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**Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held in the New Millennium Chamber, Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 6.30pm**

### Present:

Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ (Chair)  
Councillor B Blanchard-Cooper  
Councillor C Blanchard-Cooper  
Councillor Chace  
Councillor Long  
Councillor Rhodes

### 2019/2020

#### 1. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

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

The procedures were noted.

#### 3. Apologies

There were none.

#### 4. 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.

#### 5. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### 6. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

##### 6.1. Standing Order / Urgent Action – Council Photographer

The Committee received (copy attached to the minutes) an urgent action regarding the re-appointment of Scott Ramsey as the Council photographer for a further two years. It was **Resolved** that:

**The urgent action be noted.**

## **6.2. Future of Seaside Towns: Government Response to the Select Committee Report**

The Committee received (copy attached to the Minutes) the Government's response to the report by the House of Lords Select Committee on the future of seaside towns. The report considered a wide range of issues affecting seaside towns and highlighted some of the work being undertaken to help develop sustainable coastal towns. It was **Resolved** that:

**The report be noted.**

## **7. Public Forum**

There was one member of the public present.

- 7.1** Mr Ellis raised two questions relating to the town centre. These were about the possibility of installing temporary signage on the side wall to Exotic Pets directing visitors towards the seafront and other attractions in the Town. Regarding the poor state of some of the empty shops, he sought more immediate action to make the Town Centre more presentable during the coming holiday season. These comments were noted.

## **8. Officer's Reports**

### **8.1. Town Centre Management**

- 8.1.1** The Town Centre Regeneration Officer (TCRO) presented a report (copy attached to the minutes) and updated Members on current work and ongoing projects. He began by outlining the main purpose of his role, the current funding agreement between the Town and District Council and his work with traders. He updated Members on planning applications with implications for the Town Centre, progress with initiatives to tackle community safety issues, promote the Town and attract visitors, forthcoming events planned for the Town Centre and his work with the Traders Partnership.
- 8.1.2** Acknowledging the comments during the Public Forum about the Town Centre, he shared the frustration felt by Members and the public about the deterioration of the High Street. The general decline in retail coupled with antisocial behaviour was a nationwide issue. A Local Action Team (LAT) had been formed comprised of representatives from key stakeholders including the District Council, the Police and the Town Council to highlight and direct resources to tackle issues relating to crime and antisocial behaviour. Action currently focussed on increased patrols by the Police and Business Wardens and disrupting anti-social behaviour.
- 8.1.3** The Committee was sceptical about the effectiveness of this activity, particularly the conduct of some of the Business Wardens. Citing reports from residents and shoppers who had been intimidated by people displaying

aggressive behaviour in the High Street and in shops, there also appeared to be a lack of enforcement. The TCRO agreed to take these views forward at the next meeting of the LAT. It was noted that the Town Chaplaincy had started operating in the Town Centre, but this was relatively new, and it was therefore too early to gauge its effectiveness.

**8.1.4** Regarding the appearance of retail frontages, the District Council grant was being utilised, but encouraging tenants and landlords to act was problematic. Whilst some shop fronts had been significantly improved, problems with the upper parts of some buildings were not being addressed. The TCRO was aware of this and would continue to encourage landlords to act. Having noted the suggestion made during the Public Forum regarding the side wall to Exotic Pets, he agreed to investigate this further. On a positive note it was confirmed that the Look and Sea would re-open soon which it was hoped this would once again attract more visitors to the River and seafront.

**8.1.5** Discussion turned to the overall cleanliness of the Town Centre and ongoing problems with vehicles using the pedestrianised area of the High Street. It was noted that the District Council's Cleansing Manager would be reviewing the cleansing arrangements for the Town Centre. This was welcomed and it was suggested that Ward District Councillors be invited to participate in this review. The TCRO was aware of the issues with vehicles on the High Street and considered that restrictions were needed. This would be a matter for the County Council, and it was agreed that he would write to the Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee (JEAAC), Highways and Transport Sub Committee, seeking support for the introduction of restrictions to control this activity. It was **Resolved** that:

- 1) **The Town Centre Regeneration Officer explore options to improve the side wall to Exotic Pets and write to the JEAAC Highways and Transport Sub Committee seeking support for the implementation of vehicle restrictions in the High Street.**
- 2) **The update be otherwise noted.**

## **8.2. Safer Arun Partnership Joint Action Group (JAG)**

The Committee noted that the inaugural meeting of this group would be held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The Town Clerk had represented the Town Council while the Group was being formed. Now that it was established, it was proposed that the Mayor represent the Town Council and that this be agreed as an approved duty prior to Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019 when representation would be confirmed. It was **Resolved** that:

- 1) **The Mayor represent the Town Council**

**at the forthcoming meeting of the Safer Arun Partnership Joint Action Group (JAG) and that attendance be confirmed as an Approved Duty.**

- 2) Council be RECOMMENDED to approve the appointment of the Mayor as the Town Council's representative on the Safer Arun Partnership JAG.**

### **8.3. Armed Forces Covenant**

The Committee was asked to consider and if agreed, recommending to Full Council that the Town Council signs the Covenant. The Committee wholeheartedly supported the principles and aims of the Covenant and it was therefore **Resolved** that:

**Council be RECOMMENDED to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant.**

### **8.4. Health Services Update**

The Committee had before it a letter from the local MP which contained a response from the Department of Health and Social Care regarding healthcare services in Littlehampton (previously circulated). It was also noted that a meeting of the East Arun Health Service Advisory Group was scheduled to take place on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019. It was therefore **Resolved** that:

**The correspondence be noted.**

### **8.5. Members Allowances Review**

- 8.5.1** The Committee received a report (previously circulated) which set out the outcome of the District Council review of Members Allowances. The report had previously been presented to Council on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 where it was agreed that the existing allowance be retained until the matter could be considered by Councillors in the new Council. The Committee was therefore asked to consider options regarding the level of Members' Allowance with a view to making a recommendation to Full Council.
- 8.5.2** The level of allowance paid to Littlehampton Town Councillors had remained unchanged since 2015, but this equated to 10% of the District Council's Basic Allowance at that time. Acknowledging the wage restraint that was also in place for local government workers at the time, Members allowances had been held at that level since then. Members preceded to consider the options and it was proposed that the Town Council revert to the 10% figure with effect from 1st April 2019. As the District Council rate was linked to further staff pay

rises, this was considered reasonable, and the Committee therefore **Resolved** that:

- 1) **Council be RECOMMENDED to implement the 10% of the District Council rate with effect from 1st April 2019, subject to the District Council rate continuing to be linked to further staff pay rises.**
- 2) **The financial implications be noted.**

#### **8.6. Town Council Priorities**

The Committee received details of the Town Council's current Strategic Aims and Objectives (previously circulated). The Town Clerk reported that following the Elections, the new Council would be considering future priorities and a session would be arranged this summer to begin this. The outcome would form the basis of a revised set of priorities that would be presented to Full Council for approval in the autumn. It was **Resolved** that:

**The update be noted.**

### **9. Finance**

#### **9.1. Committee Budget Monitor**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) highlighting any significant variances from budget and income and expenditure relating to the Committee's budget for 2018/2019 and the budget figures for 2019/2020. It was **Resolved** that:

**The report be noted.**

### **10. Exempt Business**

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7:26pm.

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**CHAIR**