

MINUTES

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 10 OCTOBER 2023 at 10.00 am

Present Councillors Abul Azad, Colin Belsey, Nick Bennett, Bob Bowdler, Charles Clark, Chris Collier, Anne Cross, Godfrey Daniel, Johnny Denis, Penny di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Kathryn Field, Gerard Fox, Roy Galley (Vice Chairman), Nuala Geary, Keith Glazier, Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge, Stephen Holt, Eleanor Kirby-Green, Carolyn Lambert, Tom Liddiard, Philip Lunn, James MacCleary, Wendy Maples, Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood, Carl Maynard, Matthew Milligan, Steve Murphy, Sarah Osborne, Paul Redstone, Christine Robinson, Pat Rodohan, Phil Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Alan Shuttleworth, Bob Standley, Georgia Taylor, David Tutt, John Ungar, Trevor Webb and Brett Wright

31. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023

31.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record minutes of the County Council meeting held on 18 July 2023.

32. Apologies for absence

32.1 Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Sam Adeniji, Matthew Beaver, Alan Hay, Johanna Howell, Peter Pragnell, and Colin Swansborough.

33. Chairman's business

COUNCILLOR PRAGNELL

33.1 The Chairman announced that Councillor Pragnell was unable to attend the meeting.

WELCOME

33.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Anne Cross and Councillor Brett Wright to their first County Council meeting.

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CHAIRMAN'S ACTIVITIES

33.3 The Chairman reported that Councillor Pragnell had attended a number of events since the last Council meeting, including the Bishop of Chichester's reception and choral evensong, the commemorations for the Dieppe Raid, the Newhaven and Ravilious celebration, the Battle of Britain dinner at the Seahaven branch of the Royal Society of St. George, and the civic service of the Chair of Rother District Council.

33.4 The Chairman also reported that he had attended the Mayor of Eastbourne's Harvest Festival civic service, the Mayor and Young Mayor of Seaford's civic reception, and the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Awards ceremony.

33.5 The Chairman congratulated Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer, on the award of the King's Fire Service Medal which had recently been presented to her by The Princess Royal.

33.6 The Chairman also congratulated Councillor Stephen Shing following Polegate Town Council's decision to bestow the title of Honorary Freeman upon him.

33.7 The Chairman also reported that in recognition of its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, the Council received a Gold Standard Award for its pledge to support current and former military service personnel and their families. The Chairman thanked on behalf of the Council all those who had helped secure the award.

PETITIONS

33.8 The following petition was presented before the meeting:

Councillor Rodohan - calling on the County Council to introduce traffic calming measures including a 20mph speed limit, relevant mandatory signs and occasional radar checks to deliver safety in Southfields Road, Eastbourne.

PRAYERS

33.9 The Chairman thanked Reverend Paddy MacBain, Vicar at All Saints Danehill with Chelwood Gate for leading prayers before the meeting.

34. Questions from members of the public

34.1 Copies of the questions from members of the public and the answers from Councillor Claire Dowling (Lead Member for Transport and Environment) are attached to these minutes. One supplementary question was asked and responded to.

35. Declarations of Interest

35.1 There were no declarations of interest.

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36. To receive notice by the Returning Officer certifying the election of a county councillor for the electoral divisions of Heathfield and Mayfield and Eastbourne: Meads:

36.1 The County Council agreed to receive the Notice of the Returning Officer certifying the election of a County Councillor for the Heathfield and Mayfield division at the by-election held on 27 July 2023 and a County Councillor for the Eastbourne – Meads division at the by-election held on 3 August 2023.

37. Reports

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

Cabinet report – paragraph 1 (Council Monitoring Q1 2023/24), paragraph 2 (Scrutiny Review of Equality and Inclusion in Adult Social Care and Health), paragraph 3 (Annual Progress Report on the County Council’s Climate Emergency Plan), and paragraph 4 (East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan Review).

People Scrutiny Committee report – paragraph 1 (Scrutiny Review of Equality and Inclusion in Adult Social Care and Health).

Leader and Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development report – paragraph 1 (Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) - Gatwick Northern Runway Project (NRP) and the current Development Consent Order (DCO) application).

NON-RESERVED PARAGRAPHS

37.2 On the motion of the Chairman and the County Council, the Council adopted those paragraphs in reports that had not been reserved for discussion as follows:

Cabinet report – paragraph 5 (Ashdown Forest Trust Fund)

Governance Committee report – paragraph 1 (Amendment to Constitution – Scheme of Delegation to Officers), paragraph 2 (Co-opted Independent Members on the Audit Committee), paragraph 3 (Appointments of Members to Committees, Sub Committees and Panels), paragraph 4 (Appointments to Outside Bodies), paragraph 5 (Review of the County Council’s procedure for considering Notices of Motion), and paragraph 6 (Amendment to the Constitution – Public Questions).

38. Report of the Cabinet

Paragraph 1 (Council Monitoring Q1 2023/24)

38.1 Councillor Bennett introduced the reserved paragraph in the Cabinet report.

38.2 The paragraph was noted after debate.

Paragraph 2 (Scrutiny Review of Equality and Inclusion in Adult Social Care and Health)

38.3 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 2 of the

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Cabinet report with the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

Paragraph 3 (Annual Progress Report on the County Council's Climate Emergency Plan)

38.4 Councillor Bennett introduced the reserved paragraph in the Cabinet report.

38.5 The paragraph was noted after debate.

Paragraph 4 (East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan Review)

38.6 Councillor Claire Dowling introduced the reserved paragraph in the Cabinet report.

38.7 The paragraph was noted after debate.

39. Report of the People Scrutiny Committee

Paragraph 1 (Scrutiny Review of Equality and Inclusion in Adult Social Care and Health)

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

39.2 Councillor Ungar moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee's report.

39.3 Councillor Glazier moved the adoption of paragraph 2 of the Cabinet's report. The motion, including the recommendations, was CARRIED after debate.

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

40. Report of the Leader and Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development

Paragraph 1 (Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) - Gatwick Northern Runway Project (NRP) and the current Development Consent Order (DCO) application)

40.1 Councillor Glazier introduced the reserved paragraph in the Leader and Lead Member's report.

40.2 The paragraph was noted after debate.

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41. Questions from County Councillors

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

| Questioner | Respondent | Subject |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Councillor Murphy | Councillor Standley | Family hubs and nursery provision for three and four year olds |
| Councillor Wright | Councillor Claire Dowling | Councillor views on 20mph speed limits in East Sussex |
| Councillor Ungar | Councillor Claire Dowling | Upgrading zebra crossings to pelican crossings |
| Councillor Daniel | Councillor Glazier | Cabinet vacancy |
| Councillor Denis | Councillor Standley | National schools budget and support for East Sussex schools |
| Councillor Scott | Councillor Bennett | Queensway Gateway road update |
| Councillor Redstone | Councillor Bennett | Financial state of the county |

41.2 Five written questions were received from Councillors Field, Lambert, and Stephen Shing for the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. The questions and answers are attached to these minutes. The Lead Member responded to supplementary questions.

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THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 12.15 pm

The reports referred to are included in the minute book

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1. Question from Rod Calder, Forest Row, East Sussex

Background

In the last twelve months I have submitted three questions to three Full Council meetings, regarding the totally unacceptable surfacing work carried out by Costain on the A22 in Forest Row last July. Despite numerous E mails, a meeting on site on 11th January and an assurance on 6th April that the remedial work would be included in this years planned work programme, there has been absolutely no progress on site.

In June the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport stated that the remedial works would now be carried out by Balfour Beatty during Sept/Oct. Well, nothing happened in September!

Question

So my question on behalf of the residents of Forest Row is;

If the remedial works are not complete by the end of October as stated by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport will the Lead Member agree to meet me and our local Councillor during the first week of November to discuss outstanding issues and the way forward? At that meeting would the Lead Member also explain why the only two Carriageway Surfacing projects to be carried out in Forest Row this year are:- 1. Stonepark Drive; this is a short cul de sac which, incidentally joins Post Horn Lane which is also a cul de sac!
2. Twyford Lane; this is, predominantly, a single track lane in the Forest with a stream running across it!

I do not understand how either of these projects would take priority over finally surfacing all the A22 in the village.

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

I thank Mr Calder for his further query. This year ESCC commenced a new Highway Services Contract with our providers Balfour Beatty Living Places. As part of this contract they will be delivering a wide range of schemes across the County including the works along the A22 in Forest Row.

We provide an indicative timeframe for all schemes at the beginning of the year but all highway schemes require investigation and design to properly determine the timing of the works and our programme is updated accordingly.

I am afraid as can happen with a live delivery programme there has been a delay with the start of these works. Unfortunately delays on a live programme do occur. Our works are very dependent on weather, the availability of resources/materials and what else is happening on the network. Works on the A roads, including the A22, are particularly demanding as they form the main transport links within and in and out of the county. We also need to coordinate our works with the National Highways team because the diversion routes affect their network as well as our own. Whilst we endeavour to optimise our programme there are times where a delay from one scheme has a knock-on effect on others. However, residents should be assured that we do

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intend to deliver these works in March 2024 and they will be contacted when we have a definitive date for the works.

Regarding the works in Stonepark Drive or Twyford Lane, both roads have been identified as requiring repair due to surface cracking/deterioration as they have reached their end of life. However, these works have not taken priority over the works on the A22 Forest Row. Our annual programme is not delivered in order of road type priority. Works are scheduled when the conditions are best for the type of repairs we are carrying out and resources are available.

2. Question from Anna Sabin, St. Leonards, East Sussex

There are many very inexpensive road painting and flower pot interventions that could be made to a few roads in Hastings which would enable shopping streets to be pedestrianised, walks to school to be made safe and walks from railway station to beach to be marketable and enticing. Would you, or one of your transport officers, come to Hastings to work out where these active travel initiatives could be implemented so that you can make plans for them and apply for funding for them?

There is a climate emergency meaning the current pace of 'modal switch' needs radically speeding up.

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The County Council has and continues to undertake significant work to promote and encourage active travel choices in the County, including in Hastings, utilising funding that we have successfully secured towards the delivery of location specific or packages of schemes. These schemes include pedestrianisation in town centres, introducing school streets and improving active travel access to/from rail stations and other destinations.

As you may be aware, the Government published its 'Plan for Drivers' last week. As further guidance emerges from Government on elements of this Plan, including Low Traffic Neighbourhoods which often comprise some of the interventions you have suggested, we will need to consider how this relates to East Sussex.

We are planning to commence a review of the County's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan in 2024, to ensure that it is aligned with our emerging Local Transport Plan which will be subject to consultation later in the autumn. Our updated LTP will set out the County's approach, working with partners, to decarbonise transport and support the local economy up to 2050.

As we review our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, we will be engaging with key local stakeholders on the extent of the existing identified networks, discuss the opportunities to update these and consider further schemes to include in the updated Plan. Therefore, this engagement process will be the mechanism to discuss any potential active travel related schemes in Hastings for consideration and inclusion in the Plan.

Once updated, the Plan will then be used as our evidence base to prioritise schemes for development and delivery across the whole of East Sussex, and in turn inform the content of future bids for active travel funding.

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WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question from Councillor Caroline Lambert to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Residents of Hawth Hill, Seaford raise frequent concerns about the state of the roads in this estate.

Hawth Hill has a tarmac overlay on a concrete base. The nature of this surface results in frequent potholes where the tarmac skim has worn away. Hawth Hill is also a bus route and has many older and more vulnerable residents who rely on this mode of transport. Jet patching is carried out, but this is not a satisfactory or a permanent solution.

Residents in Hawth Hill want to find a longer term, preferably permanent solution to these continuing problems.

Will the Lead Member:

- outline the advantages and disadvantages of reverting to the original concrete road surface;
- state whether or not this would be an acceptable and more permanent solution;
- outline any other options for dealing with the clustering of potholes on this road surface, including re-tarmacking the estate.

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Thank you to Councillor Lambert for her questions. I believe some of the queries were answered in the email sent to her on 9 September by officers. But to clarify there is no advantage to having a tarmac surface over a concrete road other than aesthetic.

When built these roads did not have a tarmac covering and the tarmac was added later. Our preference therefore is to remove the thin tarmac layer and to repair the concrete surface and joints. This avoids the gradual unsightly deterioration of any tarmac surface superficially added.

Hawth Hill is currently on the programme to receive this treatment as part of our 2025/2026 concrete road programme. We have an annual £1m programme of concrete road repairs but we have many concrete roads in East Sussex and unfortunately, we do not have the resources to repair every concrete road in the county at the same time. Our highway stewards will continue to monitor the roads condition and if it becomes unsafe for users they will arrange interim targeted safety repairs.

2. Question from Councillor Caroline Lambert to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The County Council is being encouraged to provide more facilities for cycle parking to encourage active travel. Unfortunately, these facilities do not always seem to be adequately protected.

The cycle racks in Broad Street, Seaford, are an example of this. The racks are protected by flimsy plastic bollards which have been damaged, as has the racks, by reversing vehicles. This has apparently been a regular occurrence. Could the Lead Member please:

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- give the cost of repairs to these cycle racks from the time when they were installed;
- give the cost of installing bollards as a more robust protection for both cyclists and indeed pedestrians from reversing vehicles as a cost comparison;
- state what the County Council's policy is with regard to the installation and protection of cycle racks.

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The cycle rack and associated bollards in Broad Street were installed as a temporary measure in 2020 as part of a wider countywide response to the Covid-19 pandemic. They were funded by the Department for Transport's Emergency Active Travel Fund which was allocated to local authorities to encourage greater levels of cycling and walking at that time.

The location of the rack was identified and agreed in discussion with Lewes District Council and the installation was subject to a Road Safety Audit to ensure it was located safely. These bolt down racks are of a type that can be installed quickly but are time-limited in terms of their durability, and are generally not maintainable.

Based on installing cycle racks elsewhere in the county, the cost of providing a permanent, more durable rack and protective bollards, including associated civils costs, is in the region of £10,000 - £15,000, depending on the specific circumstances of each. It is unlikely that these cycle racks will be altered or upgraded in the near future unless a funding source is identified and made available.

We are proposing to review our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) from early 2024, at which time consideration may be given to options for improving the quality of cycle parking facilities around the county, including in Seaford.

3. Question from Councillor Stephen Shing to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council have planted wild grass seed on the grass verges next to highway footway on A2270 Eastbourne Road for some years.

Many residents and visitors express their appreciation and comment that county highway should do the same.

I am writing behalf of our residents to ask the County Council to consider amending the policy to allow any new or repairs of grass verges that are in rural areas to be planted with wild grass seeds. It is a very little cost and county highway only carries out grass cutting 1-2 times per year. The long wild grass would be beneficial for our environment, wildlife and climate change and it looks better.

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The County Council are committed to increasing and helping biodiversity in our verges and we have a designated wildflower verge process that communities can apply to. We are also carrying out a trial of a reduction in cuts on some selected rural verges, to allow wild plant cycles to benefit. Our Soft Estate Senior Asset Engineer will also consider the incorporation of wildflower seeds where construction projects are required to repair or reinstate verges. Both

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these options require ESCC permission so that we are able to acknowledge and manage our verges correctly to maximise the biodiversity benefits.

It should be noted that there will be areas that we would not allow such verges, such as at junctions where visibility splays might be compromised.

4. Question from Councillor Stephen Shing to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

In the verbal update report given by officers at the Place Scrutiny Committee meeting on 26 September, they indicated that it is likely that government is planning to delay the introduction of food waste collections until 2026. This, I believe, is to be welcomed, but ideally it should be abandoned for the time being.

In the last 4-5 years more people are using food banks and more people are in difficult financial situations, either to pay for food or heating. More importantly, our Council has just approved the Household Support Fund (4) to Adult Social Care and Health and Children's Services the grant of £3,896,568, in which there is £1,646,000 for free school meals and £250,000 to food banks and food partnerships.

The fact is so many people don't have enough money to buy food, so where is the food waste coming from. I don't believe that vegetable peelings from food preparation and chicken and fish bones leftover from households is enough quantity to economically introduce the new food waste collections under the Food Waste & Environment Act 2021. The result of not introducing food waste collections will be beneficial for our environment and climate change.

It is the over production of food or out of sell by date food, that is a commercial food wastage matter, and the Government it should be dealing with it under commercial food wastage policy.

Most of our residents I spoke to agree this household food waste collection is a waste of resources and a waste of time. Our council tax money can be better used for other council services.

Therefore, I asked you to consider this household waste collection proposal and agree with us that our Council write to our Government to request they abandon it please.

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The Environment Act 2021, which is already in law, places an obligation on waste collection authorities to introduce separate weekly collections of food waste. The five districts and boroughs in this county are waste collection authorities. The obligation does not apply to East Sussex County Council, which is a disposal authority, albeit we will be required to dispose of the food waste collected in the county.

Food waste makes up a significant proportion of what goes into the waste bin. In 2017 a compositional analysis carried out in east Sussex showed that over 30% of waste in the bin was food. Increased costs of living will be influencing our residents' spending and how much waste and recycling they generate. But food waste will still be generated, and this can and should be composted at our facility at Whitesmith. We are undertaking a new waste composition analysis and we should have data in 2024 which will show how much food waste is currently in the bin in East Sussex.

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The County Council supports weekly food waste collections and will not therefore be writing to government asking for this to be abandoned.

5. Question from Councillor Kathryn Field to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

What is the usage of the Flexibus by area? Does it run on commercial bus routes, for example, in the evening when there are no services scheduled?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

FlexiBus is the demand responsive transport (DRT) scheme within our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), operating from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday. It has been designed to serve rural parts of East Sussex that either have no or very limited public transport. The FlexiBus services are intended to provide a link to towns where there are essential services or to the wider public transport network (both bus and rail). The FlexiBus services also act as a feeder service into the bus and rail network to allow people to access the network at key interchanges across the county to allow these services to enhance accessibility into the conventional bus network.

Where the service operates in areas where there are conventional bus services, these services are protected (customers are unable to book FlexiBus), as it's a key objective that the FlexiBus services do not to compete with or extract passengers from existing, conventional public transport routes, nor is it here to replace them in any way.

It is worthwhile noting that many low frequency, rural services are not commercially operated, but operate under contract and at the expense of East Sussex County Council as what are termed socially necessary bus services. If passengers were to be extracted from these existing services, it would lower their value for money and may make their provision less sustainable. There are also some limited rural services that are run on a commercial basis. In the same vein it is imperative that customers are not extracted from these services as this may make them commercially unviable and we may lose these services. Some of these services operate very infrequently, sometimes as little as once a day. Whilst introducing a FlexiBus "no service buffer" around a conventional bus timetable has been considered (e.g. plus and minus 2 hours), there is a very real danger of passengers choosing to instead plan their journeys around using FlexiBus which could extract passengers from these existing services.

Below are the total passengers to date by zone but also the total passengers in September by zone for reference.

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| Fleet Name | Total Passengers to date | Total Passengers for September |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| East Sussex Zone 1 | 890 | 204 |
| East Sussex Zone 2 | 842 | 181 |
| East Sussex Zone 3 | 656 | 243 |
| East Sussex Zone 4 | 481 | 162 |
| East Sussex Zone 5 | 409 | 167 |
| East Sussex Zone 6 | 119 | 48 |
| East Sussex Zone 7 | 384 | 96 |
| East Sussex Zone 8 | 814 | 261 |
| East Sussex Zone 9 | 587 | 189 |
| East Sussex Zone 10 | 347 | 139 |

Link to the map of the zones:

<https://escc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=592ca03ec9e14d5b8b417ee7f2915895&showlayers=Zone%20One;Zone%20Two;Zone%20One;Zone%20Three;Zone%20Four;Zone%20Five;Zone%20Six;Zone%20Seven;Zone%20Eight;Zone%20Nine;Zone%20Ten;Zone&extent=520576,97468,594552,141652,27700>

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