

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on 26 July 2023

Present

Councillor Raines (Mayor)

Councillors Rason, Blades, Briggs, Gray, Gray, Coates, Brent, Harris, Bowdell, Bowerman, Crellin, Fairhurst, Guest, Keast, Kennett, Linger, Lloyd, Milne, Munday, Patel, Payter, Rennie, Redsull, Richardson, Robinson, Sceal, Mrs Shimbart, Stone, Tindall, Turner, Wade (Deputy Mayor) and Weeks

24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Denton, Diamond and Patrick.

25 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interests from the members present relating to matters on the agenda.

26 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting of the Council held on 21 June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

27 New Councillor Introduction

The Mayor invited recently elected Councillor Rason introduced herself to members.

28 Mayor's Report

The Mayor had nothing further to add to her published report and there were no questions from members present.

29 Public Speaking under Standing Orders 27.5 & 28

There were 3 questions received from members of the public in accordance with these Standing Orders.

Mrs Buckley attended Council and asked her questions which were duly responded to by Councillor Lloyd within the meeting.

A full list of questions and a summary of the responses are attached as an appendix to the minutes.

30 Cabinet/Board/Committee Recommendations

There were 2 Cabinet / Board / Committee recommendations for Council to consider at this meeting.

1 Overview & Scrutiny's Annual Report

Councillor Kennett introduced this item and recommendations to Council arising from the meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 05 July 2023, seeking Council to note the report.

Proposed by Councillor Kennett, seconded by Councillor Crellin, Council:

RESOLVED that the submitted 2022/23 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report be noted.

2 Membership of the Solent Cluster

Councillor Lloyd introduced this item and recommendations to Council arising from the meeting of Cabinet held on 26 July 2023, seeking agreement for Havant Borough Council to become a member of the Solent Cluster.

Proposed by Councillor Lloyd, seconded by Councillor Linger, following debate and a vote in which there was one abstention, Council:

RESOLVED that Havant Borough Council become a member of the Solent Cluster.

31 Health and Safety Policy Statement 2023/24

A motion to Council to approve the Health & Safety Policy Statement for 2023/2024 was proposed by Councillor Bowdell and seconded by Councillor Wade. Council considered the published report and following a vote, Council:

RESOLVED that the Health and Safety Policy Statement for 2023/24 be approved.

32 Leader's Report

In presenting his published report, the Leader wished to highlight the Council's successful in achieving Gold award status for the Armed Forces Scheme. Cabinet thanked officers, in particular to Laura Bevis and former Councillor Thain-Smith, for their work behind the scenes in achieving this success and looked forward to the award ceremony later in the year on HMS Warrior on 05 October 2023.

The Leader responded to questions from Councillors on his published report within the meeting.

33 Cabinet Lead Reports

The Cabinet Leads took questions from Councillors on their published reports, which were duly responded to within the meeting.

34 Questions Under Standing Order 27.4.1

There were 6 questions received from Councillors under the provision of this standing order, which were duly responded to within the meeting by the relevant Cabinet Leads.

A summary of the questions and responses is attached as an appendix to the minutes of this meeting.

35 Urgent Questions Under Standing Order 27.4.2

There were no urgent questions received from Councillors under the provision of this standing order.

36 Notice of Motions under Standing Order 14.1

The Council considered the published motion proposed by Councillor Turner and seconded by Councillor Coates. Following debate and a vote, Council:

RESOLVED

To support the establishment of an annual Honourable Havant Citizen Award. Establish a Civic Board to support the annual Honourable Havant Citizen Award and any future Freedom/Freeman of the Borough nominations.

37 Acceptance of Minutes

Proposed by Councillor Keast and seconded by Councillor Sceal, Council:

RESOLVED that the minutes of Committees held since the last meeting of Council be received.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and concluded at 6.58 pm

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Chairman

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Item 6 – Public Question Received under Standing Order 27.5

	Question From	Question to	Question
1	Mrs Buckley	Councillor Lloyd	<p>On 31st January 2023 in a response to my question asking if Portsmouth Water customers in Havant would receive the recycled water I received and shared with you the following reply from Bob Taylor, Chief Executive Portsmouth Water :</p> <p>'If the recycling project is approved the mixed water will be supplied to two outlets. One of these used on a more routine basis, sends water to use at Farlington water treatment works for further treatment and to supply our Portsmouth Water customers. The other supply will in times drought deliver a supply to Southern Waters Otterbourne Treatment Works.</p> <p>At the Overview and Scrutiny presentation on 5th July 2023 when questioned about Havant residents receiving this recycled water 5 per cent of the time was mentioned by Bob Taylor. 5 percent equates to using the reservoir for Portsmouth Water's customers including Havant for approximately 18 days in a year.</p> <p>At the same meeting Portsmouth Water's Slide 18 indicated 'our customers will only receive some recycled water mixed with spring water in draught or emergency scenarios' and that Portsmouth Water customers will almost always receive water from Bedhampton Springs.</p> <p>These three descriptions are very different. Are you concerned that conflicting responses are being given by Portsmouth Water's Chief Executive?</p>
<p>Reply: The Council understands the concerns residents have with the water recycling proposals and agrees that any inconsistencies in information provided, should be clarified. The water recycling scheme is not the Council's proposal, nor will the Council be the</p>			

	Question From	Question to	Question
			<p>decision maker. Since it is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project it will ultimately fall to the Secretary of State to make the final decision on the scheme. Because the scheme is being promoted by a third party, the Council is not best placed to provide detailed responses to technical questions and feels specific points should be directed to either Portsmouth Water or Southern Water.</p> <p>The Council will of course continue to engage with and to question Southern Water and Portsmouth Water on the proposal and will be a strong advocate for Havant and it's residents when the Development Consent Order is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The Council will also work with the water companies on their engagement strategy, to urge them to meaningfully and extensively inform and consult with local communities, on the proposal.</p> <p>The Council absolutely expects both Portsmouth Water and Southern Water to be absolutely clear, transparent and consistent with the information they provide to residents and the Council, as well as the information they will eventually provide to the Planning Inspectorate for the Development Consent Order application.</p>
2	Mrs Buckley	Councillor Lloyd	<p>The water company information keeps changing in relation to the proposed effluent recycling. Initially Southern Water said that they would need to treat and pump 5 MI/d of recycled effluent up to the reservoir every day of the year. That was 2 Olympic sized swimming pools, then it increased to 3, now in the latest information presented by Portsmouth Water they say that 8 Olympic sized pools of water (20MI/d) of effluent will be treated and pumped to the reservoir, even though the recycled water is only needed as a drought resource.</p> <p>Just imagine all the energy that is required every day to treat and pump the recycled effluent, the carbon footprint will be enormous.</p> <p>Would you agree with me that this is not sustainable solution and that we must press Southern Water to undertake a more robust review of the alternatives, in conjunction with the regulators, to identify more sustainable and better value solutions to meet and identify short and medium term water shortfall in a drought?</p>

	Question From	Question to	Question
<p>Reply:</p> <p>The Water companies have set out and have consulted on their review of alternatives through their Water Resources Management Plans. The Council responded to that consultation, questioning whether it is the best option. The Council will continue to engage robustly throughout the Development Consent Order process and ensure we continue to be a strong advocate for the interests of the Borough.</p>			
3	Mrs Buckley	Councillor Lloyd	Having listened to the water companies would you and other key councillors be prepared to meet with representatives of local groups who are concerned about effluent recycling to give them the opportunity to voice their concerns?
<p>Reply:</p> <p>The concerns of local residents are well understood, and the Council has already hosted a well-attended public meeting where the Council and the water companies, clearly heard the concerns that residents have. The Council has made clear to the water companies that there is significant local concern over the scheme in its communications with both Portsmouth Water and Southern Water.</p> <p>I would be happy to meet with representatives of local groups who are concerned about wastewater recycling, so they have the opportunity to voice their concerns directly with me.</p> <p>I must however, stress again, to any and all residents' groups and members, that it is not the Council who will be deciding whether the principle or the details of the proposal are acceptable. This proposal will be considered and determined by the Secretary of State under a Development Consent Order. As I've already stated, the Council will continue to engage robustly throughout the Development Consent Order process and ensure we continue to be a strong advocate for the interests of the Borough.</p> <p>I will ensure a link to the project FAQs is added to the Council website, where residents can find out more about how they can feed in their view to the decision-making process.</p>			

	Question From	Question to	Question
As mentioned, the Council will also work with the water companies on their engagement strategy, to urge them to meaningfully and extensively inform and consult with local residents.			

Item 11 – Questions Received under Standing Order 27.4.1

	Question From	Question to	Question
1	Councillor Kennett	Councillor Lloyd	Why is Havant Borough Council still working on developing a Local Plan at a time when dozens of other councils have stopped developing theirs?

Reply:
 Councillor Kennett, like all Members, you will be aware that Government is considering a number of potential changes to the planning system. These are detailed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. It is important to note that at this time the Government has not confirmed what, if any, reforms will be implemented and by when.

The Council is aware that other local authorities have delayed moving ahead to the next stages of plan making pending further clarity on the reforms. This is very different from abandoning a plan altogether. No authority to our knowledge has abandoned their local plan entirely.

Havant Borough Council considers it a key priority to ensure that a new Local Plan is in place to provide certainty to our residents and potential investors on what development and change will be supported in the Borough. It also allows us to better coordinate infrastructure delivery across the Borough and to set out a positive vision for the places which we control.

Our new Local Plan will also provide an up-to-date framework to determine applications and it will include the significant environmental safeguards, development quality standards and low carbon design requirements that we wish to see and which we know our residents want to see too.

Having a plan in place also enables the Council to better fend off speculative developments which it does not support. If we were to stop developing our local plan, it would be open season for developers looking at greenfield sites. As you know the Council does not currently have a five year supply of housing and as such it is vulnerable to speculative applications on green field sites. The appeals granted in Bedhampton demonstrate the impact of not having a plan in place and the weight inspectors give to not having a five year supply of land.

	Question From	Question to	Question
			<p>Therefore, while Havant Borough Council is keen to get a plan in place, it is doing so thoroughly, to ensure the need to co-operate with other planning authorities in the sub-region of southeast Hampshire, is fully tested. We are taking a cautious approach to the project creating the Local Plan so that reforms to the planning system which may be announced in the short term, can be taken into account. As part of the development of the Local Plan we will examine very carefully the requirement for new homes in the Borough and robustly test Havant's ability to meet those requirements.</p> <p>There are difficult choices ahead of us in the Local Plan (not least in potential sites for development). However, I sincerely hope that we can all agree on one point. The best way to provide an optimistic vision for the future of our borough, resisting development schemes which do not share that vision and protecting our natural environment, is to move forwards with our local plan, engaging with our residents and get it in place as swiftly as we can.</p>
2	Councillor Rason	Councillor Lloyd	<p>Housing provision within Havant borough is not meeting the need of our residents. We have 1700 plus on the housing waiting list and this number is rising due to increasing interest rates.</p> <p>The houses being built here are 10 times the average annual wage and are mainly on greenfield sites. The members of the council find they are unable to counter the developers who are not building homes that residents need. The government has removed the allocations for councils to build new homes.</p> <p>Is HBC continuing to keep these targets and if so why? And if not, why not?</p>
			<p>Reply: You, like all Members, will be aware that Government is considering a number of potential changes to the planning system. These will be detailed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. Despite these anticipated changes, the Government has not removed allocations for Councils to build new homes, known as the Standard Method. Government has though reiterated that the Standard Method is the starting point for planning for new housing. It is essential that we get the right housing policy framework in place in the Building a Better Future Plan. Our consultation document was clear last year setting out on page 20: <i>"The Government requires 516 new homes per year as a starting point, but having regard to the extent of housing need that exists alongside environmental constraints, it is unlikely that the Borough will be able to address its housing</i></p>

	Question From	Question to	Question
<p><i>need in full over the plan period. This will mean working with our neighbouring authorities to ask whether they are able to plan for additional homes over their own need. The Council will continue to discuss this with neighbouring and nearby local authorities.”</i></p>			
3	Councillor Rason	Councillor Lloyd	What is the progress on the local plan?
<p>Reply: A great deal of work and progress is being made on the Building a Better Future Plan, as set out in my Cabinet Lead report. In relation specifically to housing targets, extensive engagement has taken place recently with our neighbours through the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) and the Statement of Common Ground is being updated to reflect this. It is expected that a Spatial Position Statement will be considered by the PfSH Joint Committee by the end of the year setting out how housing need is being addressed across South Hampshire. However, individual discussions with our neighbours continue to be needed as our local plan progresses. As already highlighted, Government are considering a number of potential changes to the planning system. It is important to note that at this time the Government has not confirmed which, if any, of the reforms will be implemented and by when. So, although Havant Borough Council is keen to get a plan in place, it is doing so cautiously to ensure that we fully take into account the potential reforms to the planning system that may be announced in due course. As part of the development of the Local Plan we will examine very carefully the requirement for new homes in the Borough and robustly test Havant’s ability to meet those requirements.</p>			
4	Councillor Rason	Councillor Robinson	Considering the complexity of issues around providing the homes we need for residents, would the council consider, before the end of the year running a workshop for councillors about our housing policy and the development of the local plan and then this to be followed by holding an open meeting for all councillors to debate our housing policy?
<p>Reply: Havant Borough Council is developing its local plan by taking a cautious approach to ensure that we fully consider the potential reforms to the planning system that may be announced in due course by Government. As part of the development of the Local Plan we will examine very carefully the requirement for new homes in the Borough and robustly test Havant’s ability to meet those requirements. Part of these considerations will include the outcomes of a developing Housing Strategy which will consider the numbers and type of housing required to meet demand. The Housing Strategy will be considered & debated by all members as part of the council’s democratic processes. Once the strategy has been adopted, the council can arrange workshops for members.</p>			

	Question From	Question to	Question
5	Councillor Rason	Councillors Robinson	RSPCA has alerted councillors to the fact that very few councils have a policy in place to ban the sale of live animals or giving live animals as prizes at shows or fairs within the local council area. Does HBC have a policy to prohibit the use of live animals in this way?
<p>Reply: Havant Borough Council takes the welfare of animals very seriously and our teams work closely with the RSPCA. Fortunately, the sale of live animals/or giving of live animals as prizes at shows is not known to be a significant issue in the Borough. The Council will remain vigilant and investigate with partner agencies should reports be received regarding events held within the Borough where animals may be given as prizes.</p>			
6	Councillor Kennett	Councillors Lloyd	<p>Houses and businesses in Emsworth Ward are served by the Thornham Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW).</p> <p>While much of HBC's attention is necessarily focused upon the Budds Farm WWTW, it is becoming increasingly clear from the number of already approved and planned developments by Havant BC and Chichester DC that the Thornham plant does not have capacity to support additional housing and will not for many years. What are the implications of this for our Local Plan and in particular for development in Emsworth?</p>
<p>Reply Havant Borough Council has been absolutely clear that even though we are not a regulator of Southern Water we are holding their performance to account. We have questioned every aspect of Southern Water's performance – from calling them to Overview & Scrutiny on several occasions, requesting verification of their data regarding capacity to manage the borough's wastewater, being hands on in the calibration of information on water quality at Hayling Island seafront, to facilitating a public meeting where residents were able to ask questions directly to the company about their water recycling proposals. There has been numerous and continued correspondence between the Council and Southern Water including meetings at executive level.</p>			

	Question From	Question to	Question
			<p>Havant Borough Council is working to ensure that new development only takes place with a reassurance that there is sufficient capacity in the wastewater network. The Council is also engaging with Southern Water in preparing the Local Plan because Southern Water operates the sewage network in the borough.</p> <p>We have commissioned an independent third-party review of the information and data which Southern Water provide us with, to inform the Local Plan's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Ultimately, if it were the case that there is insufficient capacity in the wastewater treatment network, and such capacity could not be put in place within an acceptable timescale, then a relevant site would not be allocated in the local plan. In the meantime, planning applications that come forward are subject to the information we receive from Southern Water.</p> <p>It should be highlighted that there is no verified, published information which suggests that Thornham Wastewater Treatment Works does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate new development. The Chichester District Council - Southern Water - Environment Agency Statement of Common Ground also concludes that there is capacity. We will though, of course, continue to engage with Southern Water, critiquing their approach along the way, on this matter.</p>

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