

4) all Members be requested to promote the scheme within their wards.

COUNCILLOR M.J. KENWARD IN THE CHAIR

CB17/79.
(6.3)

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL: GRASS VERGE CUTTING

As a consequence of East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) budget cuts agreed on 6 February 2018, the number of grass cuts in urban areas was being reduced from six to two per season from 1 April 2018 (rural cutting would remain as current).

The impact of the reduction in service would be most noticeable in the urban areas, especially Bexhill. In recognition of the aesthetic and amenity importance for the community, ESCC had written to those town and parish councils affected and to RDC regarding Bexhill and offered the following options for consideration:

- Rother District Council (RDC) take over the grass cutting service currently provided by ESCC, with a financial contribution from ESCC equivalent to the value of two urban grass cuts, based on current ESCC contract rates; for the urban area of Bexhill, this contribution would be in the region of £7,054 per annum.
- RDC pay for additional urban grass cuts on top of the two cuts per season provided by ESCC. To maintain the current standard of six cuts this would cost RDC in the region of £14,109 per annum for the urban area of Bexhill.

Members were disappointed to hear of this proposal from ESCC with only two weeks before implementation. However, Cabinet was not prepared to accept the reduced number of grass cuts which would inevitably lead to the deterioration of the visual appearance of the residential verges, potentially cause a hazard to traffic and pedestrians as well as attracting other anti-social behaviour such as fly-tipping and litter dropping.

Cabinet therefore agreed to fund the additional urban cuts from earmarked reserves in both Bexhill and the rural parishes in order to preserve the maintenance, amenity and safety features of verges, for 2018/19 only, provided the sum did not exceed £50,000. During 2018/19 officers would undertake investigations, including the legal powers of Parish and Town Councils to fund ESCC services via the precept / Bexhill Special expenses, to identify a funding solution from 2019 and that those town and parish Councils affected consider their options during this period.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) Rother District Council pay for additional urban cuts in Bexhill on top of the two cuts per season provided by ESCC, in the region of £14,109, to be met from earmarked reserves for 2018/19;
- 2) as part of the 2019/20 budget setting exercise consideration be given to the legal powers for Parish and Town Councils to meet

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this cost and whether it can be charged as a Special Expense on the residents of Bexhill;

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- 3) the costs of urban cuts in the rural parishes be met from earmarked reserves;
 - 4) the total cost of 1) and 3) not exceed £50,000; and
 - 5) this be for one year only (Financial Year 2018/19).

(Councillor Maynard declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter as an Executive Member of East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room and declined to speak or vote thereon).

(Councillor Clark declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter as an elected Member of East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room and spoke thereon).

COUNCILLOR C.R. MAYNARD IN THE CHAIR

CB17/80.
(6.4)

THE LANDGATE, RYE

Cabinet had previously agreed that officers explore options for devolving ownership of the Landgate, Rye, a fourteenth century Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) belonging to the Council. Whilst the building was not considered central to the Council's core business and maintenance costs were likely to prove a burden in the future, the Council had a duty under legislation to look after SAMs and Grade I listed buildings in its ownership.

In 2016, officers commissioned a paper from John Bailey of Thomas Ford and Partners setting out a future vision for the building (Appendix 1 to the report). As well as providing a very useful assessment of the history and cultural significance of the building, the paper explored options for the future of the building and its guardianship.

The options for future ownership were:

- A. Rother District Council (RDC) continued ownership
- B. Disposal to a third party in current condition
- C. Enter into a deal to pass to a third party on completion of works by RDC

There were a number of local interested residents who were galvanised to drive a sustainable solution for the Landgate, including the Friends of the Landgate and the Landgate Action Group, set up under the inaugural chairmanship of Councillor Lord Ampthill. Whilst a number of meetings had been held with these local stakeholders to discuss the option to transfer guardianship of the monument to local ownership, there was, understandably, a reluctance to take on responsibility for the monument in its current state of repair.