slack
Governance Committee	-	Councillor Jones

### **Vice-Chairman**

Planning & Highways Sub-Committee	-	Councillor Mrs Stroude
Audit & Best Value Scrutiny Committee	-	Councillor Gadd
Community Services Scrutiny Committee	-	Councillor Mrs Waite
Education Scrutiny Committee	-	Councillor Field
Social Services Scrutiny Committee	-	Councillor McPherson
Transport & Environment Scrutiny Cttee	-	Councillor Lock

15.2 There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared these members appointed as Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Committees and Sub-Committee shown for the ensuing year.

*[The allocation of places to political groups on the committees and panels listed in agenda item 12.1 and the appointment of members had been dealt with in the report of the Appointments Panel].*

## **16 Appointment of Other Committees and Panels**

16.1 It was moved and seconded to confirm the continuation of the Committees and Panels with a fixed membership or to which members are appointed by the Director of Legal and Community Services as the need arises and to re-affirm exemption from the political balance provisions of the Panels of the Regulatory Committee. The motion was CARRIED.

## **17 Appointment of Chairman of the Pension Fund Investment Panel**

17.1 Councillor Vickers was proposed as Chairman of the Pension Fund Investment Panel and the motion was seconded. There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Councillor Vickers appointed as Chairman of the Pension Fund Investment Panel for the ensuing year.

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**18 Questions from Members of the Public**

18.1 Under Standing Order 41, questions were asked of the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment by Mr D Moon and Mr K Thorogood. The questions asked and the answers given are attached to the minutes.

**19 Questions from County Councillors**

ORAL QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

19.1 Attached to these minutes are the oral questions asked of Cabinet members pursuant to Standing Order 44 and the answers given.

**20 Reports (continued)**

20.1 The Council considered the remaining paragraphs of the Cabinet's report and the reports of other committees which had been reserved for discussion.

**21 [CABINET'S REPORT – REMAINING RESERVED PARAGRAPHS](#)**

21.1 Councillor Jones moved, in turn, the adoption of paragraphs 3,6,7 and 13 of the Cabinet's report.

*[Paragraphs 8,10 and 12 were considered later in the meeting with the reports of Scrutiny Committees.]*

Notice of Motion : Waste Local Plan

21.2 A recorded vote was requisitioned on the motion to adopt paragraph 7 of the Cabinet's report (including the recommendation) and was taken. The motion was LOST, the votes cast being as follows:

For the motion –

Councillors Ellis, Field, Freeman, Mrs Healy, Martin, McPherson, Neighbour, Rogers, Shing, Skilton and Woodall (11)

Against the motion –

Councillor Bagshawe, Barnes, Bentley, Birch, Bridger, Daniel, Dowling, Dyason, Gadd, Garvican, Glazier, Mrs Hopkinson, Jones, Kramer, Mrs Leigh, Livings, Lock, Murphy, Reid, Scott, Simmons, Slack, Stevens, Mrs Stroude, Thomas, Tidy, Vickers, Mrs Waite, Webb and Whetstone (30)

Abstention –

Councillor Tunwell.

Remaining Reserved Paragraphs



21.3 The motions to adopt paragraphs 3, 6 and 13 of the Cabinet's report were CARRIED

**22** [SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE – RESERVED PARAGRAPHS](#)

Learning Disabilities Social Services Day Care

22.1 Councillor Jones moved the adoption of paragraph 2 of the Social Services Committee's report. The motion was CARRIED.

Notice of Motion : Free Nursing and Long Term Personal Care for the Elderly and Vulnerable

22.2 Councillor Jones moved the adoption of paragraph 3 of the Social Services Committee's report (including the recommendation). The motion was CARRIED.

**23** [SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR A LEARNING COUNTY – RESERVED PARAGRAPHS](#)

Home to School Transport

23.1 The Council took with this paragraph, paragraph 8 of the Cabinet's report. The adoption of both paragraphs (including the recommendations) was moved and both motions were CARRIED.

Building Maintenance

23.2 The Council took with this paragraph, paragraph 10 of the Cabinet's report.

23.3 The adoption of both paragraphs (including the recommendations) was moved and both motions were CARRIED.

**24** [SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR A SAFE COMMUNITY – RESERVED PARAGRAPH](#)

Traffic and Safety

24.1 The Council took with this paragraph, paragraph 12 of the Cabinet's report and the adoption of both paragraphs was moved.

24.2 The motion to adopt paragraph 12 of the Cabinet's report was CARRIED.

24.3 The motion to adopt paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee's report, as amended by paragraph 12 of the Cabinet's report, was CARRIED.

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The reports referred to are  
included in the minute book

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## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

*Mr D C Moon, 30 Harvest Way, St Leonards-On-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7SL*

### **Traffic Calming**

Are East Sussex County Council, as the responsible Roads Authority, aware that their contractor (Hastings Borough Council) are constructing endless so-called traffic calming schemes which are outside the heights allowed under The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1996 and grossly excessive in height and ON/OFF Gradient according to Government Maximum recommendations? Traffic Advisory Leaflets 7/96, 2/96, 4/94. give local roads authorities maximum recommended standards to follow, these technical standards are the result of vast, expensive government commissioned research carried out by The Transport Research Establishment Ltd, Crowthorne, Berkshire. The constructions are preventing the peaceful enjoyment of residents with cars, breaching their rights under Protocol 1, Article 1, Property: under the Human Rights Act 1998 They are also contrary to the public's wishes as expressed in the number of petitions, local press letters, and the general public's wishes as expressed in Citizens' Panel Report, January 2001.

### **Response by Councillor Reid**

The question is an involved one and having been in post for 15-20 minutes, I will give you a rendition of a substantial response.

In recent years about 26 traffic calming schemes involving the use of road humps have been constructed in Hastings. The majority of these have been implemented by the Borough Council using its own funds.

The legislation governing the use of humps is the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999. These specify amongst other things the permitted height of humps which is between 25 and 100mm. They also specify how this is to be measured, but do not define their profile or spacing. The regulations have to be complied with, otherwise the humps could be deemed to be an unlawful obstruction of the highway.

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) has published a series of Traffic Advisory Leaflets, some of which cover traffic calming topics and others offer advice on layouts based on research and experience gained from previous schemes. Although the guidance in these leaflets would normally be followed where possible, on some occasions it has to be amended to suit local circumstances. The overriding requirement is that all schemes that alter the layout of the highway have to be subjected to independent Safety Audits at various stages in their design and implementation process. It is understood that these have taken place on all relevant calming schemes in Hastings.

The Borough Council believes that all road hump calming schemes in Hastings were designed to comply with the regulations current at the time. However, it acknowledges the concerns being expressed by Mr Moon and other residents and is engaging a firm of surveyors to check a representative sample of road humps and speed cushions to ensure that they have been constructed in accordance with the regulations. The results of this survey should be available in the near future and any humps that are found to be outside the specification will be amended as necessary.

Local residents are always consulted prior to the implementation of traffic calming and a scheme would be reconsidered if a majority of respondents indicated their objection. Mr Moon refers to the Citizens' Panel Report published earlier this year, which covers a broad range of topics including traffic management. It states that "the two most popular options for slowing down traffic were police speed cameras at 34.4% and installing speed humps or road restrictors at 34.1%." This indicates a very slight majority in favour of speed cameras, but unfortunately a camera is not a permissible option in most cases due to the strict guidelines governing their use. This means that a camera cannot be installed purely as a speed-reducing feature as an alternative to traditional physical traffic calming measures. It is a casualty reduction tool to be used at sites where traffic speeds have given rise to a higher than average number of crashes.

I am advised that the traffic calming measures do not constitute a breach of the Human Rights Act 1998.

**Chairman**

Thank you Councillor Reid. Is there any need for a supplementary question on any points you do not understand or need clarification on?

**Mr Moon**

Thank you Chair for this opportunity and I thank the member for the reply. Obviously, a reply which has been delivered very well considering the short term you have been in office but could you clarify this point. In one passage of the reply guidance or advice is quoted and yet when it comes to deciding on the height of the humps we just talk about the Regulations. Surely, if advice is applicable in one place it must be applicable in the other. Thank you Chairman.

**Councillor Reid**

Mr Moon, given my recent appointment, I will undertake to educate myself further on the nuances of what I understand is a deeply-felt concern amongst many residents in Hastings and I will talk to officers both here and get feedback from the Borough and should I determine that there are difficulties that I am unaware of and have been unable to address to you, I will communicate those to you.

*Question from Mr K S V Thorogood, Uplands Cottage, Ivy Land Green, Netherfield Road, Netherfield, Battle (On Behalf of Mountfield Heritage Group)*

**Proposed energy from waste plant at Mountfield**

My question, in fact, relates to the refuse incinerator plant which is proposed as a site at Mountfield. Will the newly elected County Council confirm that it is endorsing the initiative of the administration that it supersedes with respect to *Energy from Waste Refuse Incineration facilities*, in that it will continue to promote Mountfield as a potential site despite the accumulation of evidence that indicates the unsuitability of the location; in particular:

- Ground Instability resulting from extensive mining operations – I would refer you to the County Council Meetings dated 14th February 2001 and 3rd April 2001.

- Fall-out from Gypsum Mines wreck stack and leachate of hydrogen sulphate from decomposing plaster board which emphasises the lack of control by the Environment Agency.
- The conclusion from the recent Lancet Report in May of this year which stated in conclusion that the present Environmental Standards are insufficient to avoid measurable biological effects from emissions leading to infertility disorders in both males and females.

### **Response by Councillor Reid**

Thank you Mr Thorogood. And, again, I believe this is unlikely to be the last question we receive on this very difficult question of managing waste in our County. The newly elected County Council has not yet had the opportunity to consider issues relating to the draft Waste Local Plan and to Mountfield as a potential location for an Energy from Waste plant and Materials Recovery Facility.

It is proposed that the Cabinet should receive a report at its meeting on 26 June about the results of public consultation on the First Deposit Draft of the Waste Local Plan. The Cabinet will be asked to consider the way forward on some of the key issues raised in the consultation. The Cabinet's advice will then be considered by the full County Council at its meeting on 24 July. However, the Cabinet and Council will need to consider further issues later in the year before all the proposed changes to the First Deposit Draft of the Waste Local Plan are finally agreed and published, for a statutory six week consultation period, in the Second Deposit Draft of the Waste Local Plan.

Of course, Brighton & Hove City Council also has to consider the issues and agree any proposed changes to the Plan to a similar timetable, in view of the joint nature of the Waste Local Plan.

### **Mr Thorogood**

I have a short supplementary, Mr Chairman. It is with regard, in fact, to concern no. 1 of the main question and what I am really asking is can the County Council provide a summary with respect to Mountfield, of course, of the results of feasibility studies and conceptual studies which have been undertaken, I am sure, by the various design and construction contractors who are bidding for the works. We are particularly concerned with both the operational safety of the proposed site and surrounding residential areas from subsidence and, as important, the ability to meet best value targets and protocols as set up early this morning.

### **Councillor Reid**

Thank you Mr Chairman. I have to constantly be reminded myself and, therefore, I am not surprised others may need the same help, that the Waste Local Plan is a Plan identifying areas potentially for use for waste management. It's a land management document, has nothing to do with the engineering or the specific details. The identification of a site in Mountfield is based on the principles used in identifying land use criteria. It has not and will not look at the engineering details – that comes at a much later stage should a contractor believe that he does need to use the site. It would be at that stage, as I understand it, that the details would be looked at and if the issues already raised proved to be substantial then one can only conclude it would have a very important bearing on the decision whether or not the site were actually suitable for a physical structure.

**Mr Thorogood**

Thank you Mr Chairman.

**QUESTIONS TO LEAD CABINET MEMBERS**

**Question by Councillor Dyason to Councillor Reid, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

*Maintenance of Pathways*

The question is to Councillor Reid. Firstly, to congratulate him on his appointment as the Cabinet Member, but my question really is on pathways road maintenance. Large numbers of people that I have in my particular division are arguing this and grumbling about pathways. As the Council well knows, I represent an area of elderly people, my old darlings, and I understand that. But I would ask Councillor Reid whether, in fact, he could look at the question of pathways road maintenance. I understand his situation of the budget proposals that he has now inherited but I hope that he could give a high priority to this issue in the new administration's core services and I look on those as core services. That is my question. Thank you.

**Councillor Reid**

Thank you Mr Chairman. These are very early days but I remind the Chamber of the pledges undertaken by this Group and reiterated by the Leader this morning that basic services will be our priority. We have already begun to look at what that translates to in detail, particularly with the balance around the resourcing available and with the guidance and help of senior officers and will progress a programme for consideration and discussion by Cabinet and then the Chamber and I can assure Councillor Dyason that the issues he's talking about will be thoroughly looked at and ranked, hopefully, near the top of the list.

**Question by Councillor Birch to Councillor Simmons, Lead Cabinet Member for Education**

*Education Policy*

I would like to ask my question to the Lead Councillor for Education. I would like to ask him his view on the policy of this County Council as agreed in 1997 which read "This Council commits itself to continuing to work with all those with a stake in Education in the County to improve on its previous best to make sure the highest quality fully comprehensive education to allow every child, whatever their abilities or needs, to develop their potential to the full."

**Councillor Simmons**

I welcome the question but I would set out my reply by saying I have also been blessed with one major asset and that is that within a few weeks of my appointment there will be a full OFSTED inquiry of this authority's Education Service and so I have the opportunity of

learning from an independent inspector the full merits of our own service. As to the proportion, yes, I would reassure my colleagues right from the outset that I will use my best

endeavours to serve the community at large, parents, governors, teachers and, of course, our students across the whole community but I would seek to learn from the OFSTED inquiry where weaknesses may lay within the services that we provide.

**Councillor Birch**

My question was about fundamental principles and beliefs Chairman. Surely our Lead Councillor isn't saying that we have to wait for an OFSTED inspection to find out what his fundamental views are about the shape of education and whether he really believes in a fully comprehensive system.

**Chairman**

Councillor Daniel.

**Councillor Birch**

It is all downhill from here, clearly.

**Question by Councillor Daniel to Councillor Reid, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

*Public Transport Subsidies in Hastings*

I know that Councillor Reid is well aware of the recent cuts made by the Liberal Democrats to the subsidies from Sunday and evening bus services with £121,000 of the £191,000 savings coming from services running in Hastings. Given that the Hastings area has the lowest car ownership in the County, will Councillor Reid who, after all, I know to be a caring man, in the spirit of support and inclusion undertake an urgent review of these savage cuts and try to remedy the disastrous decision of the Liberal Democrats which has led to such widespread concern and unhappiness in our area.

**Councillor Reid**

After such a charming question it would be hard to give a churlish answer. I hope it isn't churlish but it's very much along the lines of the one I was obliged to give Councillor Dyason. It's very early days – we are having to look, as we know, very closely at our resources. Passenger transport is a large part of Transport and Environment's budget – we will be looking very closely at it and as to whether it's Democrats, Conservatives or Labour who are at fault, rest assured we will try and be fair and reasonable within the reasonable space available to us.

**Councillor Daniel**

Well, can I just ask Councillor Reid in that spirit which I will take to be reasonably positive, perhaps he can meet with me as the Opposition Spokesperson for the Labour Group on T & E – perhaps we can meet and have a particular discussion on that point with his officers present and see if we can move on together.



**Councillor Reid**

I welcome that.

**Question by Councillor Scott to Councillor Jones, Leader of the Council**

*Service Priorities*

Thank you Chairman. You recently spoke at the new members' induction seminar, along with other Group Leaders. You spoke about key areas and the need to focus in and prioritise in those key areas of business. You also indicated quite clearly that as a result of focusing in and prioritising there would be less focus in touchy, feely, fluffy areas – your words not mine. What I seek from you is clarification on exactly what you meant by those comments. I have drawn my own conclusions from your comments but would not seek to put words into your mouth. Thank you.

**Councillor Jones**

Yes. I think the answer is very simple. It is non-core services.

**Councillor Scott**

Can I come back on that.

**Chairman**

Only if you don't understand the answer.

**Councillor Scott**

OK. Well the only thing I will say is my concerns are naturally about the environment. We have .....

**Chairman**

You are not allowed to make a further comment, only ask a question.

**Councillor Scott**

OK. Thank you. I will leave it there then.

**Question by Councillor Stevens to Councillor Reid, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

*Purchasing Policy*

I think I am following your trend, Chairman, in asking a question to Councillor Reid. Inasmuch as it falls within the remit of the Lead Member for T & E does he agree in principle that, wherever possible, the Council's purchasing policy should prioritise UK industries and preferably local examples thereof.

**Councillor Reid**

In broad terms and there are many qualifiers, obviously, to this the answer is “yes”.

**Question by Councillor Webb to Councillor Glazier, Lead Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health**

*Community Development Team*

My question is to the Social Services Cabinet Member. It's on the Community Development Team – I would like to know Councillor Glazier's current thinking and that of the new administration on the continuing existence of the Community Development Team which has played such a key role in lots of areas in the social and economic regeneration over the last four years.

**Councillor Glazier**

Chairman, Councillor Webb knows well my views on that. It was the opposition at the last budget who were going to cut them but, clearly, all of our needs will be prioritised.

**Councillor Webb**

Could I ask purely for my memory that may be fading and also for the newer Councillors on the Healthy Community Scrutiny Committee, will I be right in thinking that was a “yes” that you support the Community Development Team.

**Councillor Glazier**

You can think what you like, I said everything will be prioritised.

**Question by Councillor Freeman to Councillor Reid, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

*Waste Recycling*

Well it's sad, Chairman, to pick out Tony Reid again but that's the way the cookie crumbles. He has now had 46 minutes to ease into his post and I hope my questions, Chairman, are not touchy, feely but they do concern poor services. I hope in the answer to these questions he will accept that in the areas I mention they are core services. The first one is on the energy from waste plan. What are his views, if he has positive views on the subject and what plans does he intend to implement to encourage District and County Councils to work closer together to implement what I call kerbside recycling schemes?

**Councillor Reid**

Thank you for the question. We have all been advised from several quarters familiar with the challenge we face that the integration of collection, sorting at collection, is an important part of the efficiency of this whole challenge. The conversations have already begun both at officer level and at LGA level with the districts and boroughs to encourage and integrate this process. I think we have got a lot further to go but my intention is to do whatever I can with support from as many others as possible to implement this very necessary step.



**Councillor Freeman**

*Traffic Offences Caused by Pressures on Staff*

Thank you. I think if I could just say he would have our support on that and could I remind him that we don't need to re-invent the stone. In other nearby authorities those kerbside recycling schemes are already working well.

My second question concerns the number of what I think we call low traffic offences that are committed by certain County Council employees across the different departments and in view of that are we happy that we do not put our drivers under undue pressure in order to get to places quickly whilst exercising their duties on behalf of the County Council.

**Councillor Reid**

Thank you Mr Chairman. In detail, I am not competent to answer this question at this stage. We are all aware, I think, through the recent scrutiny review that this subject gained some prominence and perhaps the fuller answer can be gained even later today when that review's views are considered and there will be expertise within that Group who can answer the question more thoroughly than I can at the moment.

**Councillor Freeman**

I think, Chairman, I will return to the subject, hopefully, later in the day. Thank you.

**Question by Councillor Rogers to Councillor Murphy, Lead Cabinet Member for Community Plan and E-Government**

Thank you Chairman. My question is to the Lead Cabinet Member for Community Planning and E-Government. And I ask him whether, in the light of his known views on such matters, he regards, or would welcome the identification of people's values within the report of the Waste Forum that we received on Friday and whether, as part of his responsibilities in relation to Community Planning, he will ensure that people's values and the best practicable community health option will feature strongly in any discussions about community planning in which he is involved and, in particular, because it is all about social, economic and environmental welfare, whether there will be a better distribution of environmental and social costs, another quote from the report of the Waste Forum, when these matters are considered in community planning in the future.

**Councillor Murphy**

Thank you Chairman. I certainly would welcome the views of all members of the community in respect of the issues which Councillor Rogers has stated. I will take them on board and they will be considered as part of the community issue. May I say, Chairman, when I was offered this portfolio I had to stop and think about it and it really got bigger and bigger and bigger and I realised in the end that it actually does pervade everywhere in the County. Properly applied these concepts provide a vehicle to make the County much more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the whole community and I think this is where Councillor Rogers is coming from. If I just may make a point about Councillor Freeman, he referred to doorstep collections. I think that is another area where we will have to look very carefully and community planning will come into the issue. It seems to me it is possible to

make the County a leaner and fitter organisation under the aspects of community planning. It's about thinking smarter and working smarter to the benefit of the community and, while

some work has started, I think I shall need to drive it forward, developing this service as a cross-service, setting up local strategic partnerships, integrating those already in operation with some boroughs and developing the County's strategic partnership as well. I would want to streamline some of the systems, whilst taking on board all of the ideas. I would want to involve local members, community leaders to create meaningful agenda, bottom up and top down. I see the County further developing partnerships working through the boroughs and districts with voluntary organisations, national charities, private companies, any organisation which can help to contribute to the development of provision of service in East Sussex. The development of E-Government, of course, is an area which hasn't been particularly mentioned but I think that enables us to actually address many of these issues and to actually enable us to target deliveries of various sources, get the information through an integral part of the delivery of top quality services, which is what we are in for.

### **Councillor Rogers**

Thank you Chairman. I was trying to understand the answer but it wasn't quite clear to me, Chairman, whether if a conflict were to arise between people's values and collective Cabinet responsibility, which way Councillor Murphy would jump. Could he answer the question, please?

### **Councillor Murphy**

Chairman, I think the answer to that has to be I will think about the issues when I know what issues, in fact, are being addressed on any particular occasion.

### **Chairman**

Thank you. Councillor Barnes.

### **Question by Councillor Barnes to Councillor Reid, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

#### *Parking Problems in Mill Rise and Bellhurst Road, Robertsbridge*

Thank you Chairman. This question is addressed to Councillor Reid whom I congratulate on his appointment. This morning I presented to the Chairman of the County Council a petition from the inhabitants of Mill Rise in Robertsbridge. I should like to ask the Cabinet member responsible for Transport and Environment a number of questions in relation to parking problems in that road and in Bellhurst Road. In doing so, I understand that he will not be able to answer most of them today. My first question is why the scheme proposed by the County Council was dropped incontinently when it had the support of the residents affected, the local county councillor and half the residents who took the trouble to answer a parish council questionnaire circulated just before Christmas. Were the County Council aware of the terms in which that circular was worded and the extent of the circulation? Did they agree with the way in which it was formulated? Why, when there is virtually 100% support from the residents for the 1 hour parking restriction in Mill Rise proposed by the County Council were they brushed on one side, apparently in deference to the parish council's view, which was based on a poorly answered survey conducted, I believe, in Christmas week. There are other questions which spring to mind but the main one which I should like answered today is whether the Cabinet member responsible will look again at the scheme that the County Council propose and re-assess the decision to drop it in the light of the clear wish of the

residents of Mill Rise? Will he further extend that consideration to the residents of Bellhurst Road also?

**Councillor Reid**

Thank you Mr Chairman. I can certainly undertake to familiarise myself with the issues which, as predicted, I am not at the moment and will take on board the findings and recommendations and progress as the data would seem to suggest.

**Question by Councillor McPherson to Councillor Tidy, Lead Cabinet Member for Community Services**

*Lewes Library*

Thank you. A question for Councillor Tidy, the Cabinet Member for Community Services. Would he please inform the Council today when it is anticipated that the contract with Lewes District Council can be signed for the purchase of the land for the new Lewes Library?

**Councillor Tidy**

I would like to thank Councillor McPherson for that question, Chairman. At this precise moment in time I am minded to sign that form. However, having only been in this post for it must be now 50 minutes, I must take advice from the necessary officers and from the members of my Group, but hopefully this will be within the next day or two as I understand that there are considerable pressures to do this as soon as possible. Thank you Chairman.

**Question by Councillor Chartier to Councillor Jones, Leader of the Council**

First of all, congratulations Mr Chairman, on your elevation. My question is to Councillor Jones. I always believe in starting at the top and then working downwards eventually. I was interested and intrigued by the answer he gave to a previous question concerning core values. He has actually stated earlier this afternoon what he considered core values are. Would he actually like to expand on his answer previously and say how he sees environmental issues. I take it from what he said earlier he does not see them in any way as a core issue. Thank you.

**Councillor Jones**

The Councillor is entirely wrong. The protection of the quality of the environment in this County is something which is at the heart of what we want to try and do and so his assumption is quite wrong. It is something which will weigh very heavily in the decisions that we have to make in the near term and the longer term.

**Question by Councillor Tutt to Councillor Jones, Leader of the Council**

*County Council Elections – Count at Eastbourne*

Thank you Chairman. I have two questions. The first is to Councillor Jones, the second to Councillor Bagshawe. To Councillor Jones I would like to say that I was delighted, as someone who has suffered on the extremely long count on the County Council elections in Eastbourne, to read that he was going to instigate an inquiry as to what went wrong there. I



wonder if he could inform the Council whether that has actually taken place yet and either enlighten us as to its outcome or, indeed, what progress it's making.

**Councillor Jones**

Thank you Councillor Tutt. I was sorry to hear the way you guys all suffered. I have asked the Director of Legal and Community Services to carry out an investigation. I have not been advised of any outcome of that as yet but it did seem to me from the evidence that was presented to me by my colleagues that you all suffered an incredibly slow count and I think there was some question as to the competence of the count as well. That is something which for democracy is a great worry that there should ever be any question marks over whether something like this was done properly or not. I have heard also from colleagues in Eastbourne Borough Council their concern and my colleague Councillor Bob Lacey has written, I know, to the senior officers who conducted the count in Eastbourne asking for explanations of about a dozen concerns that he has raised and I will, today, be passing on a copy of that letter to the Director of Legal and Community Services.

**Councillor Tutt**

I am grateful for that information Chairman. I would ask that Councillor Jones informs all Eastbourne members of the County Council as to the outcome of that work once it is completed. I wonder, in light of what happened and, indeed, it was certainly the worst count that I have ever attended and I have been to many over very many years, if he would advise his counterpart in Eastbourne, as he has been having discussions with him, to move with haste to appoint a Chief Executive.

**Chairman**

I can only say that when I left the count they were turning the lights out.

Councillor Tutt you said you had another question.

**Councillor Tutt**

Sorry, I was waiting to see if Councillor Jones would respond to the supplementary.

**Councillor Jones**

Of course I will follow through on that.

**Question by Councillor Tutt to Councillor Bagshawe, Lead Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources**

*Budget Plans*

To Councillor Bagshawe, I know that her predecessor was often overlooked when it came to Council questions. I will make sure that that doesn't happen to her. We've listened to a lot already today from the Conservative Group Chairmen regarding their change of emphasis. I would be grateful if she could inform me whether that will follow through, as I assume, into a change of budget plans for the County Council for the remainder of this municipal year and, if that is indeed the case, when will she be able to present those plans to the County Council.

**Councillor Bagshawe**

Thank you very much for that question Councillor Tutt. I'm interested that you feel that as he then was, Councillor Skinner, was often overlooked but that wasn't my experience. As for a change of priorities and emphasis and whether that will lead to a change in budget plans, what I would say is that I do intend, and I am sure you would share this aspiration, to be very careful in monitoring what is actually happening within our current budget. When I have the information on how the current budget is actually performing to forecast it may then be necessary to see whether any adjustments are required or desirable. I do hope to work on a basis of caution and, therefore, that is all I am prepared to say at the moment. I have to have the information before I can decide whether we need to make adjustments in the current budget.

**Councillor Tutt**

Maybe Chairman, I need to clarify to enable the Cabinet member to clarify her answer. Whilst I share her desire for careful monitoring of the existing budget, the Conservative budget plans presented to this Council in February were different from our own. What I am asking is, with their election as the new administration, whether she will be bringing forward changes which would reflect the Conservative budget presented to us in February and, if so, when.

**Councillor Bagshawe**

I think it will be necessary to see exactly what the current position is because the proposals that we made in February were based on our understanding of what the budgetary position then was. We need to know what the budgetary position now is before we can decide whether those proposals are still sensible or whether there needs to be variations in them.

**Question by Councillor Neighbour to Councillor Glazier, Lead Cabinet Member for Social Services**

*Payments to Adults with Learning Difficulties*

Thank you Chairman. This is a question to Councillor Glazier. Is it your intention to abide by your statement in the Council Chamber to reinstate reward money to adults with learning difficulties attending the County's day centres?

**Councillor Glazier**

Chairman, I am not in a position to answer that at the moment. I will give the member a written answer as soon as we have studied the budget and what we have in place at the moment. Thank you.

**Councillor Neighbour**

Surely, a promise is a promise, Chairman, I will await his answer with interest.

**Question by Councillor Jay Kramer to Councillor Jones, Leader of the Council**

*Staff Confidence*

Thank you Chair. This is a question to Councillor Jones as Leader of the Council. What steps are you taking to ensure that the staff have confidence in your new administration?

**Councillor Jones**

Well I hope they will find very good reason to have confidence in our administration and, indeed, I have been in contact with some of the Trade Union representatives already and hope to be in contact with others very shortly in order to hold a series of discussions with them as to how we develop a recovery plan for this Council. I think the figures that were outlined to us by the new Director of Corporate Resources the other day inevitably mean that we must look carefully at how we take forward this Council over the next few years and I see the staff of this authority and our trade union representatives as key partners in this. I hope to have very sensible and fruitful discussions with them and for them to have an important contribution to make to the development of those plans.

**Councillor Jay Kramer**

Just a brief supplementary on that then Councillor Jones. Given the positive points you made about working with the trade unions are you therefore prepared to assure staff that they have a secure future with East Sussex County Council?

**Councillor Jones**

The answer to that is very simple and that it is not in my gift to give that undertaking at the present time. I think it is very clear from the data which was made available to all councillors, or those who chose to attend the other day - not many of your group did, that we face major budgetary pressures over the next two or three years and it would be, frankly, foolish and irresponsible of me to give blanket undertakings at this stage until we have worked our way through the implications of that but I would say, and reiterate, that it is my intention that we should examine those partnerships with the trade unions and other representatives of the staff of this organisation.

**Question by Councillor Field to Councillor Jones, Leader of the Council**

*Cross-cutting priorities*

Thank you. I have a question for Councillor Jones and then one for Councillor Simmons. To Councillor Jones I would like to ask, cross-cutting priorities were a way to ensure that service delivery was dealt with in the round and to avoid duplication. Now that these priorities have been abandoned how long will it take to re-write the BVPP and what is the estimate of the cost?

**Councillor Jones**

The answer is that the Cabinet will be looking at these matters in very short order and that we will advise the Council as quickly as possible as to the new priorities and implications of those. Frankly, as we literally take office today, we do not have all of the data on which to make rational decisions yet and we will be doing that as quickly as possible when we have the full information in front of us.

**Councillor Field**

Thank you. Am I then clear when I think that Councillor Jones doesn't know.

**Chairman**

Do you want to respond to that?

**Councillor Jones**

No.

**Question by Councillor Field to Councillor Simmons, Lead Cabinet Member for Education**

*Temporary Accommodation at Schools*

OFSTED constantly makes the link between, when it reports on schools, educational standards and the condition of school buildings. What is Councillor Simmons going to do about the plethora of huts in our school playgrounds?

**Councillor Simmons**

Thank you very much Chairman. We have in front of us the programme for a new deal for schools – building maintenance and, indeed, it is on the agenda later today. I would like to take this opportunity to compliment our Lead Officer and her staff in the remarkable way in which she has been able to achieve bidding achievements. We now have a programme of works to be carried out which is constructive for our schools and, indeed, our Lead Officer, Mr Morris, has ambitions on further grant opportunities for the future. I would hope that we have the opportunity to move that programme on to best advantage for our schools throughout the community and I would hope that Councillor Mrs Field would support that endeavour. Thank you.

**Question by Councillor Livings to Councillor Reid, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

*Newhaven Household Waste Site*

Thank you Chairman. In fact, this is a touchy, feely question to Tony Reid. In response to several phone calls yesterday, I had occasion to visit the Newhaven Waste Disposal site where a new barrier has been erected for the height control of vehicles. Unfortunately, this barrier prohibits all 4x4 vehicles visiting the site. There is a diversion route marked which goes to the opposite side of the construction hut but this was coned off. Now what's going to happen here is that these vehicles are going to deposit rubbish in various parts of the town. Could I ask that adequate signing is erected on the site to indicate the availability of times and situations for tipping and also that there is sufficient manpower on the site to either raise the barrier or help the visitors to the site. Thank you.

**Councillor Reid**

Touchy, feely indeed. I am very empathetic with this problem. It has been a long running one. No one wants to exclude a sector of the society because of the type of vehicle they drive. We all know the reason for the barrier and in the light of the many comments already today about our resource difficulties we need to look for a sensible resolution to this problem and I can undertake to Councillor Livings that, with the help of officers, I will look into the issue and see if we can't find a more imaginative way to satisfy both the resource preservation implications as well as the service to the drivers who have these sorts of vehicles.

**Question by Councillor Mrs Healy to Councillor Murphy, Lead Cabinet Member for Community Plan and E-Government**

*ICT in Schools*

Thank you Chairman. It is a very quick question to Councillor Murphy for clarification. He has the Cabinet responsibility of a new role for Community Planning and E-Government and I have the shadow cabinet responsibility for that. Later this morning or this afternoon, now, we will actually be discussing a very detailed document about ICT in schools and I really want to know, as this is a new brief, will he be responsible for this or will it go to the Education person.

**Councillor Murphy**

I think this is going to have to be a joint responsibility. Community Planning and E-Government as a portfolio is going to be spread so wide across the County Council in terms of its interests etc, that I think it is something in which there will be joint responsibilities. In a number of areas, certainly this one, I think, there will be a joint responsibility. It is very much a cross-cutting responsibility.

**Question by Councillor Shing to Councillor Reid, Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

*Kerbstone and Pavement Improvements in Millrace, Wannock*

Thank you Chairman. Is Councillor Reid aware of the petition that I presented to the County Council regarding the need to improve kerbstones and pavements in Millrace, Wannock and can he inform me of the action which will be taken to rectify this problem. Thank you.

**Councillor Reid**

The honest, quick answer is no I am not aware of this specific question. As we alluded to earlier, however, basic services are the core of our approach and efforts here. I am sure we will be looking at it in the very near future and when a decision is made we will obviously ensure that you are well informed on that.

**Question by Councillor Rogers to Councillor Jones, Leader of the Council**

*Waste Forum Presentation*

This is a question to Councillor Jones, the Leader of the Council. I understand that in that weird place in Westminster it is common for members to ask the Prime Minister to list his engagements. I wish to ask you about your disengagement from the report of the Waste Forum which was presented on Friday. Given the importance of the issue why was it that you, as Leader of the Council, were not here to hear from the Waste Forum members themselves the conclusions that they had reached?

**Councillor Jones**

Mr Chairman, very simply because I was performing other duties that day. I was at a meeting of the Rural Development Programme where a number of important decisions were being

taken on behalf of that Partnership which the County Council is currently a member of and, so, unfortunately, even I, with all my talents, cannot be in two places at once.

**Councillor Rogers**

I note your priorities. Can I ask another question Chairman, is that all right?

**Chairman**

Yes

**Question by Councillor Rogers to Councillor Tidy, Lead Cabinet Member for Community Services**

*Press Release on Waste Forum Report*

This is a question to the Lead Member for Community Services but it is on a similar issue. Why is it that the press release issued yesterday to mark the publication of the report of the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste Forum was so bland as to give no information to anyone reading it as to even an inkling of the content of the document that had been presented to us?

**Councillor Tidy, Lead Cabinet Member for Community Services**

Chairman, I am sorry I have not seen this document and therefore cannot comment on its blandness or otherwise. As and when I see it, I will answer Councillor Rogers' question.

**Councillor Rogers**

The answer speaks for itself Chairman.

**Chairman**

Councillor Tidy has been asked for his views and has answered he is not aware of it. All right?