

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL

4.30pm 3 OCTOBER 2019

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Phillips (Chair), Robins (Deputy Chair), Simson, Bagaeen, Barnett, Bell, Brown, Childs, Clare, Davis, Deane, Druitt, Ebel, Evans, Fowler, Grimshaw, Hamilton, Heley, Henry, Hill, Hills, Hugh-Jones, Lewry, Littman, Lloyd, Mac Cafferty, Mears, McNair, Miller, Moonan, Nemeth, Nield, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Pissaridou, Platts, Powell, Rainey, Shanks, C Theobald, Wares, West, Wilkinson, Williams and Yates

PART ONE

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 32.1 The Mayor stated that in view of her role as an MEP she had consulted with the Monitoring Officer and although she had no direct pecuniary interest in the issue to be debated, she had sought and been granted dispensation to speak and vote on the motion listed as Item 34, Brexit Preparations and City-Wide Scrutiny.
- 32.2 The Mayor noted that there were no other declarations of interests in the matter appearing on the agenda.
- 32.3 The Mayor also noted that whilst the Conservative Group members had signed the attendance register they were not present in the Chamber for the consideration of the item on the agenda.

33 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 33.1 The Mayor confirmed that the extraordinary meeting of the Council had been called to discuss the motion listed at Item 34, having been requisitioned by the Green Group.
- 33.2 The Mayor stated that she wished to make the meetings of full Council less formal and wished to be addressed as Alex rather than Madam Mayor but would leave it to Members to decide. She had also asked councillors to confirm how they preferred to be addressed and would therefore either call them by their first name or their title of councillor.

- 33.3 The Mayor stated that she wished to acknowledge and thank the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Robins for his continued support during her mayoralty year. She fully appreciated that he had gone beyond expectations in supporting the office.
- 33.4 The Mayor then stated that she wished to take the opportunity on behalf of the Council to thank all those involved, including members of the Fire Service, the volunteers and council staff who had responded so effectively to the recent fire at Pankhurst Avenue. She hoped to be able to formally recognise those nominated for their actions at the next Ordinary meeting of the Council.
- 34 BREXIT PREPARATIONS**
- 34.1 The Mayor called on Councillor Mac Cafferty to move the motion on Brexit.
- 34.2 Councillor Mac Cafferty thanked the Mayor and stated that there was a need to recognise that the uncertainty around Brexit had led to a need to provide clarity for residents and businesses on what should do to prepare for leaving the EU. He felt that it was appalling that citizens had to apply to stay in the country but welcomed the action of the council to enable them to sign up. He believed the Prime Minister wanted to run the clock down and leave without a deal and the calling of the extraordinary meeting was the only opportunity for the council to discuss the implications for the City of such an outcome.
- 34.3 Councillor Ebel formally seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak later in the debate.
- 34.4 Councillor Platts stated that she was personally disappointed that it was likely the country would leave the EU. However, she wished to recognise the work of council officers in providing as much information as possible for residents and businesses on the issue via the website. She stated that EU residents in the city were valued and would be supported throughout the process and the information available would be regularly updated.
- 34.5 Councillor Hills stated that Universities in the city faced a major challenge in supporting their students and could face significant financial implications with the loss of overseas students and investment. They also had talented staff who may not be able to work in the country and be forced to leave which again would have implications for courses and the local economy. She hoped that the council would do all it can to support the universities and to welcome students to the city.
- 34.6 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Hills on her maiden speech.
- 34.7 Councillor Evans stated that the whole process for seeking EU settlement status was confusing and welcomed the support offered by the council to residents in the city. She noted that Brighton and Hove was a City of Sanctuary and stated that status had to be maintained. She also welcomed the information that had been put up on the council's website.
- 34.8 Councillor Lloyd stated that Brighton and Hove was a popular seaside resort and noted that it had two beaches with blue flag awards. However, he also noted that history

showed the beaches and the city's drinking water had only improved because of EU regulations and previous governments having to take action to meet EU standards. This was a clear example of why the country should remain in the EU and he hoped that consideration would be given to how such standards would be retained should the country leave the EU.

- 34.9 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Lloyd on his maiden speech.
- 34.10 Councillor Nield stated that she wished to express the concerns of residents with regard to the availability of important medicines and how this would be maintained should Brexit occur. It was clear from the Yellow Hammer report that sufficient plans to maintain supplies were not in place and a lack of information existed which needed to be addressed. She hoped that more information would become available and hoped that pressure could be put on the government and other authorities such as the BMA to take action.
- 34.11 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Nield on her maiden speech.
- 34.12 Councillor Moonan stated that she felt the amount of time and effort having to be spent on Brexit was shocking and that the most vulnerable were being left as having the least resilience to the implications that would follow. She welcomed the actions of officers to support applications for settled status and in putting out as much information as possible. However, there were clear concerns about the availability of medicines and lack of information forthcoming from the Health Service, all of which put more pressure on the Council to provide answers.
- 34.13 Councillor West stated that he believed exiting the EU would result in the country losing out on a number of benefits that it had enjoyed. He believed membership had led to significant improvement in agricultural controls and water supply standards that would be lost should Brexit occur. He believed there was a clear need to go back to the people and have a People's vote and therefore an extension to enable that to happen.
- 34.14 Councillor Henry referred to the Yellow Hammer report and noted that imports and exports would be subject to more controls and delays which could then affect how food was distributed. It was clear that there could be a greater level of waste and he noted that the number and use of food banks in the city was on the increase. It meant that there would be more pressure on the vulnerable and unless consumers were encouraged to change their attitudes and a greater demand on those organisations that were already stretched in providing food to those in need.
- 34.15 Councillor Hugh-Jones stated that there was likely to be an impact on staff and recruitment for small businesses who were less likely to be able to manage the uncertainty of Brexit. They were an important factor in the city's local economy and their demise would have a detrimental effect. She also questioned the impact for the Brighton Festival and Fringe which was a significant contributor to the city's economy. She also questioned whether there would be an increase in red tape and how food standards would be maintained in terms of regulatory alignment with the EU should Brexit happen. There was no indication of how trade regulation would be achieved or how long it would take.

- 34.16 Councillor Pissaridou stated that she had witnessed first hand the confusion over issues such as the availability of needed medicines and hoped that this could be resolved to ease the concerns of citizens.
- 34.17 Councillor Clare stated that the whole situation was unclear and unwarranted in that it was resulting in council staff having to undertake unnecessary tasks associated with Brexit, rather than being able to fulfil their primary duties. All councillors had a duty as Corporate Parents and should call for an end to the madness whereby looked after children were having to apply for settled status. The future for younger people was uncertain and they were not able to influence the decision which had to be wrong and there had to a further vote by the people on the issue of Brexit.
- 34.18 Councillor Deane noted that she had previously brought a motion to council seeing support for European Standards to be adhered to and this had been fully supported. It was now likely that such Standards would not be enforceable and there was no indication of what would replace them or when and how that would impact on services etc. The EU provided best practice in this area and was able to put the necessary investment into setting such Standards which should not be lost. It was getting things right and this country should be part of that.
- 34.19 Councillor Littman stated that the Brighton and Hove Resilience report had been forced on the council by the government and officers should be commended for their efforts and the work that had been undertaken. The people in the city wanted to know where their elected representatives stood on this matter and therefore he felt that the outcome of the vote on this matter should be recorded.
- 34.20 Councillor Druitt stated that he was concerned for the tourist sector and the potential impact on jobs and small businesses that would result from Brexit. The sector employed a significant number of foreign nationals and relied on foreign visitors and he felt it was the least prepared for the impact of Brexit. There would be changes in regulations and availability of a work force all of which would have an impact on the local economy, and he was not sure that it would be able to recover.
- 34.21 Councillor Powell stated that she felt the public sector was being pushed to a breaking point and that there was clear uncertainty over how various aspects that flowed from being a member of the EU such as Human Rights, Animal Rights and EU laws would be retained and enforced. She asked that the notes of the Brexit Working Group be made public and as much information as possible put out to keep people informed.
- 34.22 Councillor Ebel stated that she wished to highlight a positive from the situation in that the request made at the last full council meeting to support residents in applying for settled status had been delivered. She wished to add her thanks to the officers involved in ensuring that the service was available, and that information was available on the council's website. She noted that valuable time to debate the matter of Brexit had been lost in Parliament because of the unlawful decision to prorogue and that it was to be prorogued again which further limited the opportunity to give people time. There was a clear need to give them as much information as possible.

- 34.23 Councillor Yates stated that it was important to recognise the work of the officers involved in getting the information onto the council's website and ensuring that applications for settled status could be processed. He stated that the information would be kept up to date and as much preparation as possible made to meet the impact of Brexit should it happen. The council was working closely with its neighbours and other organisations such as the Sussex Resilience Forum and Business Community and the Universities. He acknowledged that there were areas of uncertainty around looked after children, child protection, and whether the EU would recognise UK Court rulings on such matters. The situation facing the vulnerable of society was recognised and the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership was preparing to ensure food availability was maintained. However, he felt that a lot of the planning was being made in the dark as no-one knew what Brexit actually meant other than it was going to be complex and difficult to meet the outcome.
- 34.24 Councillor Mac Cafferty thanked everyone for their contributions to the debate and stated that he also wanted to thank the officers, especially Dee Humphrey for their work on Brexit to date. He believed that a historic and crucial relationship existed with the EU and there was a real need for clarity on what was happening. A no deal situation was likely to see the loss of 3,500 jobs in the city. There was a clear need for impact assessments to be completed for all areas that would be affected as a result of Brexit. He hoped that EU citizens would continue to be supported in their right to stay in the country and urged council officials and public bodies to publish their plans for Brexit. The more information that could be made available the better residents and citizens would be informed. The Government had let people down and had failed to give any leadership.
- 34.25 The Mayor noted that a request for a recorded vote had been made and suggested that as the view of the Council was clear from the debate that the minutes should reflect the unanimous support for the motion rather than having to go through a recorded vote.
- 34.26 Councillor Littman thanked the Mayor and accepted the proposal.
- 34.27 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

This council resolves to:

- Ensure that updated impact assessments from Brighton and Hove City Council's Brexit Working Group are made available to the public, in order to aid preparation for any form of Brexit;
 - Ensure that our city's elected councillors are, through this meeting, afforded the opportunity to debate this urgent matter in public, given the likely impact on the city and the attempts to stifle debate among elected MPs;
 - Request the Chief Executive write to the Prime Minister, expressing;
1. Our council's dismay that the suspension of Parliament could leave the city's communities yet further unprepared for Brexit
 2. The specific concerns of Brighton & Hove City Council on the impact of Brexit, with particular reference to the findings of the council's impact assessments on:

- small businesses and tourism
- vulnerable residents, given understood impacts on fuel, foods and medical supplies
- EU citizens requiring support with Settled Status

3. Support for a 'People's Vote.'

34.28 The Mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried unanimously and that the details of the voting would be recorded.

Note: Voting list detailed below:

		For	Against	Abstain			For	Against	Abstain
1	Allcock	Not present			28	Lewry	Not present		
2	Appich	Not present			29	Littman	√		
3	Atkinson	Not present			30	Lloyd	√		
4	Bagaeen	Not present			31	MacCafferty	√		
5	Barnett	Not present			32	McNair	Not present		
6	Bell	Not present			33	Mears	Not present		
7	Brennan	Not present			34	Miller	Not present		
8	Brown	Not present			35	Moonan	√		
9	Childs	√			36	Nemeth	Not present		
10	Clare	√			37	Nield	√		
11	Davis	√			38	O'Quinn	Not present		
12	Deane	√			39	Osborne	√		
13	Druitt	√			40	Peltzer Dunn	Not present		
14	Ebel	√			41	Phillips	√		
15	Evans	√			42	Pissaridou	√		
16	Fishleigh	Not present			43	Powell	√		
17	Fowler	√			44	Platts	√		
18	Gibson	Not present			45	Rainey	√		
19	Grimshaw	√			46	Robins	√		
20	Hamilton	√			47	Shanks	√		
21	Heley	√			48	Simson	Not present		
22	Henry	√			49	Theobald C	Not present		

23	Hill	√			50	Wares	Not present		
24	Hills	√			51	West	√		
25	Hugh-	√			52	Wilkinson	√		
26	Janio	Not present			53	Williams	√		
27	Knight	Not present			54	Yates	√		
						Total	32	-	-

35 CLOSE OF MEETING

35.1 The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 5.45pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2019