

## **CABINET**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 December 2025 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes

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PRESENT      Councillors Keith Glazier, OBE (Chair), Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bob Bowdler, Penny di Cara, Claire Dowling, Carl Maynard and Bob Standley

Members spoke on the items indicated

Councillor Beaver	- item 5 (minute 41)
Councillor Bennett	- item 6 (minute 42)
Councillor Bowdler	- items 5, 7 and 8 (minutes 41, 43, and 44)
Councillor Collier	- item 5 (minute 41)
Councillor Claire Dowling	- item 7 (minute 43)
Councillor Daniel	- items 6 & 7 (minutes 42 & 43)
Councillor Denis	- items 5 & 6 (minutes 41 & 42)
Councillor Field	- item 8 (minute 44)
Councillor Hollidge	- item 5 (minute 41)
Councillor Maynard	- item 5 (minute 41)
Councillor Maples	- items 6 & 7 (minutes 42 & 43)
Councillor Murphy	- item 6 (minute 42)
Councillor Standley	- items 5 & 6 (minute 41 & 42)
Councillor Swansborough	- item 7 (minute 43)
Councillor Tutt	- items 5 & 6 (minutes 41 & 42)

### 36.      MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2025

36.1      The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 November 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

### 37.      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

37.1      There were none.

### 38.      DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

38.1      All Members have been granted with a dispensation, in relation to their membership of the Council and any membership of a district or borough council, under the Localism Act 2011

and the Council's Code of Conduct to enable them to participate and to enable the Cabinet to vote on the items on the agenda.

38.2 Councillor Collier declared a personal interest in item 5 of the agenda as a Cabinet Member for Lewes District Council. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

38.3 Councillor Denis declared a personal interest in item 5 of the agenda as a Cabinet Member for Lewes District Council. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

### 39. URGENT ITEMS

39.1 There were none.

### 40. REPORTS

40.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

### 41. EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSES TO GOVERNMENT'S STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR) IN THE EAST SUSSEX AND BRIGHTON & HOVE AREA

41.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

41.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) agree East Sussex County Council's responses to Government's statutory consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove area as set out in the appendices of the report; and

2) approve the submission to Government by the closing date of 11 January 2026.

#### Reasons

41.3 The report outlines that the 'One East Sussex' proposal for a single tier of Local Government for East Sussex as a unitary council on the current footprint of the county council, with Brighton and Hove City remaining unchanged, is underpinned by a clear evidence base.

41.4 The 'One East Sussex' proposal is the only option for LGR in East Sussex that:

- Aligns with existing service delivery footprints (e.g. social care, education, public health).
- Minimises disruption to statutory services and partnerships.
- Builds on established collaboration across the six councils.

- Meets the Government's population guidance and maintains a coherent geographic identity.
- Creates operational savings and avoids the substantial costs of disaggregation.
- Does not require boundary changes at county or district level, which are costly and disruptive to implement.

## 42. COUNCIL MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2 2025/26

42.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

42.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the latest monitoring position for the Council;
- 2) recommend that Scrutiny consider the target for the CO2 arising from County Council operations measure set out in paragraph 2.2 of the report; and
- 3) approve the proposed Capital Programme variation to include the installation of fire suppression systems at Maresfield and Pebsham Waste Transfer Stations set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

### Reasons

42.3 The report sets out the Council's position and year-end projections for the Council Plan targets, Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Savings Plan, together with Risks at the end of September 2025.

42.4 We continue to make progress on reducing our carbon emissions. However, carbon and cost reduction work is now focused on business-as-usual activity such as the planned building maintenance programme, following the reprofiling of the capital budget in 2024/25. Analysis undertaken over the summer, using the latest available data on our emissions for 2024/25, suggests that with our current resources the current target is not achievable.

42.5 Installing suppression systems will safeguard infrastructure, reduce operational and environmental risk, and ensure compliance with Environment Agency guidance, providing long-term resilience.

## 43. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR) - UPDATE ON PLANNING FOR 2026/27 AND BEYOND

43.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

43.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the updated policy context as set out in paragraph 2 of the report;
- 2) note the updated Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in paragraph 3 and Appendix 1 of the report;
- 3) note the further savings proposals set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- 4) note the reserves summary set out in paragraph 3 of the report;

- 5) note ongoing engagement with MHCLG in relation to Exceptional Financial Support as set out in paragraph 4 of the report; and
- 6) agree to undertake further lobbying of Government for sustainable funding to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex.

#### Reasons

43.3 The report reinforces the substantial challenges the Council faces, including a projected funding gap which means we must seek further savings and service reductions, as well as preparing to request Exceptional Financial Support from Government in order to be in a position to set a balanced budget for the year ahead.

43.4 The Council will not have certainty on the financial position until we receive detailed funding allocations and can factor these into our planning, alongside other emerging developments which will impact on the environment we will be operating within during the coming year and beyond.

43.5 Our updated analysis will feed into final proposals for the 2026/27 budget and Council Plan to Cabinet in January for consideration, and Council in February for decision.

43.6 Members will continue to be involved in developing plans through Cabinet, County Council, Scrutiny Committees, and specific engagement sessions throughout the 2025/26 RPPR process.

#### 44. ANNUAL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) REPORT 2024 - 2025

44.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Children's Services.

44.2 It was RESOLVED to note the annual progress report of Looked After Children's Services in 2024/25.

#### Reasons

44.3 The report summarises the performance of Looked After Children's Services in 2024/25.

#### 45. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2024/25 AND MID-YEAR REVIEW 2025/26

45.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer.

45.2 It was RESOLVED to note the Treasury Management performance in 2023/24, incorporating the Mid-Year Review for the first half of 2024/25.

#### Reason

45.3 The report fulfils the requirement to submit an annual/half yearly report in the form prescribed in the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The key principles of security, liquidity and yield are still relevant. Officers are currently investigating opportunities within the strategy to secure investment income whilst minimising costs and maintaining security.

46. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE LEWES PUBLIC LIBRARY AND MUSEUM CHARITABLE TRUST

46.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

46.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) note the final accounts for 2024/25 for the Lewes Public Library and Museum Charitable Trust; and

2) note that there are no issues that require any further action by the County Council as the Corporate Trustee.

Reason

46.3 The report fulfils the requirement for the annual accounts for the Lewes Public Library and Museum Charitable Trust to be submitted to the Cabinet.

47. TO AGREE WHICH ITEMS ARE TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

47.1 It was agreed that items 6 and 8 should be reported to the County Council.

*[Note: the items being reported to the County Council refer to minute numbers 42 and 44.]*