

Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of the **CROWBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL** held at the Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 at 7.30pm

Present	Councillors	Alison Arthur	(also WDC)
		Peter Bucklitsch	
		Jane Clark	(also WDC)
		Suzanne Dixon	
		Martyn Everitt	(also WDC)
		Martyn Garrett	
		Paul Goddard	
		David Hedges	
		Richard Jury	
		Kay Moss	
		Beverly Pashley*	
		Simon Ryder	
		Matthew Street	Mayor
Neil Waller*			
Natalie Whittle	Deputy Mayor		
Also present		Caroline Miles	Town Clerk
		Melanie Street	Deputy Town Clerk
		Cllr James Partridge	WDC Councillor
		Cllr Ian Tysh	WDC Councillor
		Cllr Andrew Wilson	WDC Councillor

1 member of public in the chamber

*Denotes non attendance

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Mayor thanked the Wealden District Councillors for attending and explained the format of the meeting. WDC Councillor Partridge gave a short statement.

Members took the opportunity to ask the Wealden Councillors a range of questions and share comments relating to the Draft Local Plan. Councillors asked what will happen if there remains an overall shortfall of 4,000 houses and whether the shortfall would result in the rejection of the Plan; why the market element of 4-plus bedroom houses remains high and whether more smaller properties could be encouraged; whether the Plan could include criteria for the bedroom to bathroom ratio in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and how the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) around the town, and specifically the edges of these areas, can be protected in the future.

Members also commented on the need to conduct a swift Boundary Review, specifically including Cooks Corner and Tubwell Lane; a range of errors and inconsistencies in the document and the need to address the infrastructure in the town, specifically mentioning

water services, doctors' surgeries, schools, rail and bus services across the town and county, and general transport services.

Cllrs Tysh and Wilson left the chamber.

One member of the public left the chamber.

PRAYER

The Mayor opened the meeting with a prayer.

APOLOGIES

Cllr Beverly Pashley

Cllr Neil Waller

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MINUTES

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 12th March 2024

10487 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2024 as confirmed be ratified by the Chairperson.

WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

To consider the Draft Local Plan and agree any action

The Council agreed that the response to Wealden District Council would be sent by email. It agreed the response should include the following comments:

- The council would like to see more multiple occupancy or studio units which would be suitable for young people or those on a low income.
- Young people cannot access education and employment due to a poor transport network. The Draft Plan states there is a 'very frequent' hourly bus service; the council does not consider an hourly service to be 'very frequent'. In addition, the FlexiBus is currently only contracted until 31st March 2025. Finally, the Brighton and Hove bus route 29 between

Brighton and Tunbridge Wells is the only bus route which regularly serves the town and other routes across the county are severely lacking. It would also be helpful if this route went through some of the larger residential estates. Clarification on the 'County-Wide Transport Model' would also be welcomed.

- The council is keen to explore the reinvigoration of the High Street.
- The council would like to see the extension of the Conservation Area within the town to encompass the Rush site and Fieldbus newsagents, and to include the first floor.
- The council is keen to encourage the reuse of site materials and to retain historical connections. It is supportive of the rejection of the old Police Station under the SHLAA as it is a valued historical asset in the town but would like to see this policy extended to other sites with historical connections such as Willetts House (formerly Pilmer House).
- There should be more emphasis on retaining historical trees and hedges. Whilst this can be a requirement of planning permission, the council has noted that following permission being granted the county council then specifies it needs wider spaces for its services and historical trees and hedges are removed. The council would like to see the county council included in the process prior the permission being granted so that the district council can specify precisely what can be removed and what should be retained.
- Green and recreational spaces provided should be adequate and multi-generational spaces.
- The council would like to see rail transport services improved including the extension of the rail line, electrification, and a dual track.
- A learner pool for the leisure centre is listed in the Plan as a 'high priority' goal. The council is very supportive of this goal.
- The Plan states that an additional 2.5 3G pitches are required for the town. The council would be willing to discuss the availability of its site at Palesgate Lane as a possible site for a pitch if the district council decides to address this shortfall.
- The council would like boundary review to be carried out as soon as possible to reflect the true location of peripheral developments such as Cooks Corner and Tubwell Lane. Sites such as these will clearly depend on amenities provided by Crowborough, but they currently fall outside of the boundary and thus do not contribute to the town in terms of CiL funds, voting or financial contribution towards services.
- The council would like to express concern that CR5, which is listed as Millbrook, currently has no discernible access without the need to cross a stream and bulldoze existing properties. Additionally, the council is concerned that CR2 Pilmer Road would have significant effects on the A26 intersection.
- The sustainability models for business in the town do not allow for larger business units than those currently proposed at Farningham Road. Local businesses have expressed a desire for larger sites to facilitate their growth, and this would encourage sustainability. The council would also like to see more employment infrastructure for the town in the Plan.
- Details on the sustainability plan are incorrect, such as the number of medical practices and public houses. There is also inconsistency in how this is reported across the different towns in Wealden.
- The council would appreciate clarification on the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule which has referenced issues at some parks and open spaces. The schedule mentioned the illegal use of the boating pond and poor signage – the council is unclear as to what this illegal usage is. It references a lack of allotments for the town but fails to mention two of the three allotment sites run by the council (Owlsbury Farm and Pilmer Road). It does not include Summersales Burial Ground as a forthcoming site and instead references a

cemetery at St Mary's where there is none. It lists issues with Hilders Farm AGS but gives no information as to where this is or who is responsible for maintenance and upkeep. It lists Bethany Close play area, but this is a privately maintained park run by a management company for residents in that development. Finally, it highlights deficiencies in football pitch maintenance which has been remedied by an agreement between the town council and Football Foundation.

- Cricket is not referenced at Wolfe Recreation Ground and should be included.
- The town council would like to be consulted on the next Leisure Services Review and be informed when this will be taking place.
- It is unclear how the assessment of the parish hall provision has been conducted. If all halls available for hire by the general public should be listed, then several are missing. If it should only be town council halls then the Rugby Club should be removed and the Whitehill Centre included.
- The Plan notes that additional spaces will be required at Grove Park school but does not state if that is the primary or secondary site, nor how that may be achieved.
- The Plan lists Mead House car park as an available car park; this was developed for housing a few years ago and no longer exists.

The response should also note that the council supports the Draft Local Plan and believes it offers a good deal for Crowborough. It supports the number of homes that have been allocated and is pleased to note that development is restrained as a result of the protected areas around the town.

10488 RESOLVED that the Town Clerk send an email to Wealden District Council with the comments noted as the town council's response to the Draft Local Plan consultation.

Cllr Partridge left the chamber.

DRAINAGE WORK PINE GROVE

To note the Officer's Report and agree any action

The report was noted. Members agreed that using vinyl in this area of the building would be more hard wearing and longer lasting.

10489 RESOLVED to accept the Option 4 quote from Pennells Carpets if all required areas are included in the quote, at a cost of £4,728.83 with funds to be taken from EMR 323/9071/901.

URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

The Mayor reminded councillors that the Annual Town Meeting would be taking place the following day.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.