

## FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **Minutes for the meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone on Wednesday, 30 November 2022**

**Present:** Councillors Mrs Ann Berry, Danny Brook, Miss Susan Carey, John Collier, Laura Davison, Ray Field, Gary Fuller, Peter Gane, Clive Goddard, David Godfrey, Anthony Hills (Vice-Chair), Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee, Nicola Keen, Michelle Keutenius, Jim Martin, Philip Martin (Chairman), Connor McConville, Jackie Meade, Ian Meyers, David Monk, Terence Mullard, Stuart Peall, Patricia Rolfe, Rebecca Shoob, Georgina Treloar, Douglas Wade, Lesley Whybrow and John Wing

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Tim Prater and David Wimble

#### 40. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

#### 41. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2022 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

#### 42. **Chairman's Communications**

The Chairman advised that he had attended a dozen events, it was a busy time with the lead up to Christmas and there were many charities needing support. He stated that a list of the events he had attended would be appended to the minutes.

#### 43. **Petitions**

A petition asking for the development at Princes Parade to be abandoned has been received and has a total of 311 signatures. As per the petitions scheme, set out in part 4 of the constitution, petitions which receive more than 250 signatures can be presented to a meeting of Full Council.

Proposed by Councillor Whybrow,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That report A/22/20 be received and noted.**
- 2. That option (b) be agreed (that the petition be referred to Cabinet, for consideration alongside the options report, and that the stopping of the project be included as an option for consideration).**

In accordance with the council procedure rule 17.5, five members present demanded a recorded vote.

FOR: Councillors Mrs Berry, Brook, Miss Carey, Collier, Davison, Field, Fuller, Gane, Goddard, Godfrey, Hills, Mrs Hollingsbee, Keen, Keutenius, J Martin, P

Martin, McConville, Meade, Meyers, Monk, Mullard, Rolfe, Shoob, Treloar, Wade, Whybrow and Wing (27).

AGAINST: None (0).

ABSTENTIONS: Councillor Peall (1).

(Voting figures: 27 for, 0 against, 1 abstention).

**44. Questions from the Public**

The questions asked, including supplementary questions (if any), and the answers given are set out in Schedule 1, appended to these minutes.

**45. Questions from Councillors**

The questions asked, including supplementary questions (if any), and the answers given are set out in Schedule 2, appended to these minutes.

**46. Announcements of the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

“Good evening to all.

Tonight I am only going to talk about 2 things:-

The first is about our Custom Service Excellence Certification. Earlier in the year the assessor from the Centre for Assessment visited the District to carry out a comprehensive assessment and I am pleased to say that we have once again been awarded the Certificate of Customer Service Excellence, which runs until September 2025.

But, not only did we receive the main Certificate, but we were also successful in being awarded Compliance Plus in 16 categories.

This is a tremendous achievement and reflects the custom first approach for this council and our engagement with our partners. My congratulations go to all of our staff and in particular to Karen Everett and her team, who so ably presented our case.

The second thing I would like to mention is one of the things that impressed the assessor, was the ‘My Account’ system. This gives our residents 24 hour access to the council and now 67% of households across the district are signed up for a My Account which is magnificent.

Well done all”.

The Leader of the Opposition responded to the announcements and stated that it was amazing to receive such awards, and his congratulated the hard working officers of the council, who often worked under challenging circumstances. He then stated it was important not to rest on our laurels, and the council should always strive to do better. With regard to MyAccount, he stated that it was great that early bugs had been resolved, and on the doorstep people stated the service was better service, but he added that it was important not to shift the balance to doing things online, a good service was still needed for residents to phone the council, calls to be answered in a timely manner and those residents receive the same service and speedy outcomes as offered through the MyAccount service.

The Leader then advised that the council had still managed, 9 years on, to get 16 compliant pluses from the assessors mean the team were not resting on their laurels and were continuing to look forward and improve service to customers. He added that access to information was still the founding principle that would always be a fall-back position for those without digital access.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Announcements of the Leader be noted.**

(The recommendation was agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

47. **Opposition Business**

Councillor McConville, on behalf of the Labour Group, set out the opposition business which requested that Air BnB properties be treated as commercial properties in respect of waste disposal.

Proposed by Councillor McConville,  
Seconded by Councillor Keutenius; and

**RESOLVED:**

That Option B (Refer the issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their observations before deciding whether to make a decision on the issue) be applied for the business set out below:

- To contact every self-catering holiday let business as shown on the register, informing them of their duty to dispose of their commercial waste by legal means and show evidence of this to the council.
- To consider the establishment of an in-house commercial waste collection operation to achieve the following:
  - Increase council revenue
  - Offer small businesses a cost effective and legal waste collection service
  - To ensure council tax is not paying for commercial waste collection.
  - To promote commercial recycling and food waste recycling.

(Voting figures: 26 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions).

#### 48. **Motions on Notice**

- (1) Councillor Gane introduced his motion which requested that Overview and Scrutiny consider various issues related to illegal encampments.

Proposed by Councillor Gane,  
Seconded by Councillor Fuller; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny be asked to consider ways in which the district council can assist town and parish councils in the area with legally moving on illegal encampments on their land (including land leased from the district council) as quickly as possible, and to at least the same level that they are able to deal with incursions on their own land.**

(The recommendation was agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

- (2) Councillor Whybrow introduced her motion which proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider capturing the lessons learned during the Princes Parade project.

Proposed by Councillor Whybrow,  
Seconded by Councillor Wade; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Overview and Scrutiny be asked to consider capturing the lessons learned from Princes Parade, particularly given the severe financial implications for the council and taxpayers of decisions that were made, and that the three ward members for Hythe be invited to take part.**

In accordance with the council procedure rule 17.5, five members present demanded a recorded vote.

FOR: Councillors Mrs Berry, Brook, Davison, Field, Fuller, Gane, Keen, Keutenius, J Martin, McConville, Meade, Meyers, Mullard, Shoob, Treloar, Wade, Whybrow and Wing (18).

AGAINST: Councillors Miss Carey, Collier, Goddard, Godfrey, Hills, Mrs Hollingsbee, P Martin and Monk. (8).

ABSTENTIONS: Councillors Peall and Rolfe (1).

(Voting figures: 18 for, 8 against, 2 abstentions).

49. **Princes Parade - Closure of Footpath South of Seaview Bridge**

The report recorded the recommendations made at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 November 2022 to close the footpath south of Sea View Bridge, once works on Princes Parade commence in earnest. (NB: The path is not currently closed). A petition had been presented to the Council calling for the footpath to be kept open after working hours and at weekends. After hearing a factual presentation concerning the rationale leading to the closure decision the Committee felt that the closure must be implemented when works commenced.

Proposed by Councillor Keutenius,  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That report A/22/21 be received and noted.**
2. **That the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be noted and the footpath south of Seaview Bridge be closed once works are commenced on site at Princes Parade.**
3. **That residents are to be given timely notification when work commences on the site, leading to the closure of the footpath**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

50. **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy ('MTFS') is the Council's key financial planning document. It puts the financial perspective on the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, expressing the aims and objectives of the various plans and strategies in financial terms over the four year period ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027. It covers both revenue and revenue implications for capital spend for the General Fund. Also included are the Council's reserves policies. The MTFS is a key element of sound corporate governance and financial management.

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An addendum had been circulated prior to the meeting setting out amended recommendations.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That report A/22/22 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as appended to the report, be agreed and adopted.**

(Voting figures: 21 for, 0 against, 7 abstentions).