

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 22 April 2025.

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

Members spoke on the items indicated:

Councillor Adeniji	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Beaver	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Daniel	– items 5 and 6 (minutes 84 and 85)
Councillor Denis	– items 5 and 6 (minutes 84 and 85)
Councillor Claire Dowling	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Field	– item 5 (minute 84)
Councillor Hilton	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Lambert	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor MacCleary	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Maples	– items 5 and 6 (minutes 84 and 85)
Councillor Redstone	– item 5 (minute 84)
Councillor Robinson	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Stephen Shing	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Shuttleworth	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Standley	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Taylor	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Tutt	– items 5 and 6 (minutes 84 and 85)
Councillor Webb	– item 6 (minute 85)
Councillor Wright	– item 6 (minute 85)

80. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2025

80.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20 March 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

81. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

81.1 Apologies for absence were received for Councillor Glazier.

82. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

82.1 Councillor Redstone declared a personal interest in item 5, as Vice-Chair of the Genesis Federation (Beckley and Peasmarsh primary schools), and SEN link governor. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

82.2 Councillor Tutt declared a personal interest in item 5, as Trustee of Southfields Trust. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

82.3 Councillor Robinson declared a personal interest in item 6, as a regular bus user. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

83. REPORTS

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

84. AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND) INSPECTION OF EAST SUSSEX LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP

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

84.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) welcome the findings of the Area Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Inspection of East Sussex Local Area Partnership which was published on 4 February 2025;
- 2) note that the East Sussex SEND Strategy 2022-25 will be updated to include actions in response to the recommendations made in the inspection report;
- 3) note the challenges within the current SEND system and our key lobbying points for future policy development in this area; and
- 4) note that the existing SEND strategy 2022-25 will be extended by one year and that work on the new strategy will begin in 2026.

Reasons

84.3 East Sussex has maintained a focus on the key priority outcome of keeping vulnerable people safe. The report notes that there are areas for improvement which the Council will continue to focus on but also recognises recent improvements and the renewed focus on SEND across the local partnership. The Council work with partners, children and young people and parents and carers to address the recommendations and deliver more consistent experiences and outcomes for the children and young people.

84.4 The strengths outlined in the report show that East Sussex is in a good position to support the implementation of future Department for Education reforms. The Council will continue to work within the Change Programme over the next two terms to advocate for the required changes that are believed are necessary to create a more equitable and sustainable SEND system in the future

85. EXCEAT BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

85.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director for Communities, Transport and Environment.

85.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the estimated costs and options for replacing Exceat Bridge;
- (2) agree to continue with the proposals for an offline two-lane replacement bridge ('Option A');
- (3) agree to re-direct £11.128m grant funding from the Newhaven and Peacehaven bus priority schemes set out in the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to the Exceat Bridge Replacement Project;

(4) approve the amendments to the 2025/26 BSIP funding allocation, reflecting the reallocation of £4m of funding to the Newhaven bus priority scheme; and

(5) delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to take all actions necessary to achieve the completion of the offline two-lane replacement bridge ('Option A'), including but not limited to awarding any required construction contracts for the Bridge.

Reasons

85.3 The Council's preference has always been to complete the original proposal for an offline two-lane replacement bridge (Option A). However, this is only viable if additional external funding is identified. The diversion of BSIP funding from the Peacehaven and Newhaven bus priority schemes provides an opportunity to continue with Option A, subject to confirmation of the Orders by the Secretary of State and / or successful negotiations with the landowners.

85.4 Delegation of authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to take all actions necessary to achieve the completion of the 'option A' two-lane replacement bridge, including but not limited to awarding any required construction contracts for the Bridge will ensure the effective delivery of the project.

86. INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY AND PLAN 2025/26

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

86.2 It was RESOLVED to agree the Council's Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Audit Plan 2025/26.

Reason

86.3 The Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan 2025/26 sets out how the Council will meet its statutory requirements for internal audit.

87. ESCC EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25

87.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer.

87.2 It was RESOLVED to approve the External Audit Plan for 2024/25.

Reason

87.3 The External Audit Plan provides an overview of the planned scope and timing of the statutory audit of the Council's 2024/25 accounts and identifies any significant risks.

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

88.1 It was agreed that item 5 should be reported to the County Council.

[Note: The item being reported to the County Council refers to minute number 84]