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Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held in the New Millennium Chamber, Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton on Monday 9th September 2019 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ (Chair)

Councillor B Blanchard-Cooper

Councillor Chace

Councillor Long

Councillor Northeast

2019/2020

11. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

12. Filming of Council Meetings, Use of Social Media and Mobile Phones

The procedures were noted.

13. Mobile Phones

Members and the public were reminded that the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) was prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings.

14. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor C Blanchard-Cooper.

15. Declarations of Interest

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. The standing declarations were noted, and no further declarations were made at this point.

16. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2019 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

17. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

17.1. Harbour Revision Order (HRO)

Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ declared a personal interest in the following matter as a member of the Littlehampton Harbour Board.

The Committee received information regarding the next steps in the consultation phase of the Littlehampton HRO. It was noted that a further public consultation exercise would take place on 24th September 2019 at the Arun Yacht Club from 5:30 until 7:30pm to which Councillors were invited. It was **Resolved** that:

The update be noted.

17.2. Environment Policy

The need for the policy had been highlighted during the Member led exercise to formulate the Strategic Policies for the New Council. A draft had therefore been prepared and Members were asked to consider the aims and objectives behind the broad policy. A final draft would be presented to the Committee for consideration and to Full Council for adoption later in October. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

The draft Policy be circulated to Members and comments forwarded to the Town Clerk by 4th October 2019.

18. Public Forum

There were eight members of the public present.

- 18.1 Mr Amrose addressed the Committee on behalf of Café 72 regarding the County Council's Charging Policy for table and chairs on the public highway. Mr Ambrose stated that in his view the blanket policy for charging was unfair as local cafes were an important and popular aspect of a vibrant local economy. These comments were supported by others in the Public Gallery.
- 18.2 Redecaring his interest as a West Sussex County Councillor, the Chairman acknowledged the strength of feeling on this issue. It was noted that the County Council were likely to review this policy in the Autumn.
- 18.3 Mr Page addressed the Committee on a number of points.

- 18.4** Expressing his concerns about anti-social behaviour, Mr Page sought the Town Council's support to make a temporary closure order on a local property permanent. This was not within the remit of the Town Council. However, it was noted that a multi-agency group, including stakeholders and the Town Council, had been formed by the District Council to formulate a plan to tackle anti-social behaviour issues in the Town.
- 18.5** Regarding the regeneration proposals for the Town Centre, Mr Page suggested that the Arcade be renamed for the suffragette Mary Neil in 2022 to commemorate the centenary of her coming to the Town in 1922. This was noted and it was also observed that events were planned to commemorate the Littlehampton Suffragettes including a possible exhibition in the Museum.
- 18.6** Mr Page sought the Town Council's support in negotiations with developers to create a Charitable Trust to oversee tree planting in the new development in North Littlehampton. It was noted that landscaping in relation to the new development had already been agreed as part of the planning process. However, the Town Council was looking to progress a planting scheme that would enhance the link road as a gateway to the Town.
- 18.7** Commenting on the County Council's charges for tables and chairs, Mr Chester stated that in view of the changes in the dynamics of the Town Centre, there should be more positive moves to welcome a diversity of leisure activities. Mr Chester went on to question why the Town Council Priorities had not been published with the agenda papers. It was noted that these proposals were embryonic and were evolving as the Town Council's Committee cycle progressed. The next stage would see proposals prioritised and evaluated for approval by the Council later in the year at which point they would be published in full.
- 18.8** Mrs Tyrell addressed the Committee regarding the growing problem of cyclists on footpaths. This was particularly an issue on narrow paths such as River Road where, despite having made numerous reports to the Police, no action had been taken. The frustration of the public regarding enforcement in this respect was acknowledged and Members reported that it had been raised with the Police in forums that they attended. Members would continue to raise it with the Police and the public were also encouraged to continue reporting these incidents.
- 18.9** Mr Ellis addressed the Committee on a number of matters.
- 18.10** Regarding the Littlehampton HRO, Mr Ellis urged Members to carefully consider the proposed changes which, in his view could have far reaching implications. This was noted.
- 18.12** Regarding Town Centre Regeneration, Mr Ellis sought clarification on the changes that were planned for the Town Centre and suggested that more could be done to engage the public more widely regarding the plans.
- 18.13** Regarding the Committee Finance Report, he observed the current high level of reserves and asked what plans the Town Council had for a Capital Project.

18.14 It was noted the current regeneration proposals for the Town Centre were illustrative at this stage and that Arun District Council had yet to appoint a designer. It was thought that further public engagement was planned as the project progressed and that this could include a walkthrough of the plans. Regarding the Town Council's reserves, these had been earmarked to support the delivery of a Town Centre Community Facility, the nature of which would be discussed as part of the emerging priorities for the New Council.

19. Officer's Reports

19.1. Town Centre Update

19.1.1 The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which updated Members on progress with initiatives to promote the Town Centre, address anti-social behaviour and the Town Centre Regeneration Project. The Committee proceeded to consider the report in more detail and discussion focused on Town Centre Regeneration. Members wished to see changes to the public realm that would deliver benefits in terms of revitalising the Town and improving the visitor experience. It was conceded that initially infrastructure changes could impact local businesses and it considered important that the proposals were widely communicated with both public and traders, and consensus reached. Regarding the Clock Tower, it was acknowledged that this was an important landmark which may need to be re-sited. Acknowledging the strength of feeling regarding the County Council's policy of charging for tables and chairs on the highway, a representation was being made to the County Council asking that they reconsider the charges. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

- 1. The representation to West Sussex County Council regarding the policy of charging for tables and chairs on the pavement be strengthened and endorsed.**
- 2. The District Council be urged to widely consult and publicise details of the proposed changes to the Town Centre public realm .**
- 3. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.**

19.2. Progress Report

The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which set out proposals for the introduction of the Town Council's Progress newsletter in a digital format. An email edition of the newsletter was proposed at the beginning of October, and the digital version would also be included in the Town Council's Event Sponsorship Package for a trial period of six months. The Committee was supportive of the proposals which would enable the Town

Council to communicate with a wider audience using the benefits of social media. It was **Resolved** that:

1. **The Principles and Guidelines set out in Appendix 1 (attached to the report) be approved.**
2. **The email newsletter be launched on 1st October 2019 and included in event sponsorship packages.**
3. **A review of the impact of the trial be brought back to the Committee in March 2020.**

19.3. Members Training Plan

The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which outlined the Town Council's Member Training Plan. It was **Resolved** that:

The report be noted.

19.4. Equality Flag

The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which sought Members views on a proposal to fly the Equality Flag. Members were supportive of this request and noting that there was no specific date to fly the flag, it was considered that it would be appropriate to coordinate the flying of the flag with the dates used by the County and District Councils. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

1. **Full Council be recommended to include the Equality Flag in the list of flags flown by the Town Council.**
2. **If approved, the purchase of the Equality flag be endorsed and a date for flying the flag be aligned to the dates used by the County and District Councils.**

19.5. A Vision for the Arun Valley

A summary of the work of the Arun Valley Vision Group had been circulated to the Committee. In view of the implications for future planning, it was suggested that the report be presented to the Planning and Transportation Committee. It was **Resolved** that:

The report be noted and presented to the next Planning and Transportation Committee for consideration.

Councillor B Blanchard-Cooper left the meeting at 7:14pm.

20. Town Council Priorities

- 20.1** The Town Clerk presented a table which contained feedback from the member led exercise and subsequent discussions by the Committees to identify priorities for the Council. The Committee proceeded to review the priorities in the context of the current policies of the Council and consider further refinements.
- 20.2** There was support to pursue significant improvements to the landscaping proposed on the Fitzalan Link Road at the entry point to the Town , and to explore initiatives to enhance 'policing' in and around the Town Centre. In view of the pace of change in technology, it was also considered sensible that initiatives such as Charging Points for Electric Vehicles were not rushed. Whilst there was some support for putting the Town Council's Awards to a public vote combining them was not considered an immediate priority. Initiatives designed to encourage visitors into the area such as Parking Disks were also supported alongside work identified to create facilities for young people and promote well planned social housing. It was noted that further detailed work, including discussions with the District Council, would be undertaken to determine the level of resources and delivery time scales for consideration by Full Council in November. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

Officers be authorised to progress detailed work in line with the comments set out in Minute 20.2 above and that final proposals be presented for approval to Full Council in November 2019.

Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ left the meeting at 7:45pm.

21. Finance

Dr Walsh KStJ re-joined the meeting at 7:47pm.

The Committee received a report (previously circulated) highlighting significant variances from Budget in terms of income and expenditure relating to this Committee's Budget. It was **Resolved** that:

The report be noted.

22. Exempt Business

It was **Resolved** that:

Members of the public and accredited representatives of the press be excluded under Section 100 Local Government Act 1972 due to the confidential nature of the business to be conducted, being Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime under the Local Government Act 1972, schedule 12A, part 1 (7).

23. Officers Reports Exempt

23.1. Local Action Team (LAT)

The Committee received a report (circulated to Members of the Council only) which set out the Terms of Reference of the LAT and details of the and Action Plan that was being developed to tackle Town Centre issues. It was **Resolved** that:

The report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8:07pm.

CHAIR