



Minutes of the meeting of the **Council** held in Committee Rooms - East Pallant House on Tuesday 28 November 2023 at 2.00 pm

Members Present: Mrs C Apel (Chair), Mr J Cross (Vice-Chairman), Mr I Ballantyne, Mrs T Bangert, Mr D Betts, Mr S Boulcott, Mr B Brisbane, Mr R Briscoe, Mr J Brown, Ms B Burkhart, Mrs H Burton, Mr M Chilton, Ms H Desai, Mr G Evans, Mrs E Hamilton, Ms O Hickson, Mr F Hobbs, Mrs D Johnson, Mr S Johnson, Mr T Johnson, Mr A Moss, Ms E Newbery, Mr T O'Kelly, Mr H Potter, Ms S Quail, Mr C Todhunter, Ms V Weller and Mr T Young

Members not present: Mr R Bates, Mr J Brookes-Harmer, Ms J Brown-Fuller, Mr R Chant, Ms M Corfield, Mr C Hastain, Mrs S Sharp and Mr J Vivian

Officers present all items: Mrs L Baines (Democratic Services Manager), Mr N Bennett (Divisional Manager for Democratic Services), Mr A Frost (Director of Planning and Environment), Mrs J Hotchkiss (Director of Growth and Place), Mrs L Rudziak (Director of Housing and Communities), Mrs D Shepherd (Chief Executive) and Mr J Ward (Director of Corporate Services)

45 **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 26 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

46 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

47 **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

48 **Chair's Announcements**

Apologies of absence were received from Cllr Brookes-Harmer, Cllr Brown-Fuller, Cllr Chant, Cllr Corfield, Cllr Hastain and Cllr Sharp.

The Chair announced her Chairs charities for the year which included:

- Stone Pillow
- Pallant House Gallery (to create a community fund)

The Chair also invited members to congratulate the Chair of Transition Chichester on their recent award from the Royal Horticultural Society South and South-eastern Bloom for Grow Chichester which received the award for the Bishops Palace Community Gardens.

The Chair also stated it was with sadness that she had to announce the death of former District Councillor Alan Chaplin. The Chair stated that Councillor Chaplin was a District Councillor until 2015 and was Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a while. Councillor Chaplin was very passionate about housing and helped the council immensely with this. The Chair also invited members to hold a minute silence for all those affected by the war in Gaza.

49 **Public Question Time**

Question from Simon Oakley:

Noting the CDC Cabinet Decision made on 6th December 2022 (Minute 53), what, if any, progress has been made with regards replacing the existing T.S. Chichester Sea Cadet building on the CDC owned site adjacent to Florence Park, with a facility that would provide not only a modern building for that youth organisation but also community hall facility for the central Eastern part of Chichester City which at present does not have one.

Answer from Cllr Moss:

Thank you Simon for your question. As you will be aware this is a site and location that is of interest to many people to try and bring forward a community building on this site. The site is currently leased to the Sea Cadets and as such it is for them to bring forward proposals for a new building. Officers continue to work with the Sea Cadets in accordance with the Cabinet Decision made on 6 December 2022 (Minute 53) to achieve a successful outcome.

50 **Determination of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024-2025**

The Chair invited Cllr Betts to introduce the item.

In a vote members made the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024-2025 be approved by Full Council.

51 **Financial Strategy and Plan 2024-25 to 2028-29**

The Chair of the Council invited Cllr Chilton to introduce the report.

Members enquired about the government Autumn statement regarding the significant reduction in spending for local government and asked if that changed the numbers. Cllr Chilton responded by stating that this would not affect the numbers as they had already anticipated a reduction in local government spending.

In a vote members made the following resolutions:

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the key financial principles and actions set out in Appendix 1 of the 5-year Financial Strategy report are approved.**
- 2. That the Minimum Level of Reserves is set, following the recommendation of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.**
- 3. That the current 5-year Financial Model detailed in appendix 2 (part 2) and the Resources Statement in appendix 3 to the Financial Strategy report be noted.**
- 4. That the earmarked Revenue Budget Support Reserve of £8m is returned to the Council's General Fund Reserve.**

52 Unauthorised Vehicle Deterrents - Parks and Green Spaces

The Chair invited Cllr Chilton to introduce the item.

Members asked if they would be able to return to this issue in the future to determine if deterrents would be advisable at other sites. Cllr Chilton responded by stating that it would be possible as there is a list of potentially vulnerable sites.

In a vote members made the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

That £141,000 from reserves to fund vehicle deterrent measures at Florence Park, Oaklands Park, Whyke Oval and Sherborne Road be released by Council.

53 Replacement of Groyne Aids to Navigation

The Chair invited Cllr Brown to present the item.

A number of members welcomed this initiative on behalf of their wards.

In a vote members made the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

That £125,000 be allocated from General Fund reserves for the repair and replacement of 5 groyne markers.

54 Making the West Wittering Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Chair invited Cllr Brisbane to introduce the item.

Members praised the hard work of the West Wittering Parish Council in formulating the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

In a vote members made the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

Following the successful referendum result on 22 November 2023 Council agrees to make the West Wittering Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the Development Plan for Chichester District (excluding the area within the South Downs National Park).

55 Unreasonable Complainants Policy

The Chair invited the Monitoring officer to present this item.

Members asked if there was a particular issue that had happened in the recent past that might have prompted this Policy. Mr Bennett responded by stating that in recent years the number of complaints by residents had risen and that this Policy provided a clear framework to deal with the complaints. Additionally, the complaints were more complex and intense than before.

In a vote members made the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

That the unreasonable complaints policy attached to the agenda pack be approved.

56 Meeting Timings

The Chair invited Cllr Moss to introduce the item and his amendment. Mr Bennett was then invited to comment on the report.

Some members commented that scheduling meetings in the evening could have a detrimental effect on council engagement, specifically parents with young children who may find it difficult to attend council meetings in the evening. It was also noted that hosting meetings in the evenings could exclude people who have to commute from far distances. In addition it was noted that a guillotine of 9.30pm could result in excluding Questions to the Executive being heard on a regular basis.

Many members however agreed with the proposed amendment motion and stated that they often struggled to attend daytime meetings due to work commitments. Additionally, some members mentioned that a mixed hybrid approach if the law allowed would go further.

Members in favour of the amendment commented that a move to an evening meeting would be more inclusive.

Cllr Moss was invited to sum up his amendment motion.

Cllr Hickson proposed that the Housing and Communities Panel be held in person rather than online which was seconded by Cllr Briscoe. The Chair of the Panel Cllr Betts was in agreement so it was agreed to include this amendment in the substantive vote below.

Following a call for a recorded vote in the line with the Constitution Mrs Shepherd then carried out a recorded vote on the amendment motion. The results were as follows:

a) That Council amend the start time for Full Council to 6pm.

Cllr Apel – For
Cllr Ballantyne – For
Cllr Bangert – For
Cllr Bates – Absent
Cllr Betts – For
Cllr Boulcouth – For
Cllr Brisbane – For
Cllr Briscoe – Against
Cllr Brookes-Harmer – Absent
Cllr Brown – For
Cllr Brown-Fuller – Absent
Cllr Burkhart – Against
Cllr Burton – For
Cllr Chant – Absent
Cllr Chilton – For
Cllr Corfield– Absent
Cllr Cross - For
Cllr Desai – For
Cllr Evans – For
Cllr Hamilton – Against
Cllr Hastain – Absent
Cllr Hickson – For
Cllr Hobbs – Against
Cllr Donna Johnson – For
Cllr Stephen Johnson – For
Cllr Timothy Johnson – For
Cllr Moss - For
Cllr Newbery – For
Cllr O’Kelly – For
Cllr Potter – Against
Cllr Quail – For
Cllr Sharp – Absent
Cllr Todhunter – For
Cllr Vivian – Absent
Cllr Weller – For
Cllr Young – Against

For = 22

Against = 6

Absent = 8

b) a guillotine shall apply to Full Council at 9.30pm.

Cllr Apel – Against
Cllr Ballantyne – Against
Cllr Bangert – Against
Cllr Bates – Absent
Cllr Betts – For
Cllr Boulcouth – For
Cllr Brisbane – For

Cllr Briscoe – Against
Cllr Brookes-Harmer – Absent
Cllr Brown – For
Cllr Brown-Fuller – Absent
Cllr Burkhart – Against
Cllr Burton – For
Cllr Chant – Absent
Cllr Chilton – Against
Cllr Corfield– Absent
Cllr Cross - For
Cllr Desai – For
Cllr Evans – For
Cllr Hamilton – Against
Cllr Hastain – Absent
Cllr Hickson – For
Cllr Hobbs – Against
Cllr Donna Johnson – For
Cllr Stephen Johnson – For
Cllr Timothy Johnson – For
Cllr Moss - For
Cllr Newbery – For
Cllr O’Kelly – For
Cllr Potter – Against
Cllr Quail – For
Cllr Sharp – Absent
Cllr Todhunter – For
Cllr Vivian – Absent
Cllr Weller – For
Cllr Young – For

For = 19

Against = 9

Absent = 8

A vote was then taken for recommendations 1.C and 2.

RESOLVED:

1. That:

- a) The Council amend the start time for Full Council to 6pm.**
- b) A guillotine shall apply to Full Council at 9.30pm.**
- c) The Council do not amend the timing of any other statutory meetings.**

2. That the Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25 (as set out in Appendix 2) as amended be approved subject to the above modifications.

57 Regeneration site and local plan policy

The Chair invited the Cllr Moss to present the report.

In a vote members made the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

That proposals for the development of the Basin Road, bus station and bus depot sites are developed in accordance with the requirements of Policy A4 of the Council's Proposed Submission Local Plan be approved.

58 Motion from Cllr Briscoe

The Chair Invited Cllr Briscoe to introduce his Motion.

Several members praised Cllr Briscoe for his work on formulating this Motion. Members supported the motion.

In a vote members made the following resolutions:

RESOLVED:

That Council urges the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet member for the Environment to take the following steps:

- 1. Write an official letter to the Head of the Environment Agency, expressing our concerns about the ongoing environmental damage to the river Ems caused by over-abstraction and requesting an explanation for the lack of effective action taken to address this issue and request an urgent review of the abstraction license from the Ems with a view to rescinding the license to abstract from this water course.**
- 2. Write a letter to the Minister for Environment, highlighting the significance of the river Ems as a rare Chalk stream and a recognized special habitat, and urging them to intervene and ensure that the Environment Agency fulfils its responsibility to protect this vital resource.**

59 Questions to the Executive

The following Questions to the Executive were asked with responses that followed:

Cllr Hobbs asked in relation to the lack of affordable housing in the district, whether the leader could provide an outline of how the Cabinet intend to use levers within their control to increase local housing provision. Cllr Moss explained that the current Local Plan requires 30% Affordable Housing in the area. Cllr Moss confirmed that work is ongoing to assist residents to afford to live in privately rented properties in the district.

Cllr Burton stated that she was extremely concerned to see that Hyde were selling social housing in the villages surrounding Midhurst and Petworth. Cllr Burton asked if enough pressure was being applied on Hyde to retain the rural housing wherever possible despite the potential high relet costs. Cllr Betts responded by stating that he had been working with Hyde on a number of issues including this although it should be noted that Hyde is accountable to the Regulator of Social Housing. Cllr Betts explained that where Hyde can they are investing in bringing properties up to energy efficiency standards.

Cllr Stephen Johnson asked a question on behalf of Cllr Bates. The question related to Southern Water acknowledging that it has statutory obligations to treat the sewage. Cllr Johnson asked how the council could engage with the regulator Ofwat to ensure the utility is fulfilling its statutory obligations. Cllr Brisbane responded by stating that in May last year the water Ombudsman CCW and Ofwat published a short report entitled customer experiences of Sewer flooding. Cllr Brisbane read out the following recommendations:

1. To provide an easy to find single point of contact for reporting incidents or complaints
2. Provide information quickly as to what the company will do in response
3. Establish the cause of flooding incidents as soon as possible and provide clear timescales for the completion of the repair work
4. Provide information on payment of compensation

Cllr Brisbane stated that the council has previously liaised with Southern Water and individual complaints have been lodged. However, in the short term there is little prospect of a comprehensive solution to the problem of sewer flooding after heavy periods of rain. Cllr Brisbane explained that the council should provide communities with specific contact details of Southern Water and Ofwat and monitor the number of complaints lodged.

With reference to Cllr Hamilton's question Mr Bennett stated that the matter should be dealt with via the formal code of conduct process outside the meeting.

Cllr Briscoe asked why some Cabinet members were not wearing poppies during the Cabinet meeting that took place on the 7 November 2023 before Remembrance Day. Cllr Briscoe asked the Cabinet to clarify their official stance on wearing poppies and support for military veterans. Cllr Bangert responded first as the council's spokesperson for the military. Cllr Bangert stated that she had worn a poppy during the Cabinet meeting of the 7 November. Cllr Bangert explained that she was in her fifth year as a military champion for the Chichester District and that she was very proud of her role. Cllr Bangert explained how she had helped initiate the breakfast club and that she had worked with a number of homeless veterans recently. Cllr Brisbane also responded that he wore his poppy on his overcoat and stated that it was a personal decision when and where to wear poppies.

Cllr Quail asked Cllr Betts if he was aware that some asylum seekers in the Chichester area will very soon receive notification that they can stay in the United Kingdom. Cllr Betts responded by stating that once an asylum seeker is given leave to remain; they are given full access to the same benefits as a British citizen. Cllr Betts explained that there has been an increase in homelessness nationally due various factors including landlords leaving the private rented sector.

60 **Late Items**

There were no late items.

61 **Exclusion of the press and public**

There was no requirement to exclude the press or the public.

The meeting ended at 5.07 pm

CHAIRMAN

Date: