

Subject:	Items referred from 28 January Council meeting - Deputations		
Date of Meeting:	18 March 2021		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Wall	Tel: 01273 291006
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Wards Affected:	Various		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To receive the following deputation referred from the Council meeting held on the 28 January 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee responds to the deputation either by noting it or where it is considered more appropriate, calls for an officer report on the matter which may give consideration to a range of options and writes to the deputation spokesperson setting out the committee's decision(s).

3. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 To receive the following deputation along with the extract from the council meeting which is detailed in appendix 1:

(1) Deputation concerning the Fossil Fuels and Climate Change and BHCC's Lack of Representation on the East Sussex Pension Committee

Spokesperson Luke Simanowitz

In 2017 and again in 2020, Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) passed motions calling on East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to stop investing local people's pensions in the giant fossil fuel companies that are driving the climate crisis – companies like Shell and BP.

Yet, despite declaring a 'climate emergency', ESCC has repeatedly refused to divest the East Sussex Pension Fund - the local government pension scheme for East Sussex, Brighton and Hove - from fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas), most recently in June of 2020.

The window for limiting global warming to 1.5°C – and thereby avoiding the most calamitous impacts of climate change – is rapidly closing. Doing so will require dramatic cuts in emissions from oil and gas over the next ten years.

Yet despite many years of ESCC's official policy of 'engagement', not a single oil and gas major is currently anywhere near aligning with this goal. Indeed, an analysis by Oil Change International, published in September, found that 'not a single climate plan released by a major oil company comes close to aligning with the urgent 1.5°C global warming limit'.

Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) is a major contributor to the East Sussex Pension Fund, which currently has over £100m of local people's pensions invested in fossil fuels. Brighton and Hove also account for over a third of the population of East Sussex, Brighton and Hove. Yet, for purely historical reasons, BHCC currently has no representation on the East Sussex Pension Committee, the ultimate decision-making body for the Fund. This means that the residents of Brighton and Hove have no real say in how these monies are invested.

With less than a year to go before this year's crucial UN climate summit in Glasgow, we need all institutions to be showing leadership on the climate crisis.

We therefore call on BHCC to demand adequate representation on the East Sussex Pension Committee to ensure that these climate-destroying investments can finally be eliminated from the East Sussex Pension Fund.

Supported by: Les Gunbie, Andrew Beechey, Madeleine Bradbury, Clare Finn, Dr Hugh Dunkerley, Natasha Fairbanks, Ruth Urbanowicz, Dave Allen and Tim Beecher

Ward affected: All

COUNCIL

4.30pm 28 JANUARY 2021

VIRTUAL MEETING - TEAMS

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Robins (Chair), Mears (Deputy Chair), Allcock, Appich, Atkinson, Bagaeen, Barnett, Bell, Brennan, Brown, Childs, Clare, Davis, Deane, Druitt, Ebel, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Gibson, Grimshaw, Hamilton, Heley, Henry, Hills, Hugh-Jones, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Lloyd, Mac Cafferty, McNair, Miller, Moonan, Nemeth, Nield, O'Quinn, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Phillips, Pissaridou, Platts, Powell, Shanks, Simson, C Theobald, West, Wilkinson, Williams and Yates.

PART ONE

90 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(1) DEPUTATION CONCERNING THE FOSSIL FULES AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND BHCC'S LACK OF REPRESENTATION ON THE EAST SUSSEX PENSION COMMITTEE

Spokesperson Luke Simanowitz

- 90.1 The Mayor reported that two deputations had been received from members of the public and that he would invite the spokespersons to introduce their deputation and for the relevant Chair to respond. He noted that 15 minutes were set aside for the consideration of deputations.
- 90.2 The Mayor invited Mr Luke Simanowitz as the spokesperson for the first deputation to come forward and address the council. The deputation related to Fossil Fuels and Climate Change and Brighton & Hove City Council's Lack of Representation on the East Sussex Pension Committee.
- 90.3 Mr Simanowitz spoke on the deputation relating to global warming and the climate change emergency. He said that the East Sussex County Council pension scheme invested heavily in the large fuel companies who were driving the climate crisis. Brighton and Hove City Council were a major contributor to the East Sussex Pension Fund and had previously passed motions calling on East Sussex County Council to stop investing in those companies. However, Brighton & Hove City Council had no representation on the East Sussex Pension Committee, the ultimate decision-making body for the Fund and the deputation called on this Council to demand adequate representation on the East Sussex Pension Committee to ensure that those climate-destroying investments could finally be eliminated from the East Sussex Pension Fund.
- 90.4 Councillor Druitt thanked Mr Simanowitz for the deputation and agreed that it was a shame that Brighton & Hove residents did not have any representation on the East Sussex Pensions Committee where important decisions on investments were made. He noted that in 2016 Waltham Forest Council had declared that they were going to divest all of their investments in fossil fuel and were now on target to complete that

divestment. That Council had set the bar and it was now up to us to achieve that as well, but that couldn't be done unless the City had representation on the Pension Committee, and as a Member of the Pensions Board he would raise that at the next meeting.

90.5 The Mayor thanked Mr Simanowitz for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. He explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.

90.6 **RESOLVED:** That the deputation be noted and referred to the Policy & Resources Committee.