

Playden DC Report November 2019

1. Cabinet meeting 30th September, of note:-

1.1 Proposed Operational Changes to the Planning Committee, including:-

1.1.1 The cut-off time for late submissions (9:00am the Monday before the Planning Committee (PC) on the Thursday) is to be formally adopted. The statutory requirement for receiving comments from third parties is 21 days from the application being advertised. Almost without exception PC items are reported well in excess of this time period. Imposing this deadline formally will not disadvantage third parties in their ability to submit comments on the application but it will formally adopt past practice. It will also give Planning Officers and Members the formal framework and authority to reject and disregard late submissions.

1.1.2 Any RDC councillor can attend meetings of the PC and speak on any item by invitation of the Chairman of the PC. Currently, custom and practice allows for non-PC councillors to address the PC for an unspecified time. It was decided that non-PC councillors be given the same length of time as members of the public under the terms of the Public Speaking Scheme (five minutes).

1.1.3 Attendance at the formal PC site visits is to be compulsory, subject to discretion of the Chairman on a case by case basis, for PC Members in order to be part of the decision making at the subsequent PC meeting. Site visits are currently not compulsory.

1.1.4 PC meetings are going to be audio recorded and the audio file be made available on the website alongside the PC Minutes. This will improve transparency of the planning meetings.

1.2 Establishment of a Climate Change Steering Group

Members considered the report of the Executive Director which outlined the proposed establishment of a Climate Change Steering Group and the terms of reference.

It was agreed that the Steering Group should comprise of seven members; Paul and I have been co-opted onto this Group and would welcome input from parish councillors and residents. RDC officers have been requested to explore resource implications of a designated officer to work with the Steering Group. The first meeting has been scheduled to be held on 15th November.

1.3 It was agreed that Government be lobbied regarding the introduction of a charge on housing developers for development sites with planning permission that remain unbuilt for three years or more. This issue has come up time and time again all over the country. I raised it with the then Housing Minister, Gavin Barwell in 2016, and a 2017 Government Housing White Paper included measures to help prevent the stalling of development by giving councils new powers - shorter timescales for implementing permissions (from 3 years to 2); more streamlined completion notice procedures; and new guidance encouraging more active use of compulsory purchase powers at stalled housing sites.

2. Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Discovery Centre.

The building is coming along and I have been invited to a 'hard hat' tour later this month. There is some amazing news in that the National Lottery Heritage Fund has agreed £588,100 funding for the Discover Rye Harbour Programme (the Programme), which is a 39 month project to deliver an extensive programme of 'activities, education, volunteering opportunities and interpretation to connect people to their natural heritage and inspire interest in the reserve'.

The funding will support: -

- Interpretation and signage in the Discovery Centre and around the nature reserve;
- Materials and resources to deliver a programme of activities to engage visitors; and
- Staff costs to include 50% of the (full time) Centre Manager, all the costs of the (part time) Assistant Centre Manager, the (full time) Senior Learning & Engagement Officer, (part time) Volunteer Co-ordinator and the (part time) Learning and Engagement Officer as well as the cost of three Heritage Trainees.

I am delighted to have been involved with this project, both as a district councillor for Rye Harbour and as a member of the Appeal Board, raising funds for the project with the help of local people.

The Programme will bring some excellent educational opportunities to Rye Harbour and Rother District, as well as providing jobs.

3. I attended a Sussex Police Focus Group meeting in Rye on 21st October which covered discussions including rural crime, police recruitment and increasing uniformed police in our rural communities, road safety, drug dealing in our villages, and communication.

4. I attended the RALC meeting on 23rd October and put my name down to join the Speeding Working Group.

5. General Election 12th December

I know that we are all fed up with the Brexit impasse for one reason or another, but please do go out and exercise your democratic vote on 12th December!

6. Cabinet Meeting 4th November, of particular note to Parish Councils, Paul advised that Cabinet approved (subject to Full Council) to stop funding additional grass cuts - Playden will need to budget for this. In addition, Cabinet decided to increase the garden waste collection to £60 (incremental increases).

I was not able to attend the Cabinet meeting, so will need to wait for the minutes to come out before reporting.

SAH