

**Council**  
**1 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Present: Councillors: David Skipp (Chairman), Kate Rowbottom (Vice-Chairman), Matthew Allen, Tony Bevis, John Blackall, Martin Boffey, Chris Brown, Karen Burgess, Peter Burgess, Jonathan Chowen, Philip Circus, Paul Clarke (Leader), Roy Cornell, Michael Croker, Brian Donnelly, Ruth Fletcher, Billy Greening, Tony Hogben (Deputy Leader), Nigel Jupp, Liz Kitchen, Lynn Lambert, Richard Landeryou, Gordon Lindsay, Tim Lloyd, John Milne, Christian Mitchell, Roger Noel, Bob Platt, Louise Potter, Josh Potts, Stuart Ritchie, Jack Saheid, Claire Vickers, Tricia Youtan and James Wright

Apologies: Councillors: Andrew Baldwin, Toni Bradnum, Alan Britten, Christine Costin, Ray Dawe, Frances Haigh, Colin Minto, Mike Morgan, Jim Sanson, Ian Stannard, Diana van der Klugt and Belinda Walters

CO/27 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 June were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CO/28 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Item 10: Notice of Motion – Councillor Nigel Jupp declared a personal interest because he is a County Councillor.

CO/29 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Claire Vickers, Cabinet Member for Community & Wellbeing, announced that a number of residents were finding it difficult to get a GP appointment and she would look into what could be done to ensure older and vulnerable residents were able to visit their surgeries. The Chairman stated that he was aware of this issue and supported the Cabinet Member in taking this forward.

Councillor Chris Brown, Cabinet Member for the Local Economy, made the following announcements:

- The Y-Wish Youth Employment Hub, located in Swan Walk, had fully opened after lockdown restrictions. The Cabinet Member had recently spoken on Radio Sussex about this valuable resource for helping 18 – 24 year olds get back into employment.
- The Cabinet Member urged Councillors to tell retailers in their wards about the West Sussex Retail Hub. This was an on-line resource supporting retailers across West Sussex, offering training and advice with a focus on getting people back into the high streets.

- This year's Jobs Fair was taking place in the Drill Hall on 2 October. Over 20 employers had signed up already.
- The current round of the Council's LEAP grants had just opened for applications. These grants were for small to medium enterprises in the district and an important resource to help recovery.
- So far 12 Shop Improvement Grants had been approved. There was still approximately £50,000 worth of grants available and the Cabinet Member encouraged independent retailers in the district to apply.

Councillor Roger Noel, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, made the following announcements:

- The Wider Horsham District board had signed off the completed Nature Recovery Network. This was a major milestone for recovering the natural environment and would give residents the opportunity to be part of our move towards a low carbon future. He thanked the officers who had worked so hard to complete the NRN, and also thanked Councillor Jonathan Chowen, the previous Cabinet Member who had been instrumental in setting up the Wilder Horsham District project.
- Jeremy Knight, Horsham Museum's curator for 32 years, had announced his retirement. The Cabinet Member thanked him for his commitment and expertise over the years and for the quality of the exhibitions he had curated. While the museum was closed during the pandemic its collections had been completely reorganised. There would be a special evening event on 1 October for staff, volunteers and friends of the museum ahead of its opening to the public on 2 October. The Chairman of the Council endorsed the Cabinet Member's sentiments regarding Jeremy's contribution and legacy.

Councillor Philip Circus, Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste, Recycling & Cleansing, made the following announcements:

- He had visited the Depot with the Chief Executive and Director of Community Services to thank staff for their hard work in running the services within his portfolio. Their loyalty had helped run a comprehensive service throughout the challenges brought by the pandemic.
- Food waste collections were going to be trialled shortly, beginning with a number of properties in Billingshurst in September. The Cabinet Member advised that this would also potentially include changes to the current routine of waste collections.

Councillor Louise Potter, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, formally thanked Godfrey Newman, who had resigned as a District Councillor last month because of ill health, for his many years of service, including his commitment to residents of Forest ward. She spoke of his warmth, pragmatism and sense of humour.

Councillor Peter Burgess, the Council's Armed Forces representative, made the following announcements:

- On 15 September the Council would organise a celebration of the Battle of Britain. It would be a low-key occasion of about half an hour at the War Memorial.
- Remembrance Day on Sunday 14 November would be organised by the Royal British Legion and the Council. He hoped that this year it would be possible to hold a parade.

CO/30 **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions relevant to the business of the meeting had been received.

CO/31 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET**

Item withdrawn from the agenda.

CO/32 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

Councillor John Blackall, Vice-Chairman of the Licensing Committee, advised that the Council's Taxi and Private Hire Policy had been revised to reflect changes in the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Standards. These changes were aimed mainly at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Councillor Blackall confirmed that at the Committee meeting in June officers had answered queries regarding the new legislation and resulting changes to the Council's procedures to the Committee's satisfaction. Public consultation on the revised policy had taken place and no representations had been received.

The recommendation to approve the adoption of the statutory Taxi & Private Hire Standards and Conditions was seconded by Councillor Gordon Lindsay.

RESOLVED

That the statutory Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and Guidance (including standards and conditions), as set out in Appendix A to the Licensing Committee report, be adopted.

REASON

- i) To protect the public.
- ii) To ensure transparency and openness in decision-making.

CO/33 **GRANT DECISIONS ARISING FROM THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

The Chief Executive reminded Members that he had been granted the authority to use emergency powers to take decisions quickly to ensure that government funding made available to counter the impact of the pandemic could be spent in a timely manner.

By allocating Additional Restrictions Grant funding without waiting for the cycle of meetings that would allow for Cabinet and Council endorsement, the Council had been able to secure a further £1.29m tranche of funding to help the district's businesses recover.

The Chief Executive gave details of funding that had been allocated to projects supporting the mental health and wellbeing of younger people; by using the emergency powers this support had been available during the summer holidays. The Cabinet Member for Community & Wellbeing thanked officers for providing these extra services to young people when most needed.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he used the emergency powers sparingly and had consulted with Cabinet Members and the Leader before taking these decisions.

**RESOLVED**

- i) That the amendments to the Additional Restrictions Discretionary Grant scheme and the spend without budget on mental health services made by the Chief Executive under his Head of Paid Service powers outlined in section 3 be noted.
- ii) To delegate to the Chief Executive the approval of any further amendments to the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme, subject to reporting these back to the following Council meeting.
- iii) To approve the addition of £120,000 of grant to the Council's community development budget.

**REASON**

- i) The use of Additional Restrictions Grant met the Government's request to help businesses eligible for Restart Grants in July. Using the remainder of the Council's allocation of Additional Restrictions Grant in this way meant the Council was able to obtain an extra £1,289,093 grant to further help Horsham District's businesses in the autumn and winter. Allowing the Chief Executive to make changes to the Additional Restrictions Grant policies will allow him to quickly allocate money to businesses. The Director of Corporate Resources already has a delegation for setting up projects and their budgets in consultation with a group of Cabinet members and the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny.
- ii) The decision to spend the youth mental health grant immediately allowed critical work for the wellbeing of Horsham District's young people to begin during the school holiday period.

CO/34 **REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Liz Kitchen, the Council's representative on GatCom reported that the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) were carrying out two consultations, one regarding night flights.

The second consultation was on the proposal to bring a second runway into regular use. The impact of a second runway on the district would be profound and Councillor Kitchen stated that she would bring a Notice of Motion to the next Council meeting so that a consultation response agreed by the whole Council could be submitted.

The Chairman of the Council thanked Councillor Kitchen for her involvement with GatCom. He encouraged other Councillors who were representatives on outside bodies to bring reports to future Council meetings.

CO/35 **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Billy Greening and seconded by Councillor Peter Burgess:

*“Council notes the humanitarian disaster resulting from the fall of Afghanistan and Kabul to the Taliban.*

*Council further notes the efforts to evacuate many Afghan nationals, including those who have worked with the UK military and diplomatic presence in Afghanistan, to the UK.*

*Council resolves to support efforts to resettle those refugees, working with the Home Office, charities and other agencies, and to help accommodate a fair and reasonable number locally alongside/as are many other local authorities, with appropriate Government funding and support.’*

Members debated the proposal. The Cabinet Member for Housing & Public Protection confirmed that the Council was committed to doing what it can to house those allocated to the area and support them in finding a better life. She was working with West Sussex County Council, who had overall responsibility in facilitating the government's resettling scheme. Councillor Nigel Jupp confirmed that WSCC was playing a full part and was liaising with all district councils in West Sussex.

On being put, the motion was unanimously declared CARRIED.

CO/36 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Three Questions on Notice had been received.

1. Councillor Mike Croker asked Councillor Lynn Lambert, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, the following question:

*‘I note from Appendix 3 of the ‘Local Plan Evidence Base Summary’ of the proposed Regulation 19 Horsham District Local Plan that was presented to*

*Cabinet at Agenda Item 6 on 15 July that a Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document was apparently in preparation by somebody known as 'CSE'. I also note in paragraph 9.7 of the draft plan that 'A Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document, to support Policies 36, 37 and 38 will provide further guidance on these matters'.*

*Please can the Cabinet Member for Planning & Development say when the drafts of these documents will be available for members' and/or public scrutiny?'*

The Cabinet Member replied:

*'As you note, it is the Council's intention to produce a Supplementary Planning Document on Climate change matters in order to support the Local Plan once it is adopted. We have started work on this at an early stage so that we can hit the ground running once we have a local plan in place.*

*The purpose of SPDS is to provide guidance on how to use or interpret planning policies. They do not set policies themselves. Therefore we cannot progress the SPD until we have a new Local Plan in place – until that time the policy wording could change or there may be updates from government which lead to policy changes.*

*I am very happy to ensure that Members are involved in this process. However, this will need to follow the adoption of the plan which is programmed for 2023.'*

In reply, Councillor Croker asked a supplementary question:

*'Will the Cabinet Member consider consulting Members about the SPD prior to 2023?'*

The Cabinet Member replied:

*'As already outlined the policy framework can be changed by the inspector or updated by government guidance during the Local Plan examination. This will mean updates to the SPD would be needed as well – making comments at this stage premature and possibly abortive.*

*In addition, the Local Plan staff are now fully committed on Local Plan review work and we cannot resource additional work on other matters at this point in time.'*

2. Councillor John Milne asked Councillor Lynn Lambert, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, the following question:

*'It has been determined in 3 recent planning appeals that HDC can no longer claim a 5-year-land-supply, with significant negative potential for the district.*

*HDC's calculation in all 3 appeals counted 5 years forward from a base date of 1 April 2020, which was the most up to date figure available at the time.*

*However, the housing delivery figures to 31 March 2021 should now be finalised or about to be. According to planning guidelines, we can now legitimately advance the calculation by one year and switch to a 1 April 2021 base date, as will also be used in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) later this year.*

*Can the Cabinet Member confirm that this approach will be adopted forthwith, and that further planning applications can thereby continue to be determined on the premise that HDC once again has a 5-year-land-supply?’*

The Cabinet Member replied:

*‘Following the 3 recent appeal decisions at New House Farm, Horsham; Rascals Farm, Southwater and Sandy Lane, Henfield, it is confirmed that HDC no longer has a 5 year supply. The conclusions of these inspectors differ slightly but our current supply is between 4.2 and 4.4 years.*

*You are correct that our next Authority Monitoring Report (or AMR) will include the housing completion figures for the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021. In addition, the base date for the new 2021 AMR will be rolled forward to 1 April 2021.*

*However, it does not follow that a 5-year supply figure is automatically re-instated once the base date moves and the new 5-year supply figure is calculated.*

*As you may be aware, our housing completion figures are finalised by WSCC. This work has not yet been completed. I am therefore not able to comment on whether or not we will have a 5-year supply when the next AMR is published.’*

Councillor Milne responded by saying there were three reasons to argue that our 5-year supply would materially improve. Firstly, the 700 houses that the inspectors had judged inadmissible were still part of our future supply and it was reasonable to expect them to be included in the next 5-year supply. Secondly, the impact of Covid in 2020/21 led to the delivery of approximately 250 fewer houses than our annual requirement; 2020/21 will be replaced by 2025/26 in the next calculation, which should have higher totals. Thirdly, the 100 houses granted on appeal at Rascals Farm could now be added. Councillor Milne concluded that, given the above, our apparent shortfall should become marginal or disappear altogether. He urged the Council to take a robust approach and continue to claim a 5-year-land-supply.

3. Councillor Bob Platt asked Councillor Lynn Lambert, Cabinet Member for Planning & Development, the following question:

*‘The Horsham District Draft Local Plan 2021-38 is currently under review to meet the new requirements of the NPPF, including a Review of the Sustainability Appraisal to take into account a 30-year vision. The Government seems to have done HDC a favour by changing the NPPF to include a 30-year vision for strategic sites, as it has, firstly, given us 4 to 5 months to think the*

*Plan through and secondly, reminded us that by 2050 the United Kingdom should be carbon net zero. As there is no point in waiting until 2039, should not the new draft Local Plan require all new builds to be carbon neutral in operation, thereby not adding to the massive housing retrofit requirement that will be needed in Horsham District?’*

The Cabinet Member replied:

*‘I agree that the issue of climate change is very important. Whilst it will ultimately be a matter for the Council to agree the policies on this and other topics, officers drafting the plan are already aware of the need to avoid adding to the need to retrofit existing stock and are drafting policies to ensure that local and national carbon net zero targets can be met. This includes a commitment to ensuring that from 2025 (which, by the time the plan is adopted will be when most of the new homes are built from), new build can meet net zero carbon in their lifetime and thereby removing the need for costly retrofitting.*

*In addition, I can confirm that as part of the further work on the 30-year vision for strategic sites, the longer term need to achieve carbon net zero in that timescale is a key consideration.’*

CO/37 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

*The meeting closed at 7.25 pm having commenced at 6.00 pm*

**CHAIRMAN**