

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 18 January 2006 at 6.05pm

Present:-

Councillor C S Belsey (Deputy Mayor) in the Chair

Councillors Mrs Bannister, Berry, Bowker, Elkin, Mrs Goodall, Harris, Mrs Healy, Herbert, Mrs Howlett, Lacey OBE, Lucas, Marsh, Mrs Murray, Mrs Pooley, Mrs Sims, Skilton MBE, Slater, Stanley, Stevens, Taylor, Thompson, Tutt, Warner, Williams and Miss Woodall.

49. Minutes. The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2005 were presented and the Mayor was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

50. Mayoral Engagements. The following recent key mayoral engagements were reported for information:

- Eastbourne Youth Radio 2005
- Launch of Sussex Air Ambulance
- Visit and Tour of Chestnut Tree Children's Hospice, Arundel
- The Mayor's Christmas Bazaar & Mince Pie & Sherry Morning, St Mary's Church (which raised £750 for the Mayor's Charity)
- Christmas Luncheon (Sussex Mayors' Association), Arundel Park Hotel
- Visit to Eastbourne Town Hall by the Quicken Trust
- Celebration Party (Goodbye to the Manor House & 40th Birthday of the Friends of the Tower), Towner Art Gallery
- Celebration of the Victory Day of Bangladesh (The Shunar Bangla Assocaiton), Eastbourne Town Hall
- Civic Evening – Sleeping Beauty, Devonshire Park Theatre
- Traditional Christmas Day Visits to: The Royal Alfred Seafarers' Society, The Chaseley Trust and Our Lady of Ransom Church Hall

51. Disclosures of interests and related matters by Members. The following interests were declared:

- Councillor Thompson declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of item 56 below and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of that item.

- Councillor Lucas declared a non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 57 below and remained in the meeting and participated in the consideration of that item.
- Councillors Elkin and Taylor declared non-prejudicial interests in respect of item 56 below and remained in the meeting and participated in the consideration of that item.

52. Financial Strategy & Council Budget 2006/07. The Council received a report from Councillor Williams on behalf of the Cabinet which had been submitted to give an opportunity to debate the broader issues of the Council's financial position before consideration of the 2006/07 budget at the next meeting. The report outlined the key Financial Strategy issues in respect of Council Tax levels, the budgetary gap between the Council's aspirations and its resources, changes to the Concessionary Fares scheme, and the need to allow for new Government plans, and for new initiatives. The report also summarised the recent public consultation exercise, the need for a revised Capital Programme, and the work that had been ongoing to identify efficiency savings. Council was reminded that the final figures had still to be settled as Government grant could still change and one of the Council's Service and Financial Plans had yet to be concluded.

Noted.

53. Council Tax Base 2006/07. The Acting Director of Financial Services submitted a report in accordance with a provision of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which required each billing Authority to agree its Council Tax Base.

Resolved: (Nem Con): 1. That a Collection Rate of 98.5% for 2006/07 be approved.

2. That a Council Tax Base of 36,305 for 2006/07 be approved.

54. Proposed Change to Financial Procedure Rules – Write-Off of Irrecoverable Debts. This matter was reported by Councillor Williams on behalf of the Cabinet.

Resolved: (By 24 votes to 1) That Financial Procedure Rule 4.26 be amended to allow the Finance Director to write off debts in excess of £5,000 where the debtor is deceased and where no residual estate exists to discharge the debt.

55. Ethics and Standards Training. The Council considered the recommendation of the Standards Committee that all Councillors be required to undertake compulsory training on ethics and standards.

Resolved: That the recommendation of the Standards Committee be endorsed subject to such training being organised and scheduled having regard to Members' other varying commitments, thus enabling all Members to have the opportunity to attend.

- 56. Proposed Waste Plant at Tutts Barn.** The following motion, submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13, was moved by Councillor Slater and seconded by Councillor Harris:-

"That Eastbourne Borough Council wishes to express grave concerns about the proposed Waste Plant at Tutts Barn, as proposed in the East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council, Waste Local Plan. This Council believes that any waste facility at this site would be inappropriate due to its close proximity to: three schools, the District General Hospital, a nursery, allotments and grazing animals. The Council further believes that the way in which this site appeared in the plan (i.e. as part of the 2nd Deposit Draft) meant that many local people were unaware of these plans and not properly consulted on them. The Council therefore resolves to write to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister requesting the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Waste Local Plan be 'called in' as it is in breach of the AARHUS European convention, which says local people must be fully consulted before any major environmental proposals can be implemented."

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Lacey and seconded by Councillor Elkin:-

Remove all words after "Council" in line one and substitute with the following:-

"...urges East Sussex County Council to recognise that the Refuse Household Waste Facility at St Philip's Avenue remains unsatisfactory and unsustainable and that it should be sold and the capital receipt received from the sale be used for the sole purpose of building a new site away from residential development, schools and hospitals.

In addition, Eastbourne Borough Council fully supports residents' demands to maximise recycling measures within the town; recognises the need to raise the percentage of recycled waste, and the requirement of a fully enclosed building for that purpose. Eastbourne Borough Council remains fully committed to maintaining public consultation over any such development proposal."

The above amendment was approved by 13 votes to 9.

An amendment to the effect that the full wording of the original motion be added to the approved amendment to form the substantive motion was moved by Councillor Tutt and seconded by Councillor Stanley. This amendment was lost by 13 votes to 9.

Resolved: (By 24 votes to 1) (Substantive Motion) That the following be approved:-

That Eastbourne Borough Council urges East Sussex County Council to recognise that the Refuse Household Waste Facility at St Philip's Avenue remains unsatisfactory and unsustainable and that it should be sold and the capital receipt received from the sale be used for the sole purpose of building a new site away from residential development, schools and

hospitals.

In addition, Eastbourne Borough Council fully supports residents' demands to maximise recycling measures within the town; recognises the need to raise the percentage of recycled waste, and the requirement of a fully enclosed building for that purpose. Eastbourne Borough Council remains fully committed to maintaining public consultation over any such development proposal.

- 57. Use of Second Homes Council Tax Money.** The following motion, submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13, was moved by Councillor Tutt and seconded by Councillor Mrs Healy:-

"That Eastbourne Borough Council wishes to express its concern at East Sussex County Council's proposal to phase out the Second Homes scheme over the next two years due to the impact that this will have on the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership. The Council therefore calls upon East Sussex County Council to reconsider and withdraw this proposal before setting their budget."

An amendment that the last sentence be deleted and replaced by "The Council further calls upon East Sussex County Council to explain why this is necessary, and to reconsider the position prior to their budget being finalised" was moved by Councillor Lucas, seconded by Councillor Lacey and accepted by Councillor Tutt.

Resolved: (Amendment and Substantive Motion) That the following be approved:-

That Eastbourne Borough Council wishes to express its concern at East Sussex County Council's proposal to phase out the Second Homes scheme over the next two years due to the impact that this will have on the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership. The Council further calls upon East Sussex County Council to explain why this is necessary, and to reconsider the position prior to their budget being finalised.

- 58. Sustainable Communities Bill.** The following motion, submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13, was moved by Councillor Tutt and seconded by Councillor Stanley:-

"That Eastbourne Borough Council

i) expresses its concern at the decline of local services and facilities which affects local communities and in particular the elderly and people on the lowest incomes, the resulting decline of local jobs and local economies and the resulting extra traffic and pollution caused by the need to travel further, and

ii) notes that this combination of factors increases people's feelings of exclusion and lack of involvement, and so

iii) supports measures to reverse this process, and

iv) supports the concept of local sustainability as envisaged in the Sustainable Communities Bill, namely;

- the promotion of local economies
- the promotion of local services and facilities
- the protection of the environment
- the reduction of social exclusion and
- measures to increase involvement in the democratic process

v) and accordingly resolves to support the Sustainable Communities Bill which requires the government to assist councils and communities in promoting local sustainability in ways decided by them; and

sets up a participative process whereby councils and communities can drive the way in which government uses its power and influence to assist with the promotion of local sustainability; and

recognises therefore that the Bill provides for a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top down' one-size-fits-all process

notes that this Bill is therefore fully in accord with current thinking in local government in that it impacts on central authorities and does not impose any new duties on councils but instead enables them to influence how government uses its resources and influence to help councils and communities; and

specifically provides that where councils themselves decide to take action to promote local sustainability they should be given the resources to do so; and so

vi) further resolves

- to inform the local media of the decision;
- to write to the Local Works Campaign (at 94 White Lion St, London N1 9PF) expressing its support."

An amendment deleting all words after "Council" in line one and substituting with "...will write to the MP asking him to consider supporting Early Day Motion 641, calling for the Sustainable Communities Bill to be reintroduced during the lifetime of this parliament" was moved by Councillor Lucas, seconded by Councillor Elkin and accepted by Councillor Tutt.

Resolved: (Nem Con) (Amendment and Substantive Motion) That the following be approved:-

That Eastbourne Borough Council will write to the MP asking him to consider supporting Early Day Motion 641, calling for the Sustainable Communities Bill to be reintroduced during the lifetime of this parliament.

- 59. Community Arts and Cultural Festival.** The following motion, submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13, was moved by Councillor Lucas and seconded by Councillor Mrs Howlett:-

"That this council supports the principle of Eastbourne celebrating the opening of the Cultural Centre in 2007 by having a Community Arts and Cultural Festival, co-ordinated by the council, and that the council will facilitate a public meeting to launch this initiative."

Resolved: (Nem Con) That this motion be approved.

- 60. Minutes of Council Bodies and Items for Discussion.** The minutes of the following Council Bodies were submitted to this meeting:-

Conservation Area Advisory Group	29 November 2005
Scrutiny Committee	5 December 2005
Planning Committee	6 December 2005 & 10 January 2006
Cabinet	14 December 2005
Standards Committee	15 December 2005

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14, Members raised the following items for discussion:-

1. Scrutiny Committee, 5 December 2005 – Page 252, Minute 77 – One Stop Shop Investigation – Raised by Councillor Mrs Healy who thanked staff for their efforts in achieving significant service improvement in this area.

Further to Council Procedure Rule 14.3(e) it was,

Resolved: That all the minutes of the above Council Bodies be accepted.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

**C S Belsey, Deputy Mayor
Chairman**

(pf\P:council\06.01.18\mins)