

Minutes of a Meeting of Mid Sussex District Council held on 16th June 2010 from 7.00 pm to 9.20 pm

Present: Councillors:

Jane Keel (Chairman)
Mandy Thomas-Atkin (Vice-Chairman)*

Jonathan Ash-Edwards	Brian Hall*	Andrew MacNaughton
Irene Balls	Sophia Harrison*	Gordon Marples
Eileen Balsdon*	Dorothy Hatswell	Gary Marsh
Stephen Barnett	Susan Hatton	Peter Martin
Andrew Barrett-Miles	Paddy Henry	Edward Matthews
Richard Bates	Janice Henwood	Simon McMenemy*
John Belsey*	Christopher Hersey*	Pru Moore
Liz Bennett	Margaret Hersey*	Sue Ng
Andrew Brock	Chris Jerrey*	Ian Pearce*
Heidi Brunsdon	Anne Jones*	Peter Reed
Jack Callaghan	Jim Joyce-Nelson	Heather Ross
Patrick Cutler	Susanna Kemp	Robert Salisbury
Ian Dixon*	Edward King	Susan Seward
Anna Defilippo	Graham Knight*	Christopher Snowling
Kathleen Dumbovic	Jacqui Landriani	Julian Thorpe*
Bernard Gillbard	Andrew Lea	Garry Wall
Mrs Jean Glynn	Mike Livesey	Mike Watts

*Absent

There was a minute's silence in remembrance of Councillor Clive Chapman.

12. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 12th May 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Ash-Edwards, Bates, Henry, Keel, Snowling and Wall declared a personal interest in Agenda item 7.

Councillor Landriani declared a personal interest in Agenda item 8 as a member of the Standards Committee.

Councillors Brock and McNaughton declared a personal interest in Agenda item 9, as members of the Bluebell Railway.

Councillors Brunsdon, Barnett, Marples and Wall declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 9 as patron and vice-patrons of the Bluebell Railway.

Councillor Moore declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 9 Recommendations from Cabinet in relation to Cyprus Road.

14. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman said that she had agreed to one item of urgent business, Temporary Appointment of Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer, which would be taken after Agenda Item 11.

15. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Council received a report of the Head of Corporate Improvement introduced by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery. He said that Council had agreed in November 2009 to establish a Community Governance Review following a request from Haywards Heath Town Council. The report sets out the results of the initial consultation and the proposals for the second consultation. He did not propose to comment on the proposals other than that regard had been paid to ensuring that boundaries follow easily recognisable landmarks. The proposals would have knock on effects for District and County Boundaries. Community Governance Reviews need to be completed within one year so if the recommendations were agreed the result of the second consultation would come before Council in November. He proposed that recommendation 4.1 be amended to read 'agree the proposals for the second consultation of the Community Governance Review of Haywards Heath.'

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery moved as recommended subject to the amended wording. Councillor Wall seconded the proposal.

Councillor Bates proposing a motion said that it was amazing how much tinkering was going on to ward boundaries in Haywards Heath when the original request was to address issues of Bolnore Village. The review should only be trying to accommodate residents in Bolnore Village and make the numbers correct. It was appalling that wards were being carved up and that residents will be voting in different wards for Town and District, the review went too far and should concentrate on providing Bolnore Village with a separate Town Councillor.

Councillor Bates proposed and Councillor Balls seconded the following amendments to the recommendations: -

1. Following initial consultation subsequent consultation should be confined to the situation at Bolnore Village.
2. The remainder should be left the same until there was new housing
3. Not to alter the ward arrangements to Lindfield Ward.

The Solicitor to the Council advised Members to consider paragraph 18 on page 12 of the report. He said that the proposal did not address the numbers in the present Lucastes/Bolnore area and the proposal wouldn't work in terms of making the numbers equal, which is one of the requirements.

A Member referred to page 13 paragraph 18 IV of the report and said that those roads had always been in Bentswood and were built on land that had previously been Bentswood. He added that he found it quite wrong that part of Lindfield has been removed and could not comprehend how this was a knock on effect of securing some representation for the residents of Bolnore Village. He would reserve his comments on the proposals for the consultation but did not think that the proposals should go out to consultation in this form.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery said that part of the Terms of Reference had been that the town boundaries would be looked at as a whole. The

numbers were based on growth that already has outline planning permission; there was a need for boundaries to be clear and based on phase 1 of the consultation, which showed some support for the proposals.

A Member expressed concern that for the next election it would completely shatter District and Town boundaries being the same. Residents would be voting in one ward in the Town election and another ward in the District election. The consultation should include the issue of timing. County Council changes in East Grinstead had already caused this problem for a small number of residents. He said that it would not be a good thing especially for a large number of residents when there was no need. Bolnore may stand on its own but any wider changes need to be carefully considered especially the timing.

Councillor Balls in seconding the motion said that Bolnore Village is a distinct and separate area from Lucastes and she understood why Bolnore Village residents wished to carve out an identity for themselves. The tinkering was not a good idea and the proposals were not what was wanted, the integrity of the community was important. Bolnore Village should be given a Town Councillor and Lucastes should be reduced to two Town Councillors but there was no need for any other parts of the town to be affected.

The motion fell by 17 votes for, 18 against and 5 abstentions.

Councillor Snowling in proposing a motion expressed concern that 124 residents would be moved out of Lindfield into Haywards Heath. The area was traditionally part of Lindfield village. He was concerned that 124 people would have to write in. He suspected that other parishes such as Ansty and Staplefield didn't expect to be included in a Haywards Heath review. Although he agreed with the review, he did not agree with the proposed basis for the consultation. He said that the reference to Lindfield and Ansty and Staplefield should be removed.

Councillor Snowling proposed that in addition to the amendment proposed by the Cabinet Minister for Finance and Service Delivery the following words should be added to the recommendation at 4.1 – 'with the exception of those referring to Lindfield Parish and Ansty and Staplefield Parish. Councillor King in seconding the proposal said that he welcomed the inclusion of Ansty and Staplefield Parish in the proposal.

Members commented that Lindfield was distinct from Haywards Heath, boundaries mattered and the distinctiveness of areas mattered. Moving rural areas back into Haywards Heath was unsupportable.

25 votes for, 0 against and 15 abstentions the motion was carried.

RESOLVED

That Council: -

- (1) agree the proposals for the purposes of the second consultation of the Community Governance Review of Haywards Heath with the exception of those referring to Lindfield Parish and Ansty and Staplefield Parish and
- (2) agree to including, in that consultation, reference to consequential recommendations.

16. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBER ALLOWANCES.

RESOLVED

To make the following appointments of Independent Members of the Council's Standards Committee and to the Independent Panel on Member Allowances, having regard to the recommendations of the appointments panel.

Name	Term ends	Committee or Panel
Anthony Bellringer	April 2014	Independent Panel on Members Allowances
Ian Church	April 2014	Standards Committee
Adam Haynes	April 2014	Independent Panel on Members Allowances
Andrew Lewis	April 2014	Standards Committee
Trevor Swainson	April 2014	Standards Committee

17. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

[Councillors Barnett, Brunsdon, Marsh and Wall left the room during the consideration of recommendation 5 Bluebell Railway, which was taken first. They returned to the room for consideration of the other recommendations.]

RESOLVED

- (1) that the balance of interest of £329,000 is transferred to the General Reserve;
- (2) that the 2010/11 capital programme be increased by £727,000 being the slippage of some 2009/10 capital projects and Social Housing Budget underspent, as detailed in table 3.
- (3) that the revenue underspending in 2009/10 be transferred to Reserves as follows:
 - a) £16,000 be transferred to Specific Reserve and earmarked for Concessionary Fares;
 - b) £189,000 relating to the cost of severances / early retirements set out in the Corporate Plan and Budget 2010/11 report be transferred to Specific Reserve to meet committed expenditure as set out in paragraph 15 below
 - c) £19,000 balance to be transferred to General Reserve
- (4) that the sum of £50,000 be released from the General reserve to fund the contribution to the Bluebell Railway
- (5) that a politically balanced advisory group of 12 Members be formed for the Council year 2010-2011, which will meet in public, to oversee the

town centre revitalisation project, and advise Cabinet as appropriate. The objectives of the group would be to progress the master plan for each town centre including seeking to achieve the following outcomes:-

- the development of strong and successful town centres
 - the development of new retail and commercial floor space, including residential development, where this is possible;
 - where relevant, in the particular town centre, the provision of new / replacement / refurbished community buildings and improved public realm,
 - The enhancement of the accessibility of each centre, including car parking and public transport,
 - The improvement to the environment in each town centre;
- (6) that the Council does not pursue a Framework Agreement with a new development partner;
- (7) that the Council should work with a range of interested parties to progress the project

.18. MOTION ON NOTICE – COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11

The Chairman informed Council that an amendment to the motion was tabled. The motion was proposed by Councillor Seward and seconded by Councillor Kemp and read as follows: -

Mid Sussex District Council has consistently and rigorously disputed the housing figures allocated from regional bodies.

The unjustified high housing allocation has caused difficulty and conflict across the whole of Mid Sussex

The letter received recently from Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, is most welcome, and directs us towards new strategies and policies and allows us to begin making decisions for our district.

Therefore, as leaders in our communities, and in the interests of our residents and taxpayers, we need to be robust and take forward our new roles in this matter

We therefore propose:

That this Council should,

Abandon progress on the Core Strategy in its current form.

As Government guidance becomes clearer commence work to examine housing numbers necessary for demographic and sustainable growth within Mid Sussex.

Request the Cabinet Member for Planning consider any joint work with neighbouring authorities in the light of the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy in the form of the South East Plan.

Request the Cabinet Member for Planning write to the Secretary of State to clarify the position of the basis of the 5-year housing land supply.

In proposing the motion Councillor Seward said that for many years the Council had been opposed to the high housing allocation. They objected to the top down imposition of housing numbers rather than having the opportunity for their own decision-making. She said that the Council should adopt a flexible approach to the building of more housing in the District.

The Leader welcomed the motion and said that it encompassed the concerns of the Council and explained the case very well. The motion embraced the announcement by the Secretary of State that provided the opportunity for the Council to address the needs of the community.

Members made the following comments in support of the motion. Localism was important and the opportunity to work with the local community was important. Slight concern was expressed about waiting for guidance as it was felt that work on housing numbers should commence immediately.

In reply to a Members question the Cabinet Member for Planning said that he welcomed the motion, there was an opportunity to take things into our own hands and the scrapping of the Core strategy means that we have more control. They would look at the housing numbers and there would be joint working where relevant. Previously identified sites that make sense would continue.

Members said in support of the motion that it was truly bottom up and communities should have a say in the development of housing need. The towns had originally had an input and they hoped that that would continue. The District has an infrastructure deficit and that needs to be taken into consideration. Guidance was needed urgently regarding issues of housing density and the 5-year land supply. There are 5000 people on the waiting list for social housing and there would be no more social housing without development. 10,800 houses are currently earmarked for Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill. Some should be removed from Haywards Heath, particularly those at Hurst Farm south of the relief road. New housing should not all be in Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill to the detriment of the towns. After years of talking about housing it was a good position to be in, there was a need for more social housing.

In reply to a Members question the Solicitor to the Council confirmed that the Small Scale Housing Allocation is part of our Local Plan Policy and some areas will be built on.

A Member said that there is a demand for housing in this area and that will need to be taken on board but should be delivered in a timely and sustainable manner; the pressure had been removed and it was open to the Council to find a different way of doing it. They would be looking at the planning strategy to meet the District's own needs for sustainable housing and necessary infrastructure.

Council voted on the motion as amended. 39 votes for, 0 against and 1 abstention the motion was carried.

RESOLVED

That Council: -

- (1) Abandon progress on the Core Strategy in its current form.

- (2) As Government guidance becomes clearer commence work to examine housing numbers necessary for demographic and sustainable growth within Mid Sussex.
- (3) Request the Cabinet Member for Planning consider any joint work with neighbouring authorities in the light of the abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy in the form of the South East Plan.
- (4) Request the Cabinet Member for Planning write to the Secretary of State to clarify the position of the basis of the 5-year housing land supply.

19. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader of the Council reported on the meetings that he had attended which include, public service, police authority, leaders, Gatwick Diamond and Falmer stadium. The MSP conference had been interesting and there was a mood to embrace issues and problems and find solutions to take communities forward. He said that a common theme of the meetings had been financial pressure and budgetary cuts. There would be tough decisions and challenges for the Council but it would continue to deliver the best possible service.

He reported the resignation of the Chief Executive, John Jory, who would leave the Council on 30th June 2010 to join Reigate and Banstead Borough Council. He said that the Chief Executive was leaving the Council in a strong position and thanked him for his stewardship of the past 6 years. He wished him all the best for the future. The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group added their thanks and best wishes for the future; the Labour Member also added best wishes for the future.

The Chief Executive thanked Members for their kindness, support and good wishes and added that he had enjoyed his time at Mid Sussex District Council. He said that it was a good organisation with an excellent officer team that meant that the Council was well placed to move forward.

20. TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT OF ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER AND RETURNING OFFICER

The recommendation was moved by Councillor Henry and seconded by Councillor Hatton. Council voted on the motion, which was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Monitoring Officer be appointed as the Electoral Registration Officer and the Returning Officer for all elections until such time as the Council has decided where these roles should sit within the Council officer structure.

21. CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

Cabinet Member for Economic Investment and Regeneration

The Cabinet Member reported that unemployment in Mid Sussex had fallen from 2.2% in March to 1.8% in May, and was the lowest rate in West Sussex. There were currently 1,391 claimants and the Council was working hard to achieve further reductions.

He reported that the Council had purchased road closure signs for events and were encouraging Town and Parish Councils and Charitable Organisations to make full use of this resource. He said that they also had large banners displaying the Council's corporate theme, to publicise the Council's involvement where it had offered some support. The display was coordinated through the Press Office. They had recently been seen at the South of England Show and at the Jazz on the Broadway. He reminded Members of the opportunity to attend workshops about Town development on 1 July for East Grinstead, 6 July for Burgess Hill, 7 July for Haywards Heath.

He reported that he had attended a number of meetings.

Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability

The Cabinet Member said that she had attended the National Badminton Championships at Olympos Haywards Heath; this was a prestigious event for the District. She had also had the pleasure of presenting 14 NVQ certificates to SERCO staff. She had attended the parallel games and welcomed the support of Freedom Leisure. She reported that the new initiative of street cricket for which the Council supplied the car parks and the staff had been a great success and with the backing of Sussex County Cricket it was hoped to roll out the programme across all the towns.

In reply to a Members question the Cabinet Member confirmed that she had undertaken a tour of every toilet in the District. The original toilet strategy had been passed in 1994 with a budget of 450,000 from the general reserve. Of the original portfolio some had been transferred to Parish Councils. The Council retained 12 sites, some in good order. King Street in East Grinstead needed to be demolished. The Council was signed up to a compliance scheme and were reviewing implementation of the scheme in the light of the planned regeneration not now going ahead. Officers were working to compile a new strategy with Town councils and the development team. The Member thanked the Cabinet Member for the reply and asked to receive a written response.

In reply to further Members question the Cabinet Member said reminded Members of the success of the Councils fortnightly rubbish collections and that the Council had signed up to the 10:10 campaign. The King Street toilets were a priority but the Council needed to plan for the long term.

Cabinet Member for Health and Community

The Cabinet Member reported on a public consultation on mental health provision in West Sussex. A proposal to cut beds in Haywards Heath was still in the consultation document. He had attended a public consultation meeting on 1st June and the robust Health Panel response was set out in full in MIS 20.

He would be attending a meeting with Housing Associations to find out the prospects for cutting the waiting lists.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment

The Cabinet Member reported that he expected GOSE to revoke the South East Plan by the end of the month and to produce a statement of how to deal with planning policy in the interim. The Core Strategy relied on the South East Plan and therefore

the decision to abandon the Core Strategy was correct. He confirmed that he would write to seek clarification of the situation with regard to the SE Plan. It also meant that there was now no basis for the calculation of housing numbers. He understood that gardens would no longer be considered brownfield sites. Better Environment Advisory Group would be considering some implications at their meeting on 22nd June. The Advisory Group would also be considering whether to assume the delegated planning powers for those parts of the District, which fell within the South Downs National Park.

In reply to a Members question the Cabinet Member welcomed the initiative to build a green hotel in Burgess Hill and confirmed that the Council will maximise publicity for the initiative and all local Members will be involved.

In reply to further Members question the Cabinet Member said that the any planning applications have to take into account the rules relating to density as they now stand. He would seek clarification re the position of strategic and local gaps.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Service Delivery

The Cabinet Member reported that following the decision to remove the enhanced element of the car allowance scheme 106 of 107 staff had returned signed letters. The changes would be phased in. The Council was very grateful to staff for their help with this issue. The abolition of the CAA, which had been bureaucratic and top down, would result in a saving in fees. The Audit commission was still responsible for giving a value for money conclusion. There was a move towards greater transparency of monthly spending reports and the work of MSDC in this regard would be highlighted as best practise. A Member workshop to consult on future spending cuts was to be held in due course when more information was available.

In reply to a Members question about pension reform the Cabinet Member agreed that the Council's position does need to be drawn to the attention of Ministers and he would write together with the Head of Finance to highlight this issue. A Member commented that there should be a distinction made between the vast majority of relatively low paid workers pensions and those of higher paid executives. The Cabinet Member reiterated the need to draw Ministers attention to the financial impact of pension provision on the Council.

20. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY GROUPS

Council noted the draft Minutes of the following meeting:-

- (a) Audit Committee 9th March 2010.

Chairman.