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Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held in the New Millennium Chamber, Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton on Monday 28th October 2019 at 6.30pm

Present:

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

2019/2020

24. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

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

The procedures were noted.

26. 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.

27. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor C Blanchard-Cooper.

28. Declarations of Interest

- 28.1** 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.
- 28.2** Additionally, the Town Clerk explained that at Council he had reported that it could be necessary to hold an extraordinary meeting of the Governance and

Audit Committee partly to consider granting dispensations to members of the Town Council who were also members of the District Council to allow them to participate in discussions of joint interest. After further checking the Town Clerk was now able to confirm that this dispensation already existed within the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

29. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2019 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

30. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

There were none.

31. Public Forum

- 31.1** The Chair of the Littlehampton Society referred to last year's "Let's talk about your Town" conference and asked why Littlehampton had not applied for support from the Government's Future High Streets Fund and reported that the Grants were still available although it was thought bids were limited to a maximum of £1 million. The Chair and Town Clerk responded by stating that they understood that applications for this funding had been made by Arun District Council in respect of Bognor Regis and that funding for Littlehampton, were particularly regarding the enhancements to the Town Centre, were forthcoming from other sources.
- 31.2** Janet Crossley, a Littlehampton resident, asked whether the Public Realm enhancements for the Littlehampton Town Centre had been finalised and whether they could be changed at this stage. The Chair and the Town Clerk responded by stating that consultation had taken place earlier in the year and that no decision had been taken as of yet. It was very likely that there would be further discussion in the public arena before this scheme commenced.
- 31.3** Susan Penn, a local resident, referred to a local trader's survey about current trading conditions, their view of the Town Centre, the likelihood of employing more staff and level of confidence for the future. This was referred to in the District Council's Cabinet Report on the Public Realm and she asked if the results of this survey would be made public. In response, the Chair stated that he would look into this, with a view to making these public if appropriate.
- 31.4** Referring to the recent presentation by Wayne Hemmingway at a meeting of the Littlehampton Society, Sarah Tyrell suggested that he be approached for his views on significant elements in the Town Centre such as the former Waitrose supermarket site.
- 31.5** Terry Ellis also referred to the Public Realm Enhancements and reported that he had been told that the proposals were "cast in stone". The Chair of the

Committee stated that this was not the case. Mr Ellis also spoke about the possible advantages of inviting someone such as Wayne Hemmingway to become involved in any design element aimed at improving the Town Centre.

32. Officer's Reports

32.1. Festive Window Display Proposal

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which considered the successful financial prizes for best festive window displays in the Town Centre. Members were supportive of this but requested the Traders be asked to consider options in those displays that might encourage the public to visit the Town Centre. Subject to this, the Committee **Resolved**:

To sponsor the festive window display competition each year by awarding cash prizes as set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report.

32.2. Innovating Our Highstreets

32.2.1 The Committee considered the report (previously circulated) which had as an appendix a report considered by Arun District Council's (ADC) Cabinet on 7th October 2019. The report looked to introduce town centre events to drive footfall, encourage out of town visitors to the town centre together, raise local aspirations and also dovetail into support for the night-time economy. Furthermore, the report requested that ADC Officers investigate ways to develop town centre plans and also to research setting up a business rate fund for new start-up businesses in a defined town centre.

32.2.2 The Chair explained that this was part of a much larger package of investment in the town centre which also included the Public Space Protection Order, possible Community Wardens and the Public Realm enhancements. This was in addition to the work that the Town and District Council undertook with the Traders Partnership and the Disc Parking Scheme. Members were strongly supportive of the proposal to fund the town centre events and hoped that visible evidence of Town Council support would be forthcoming. Members were also very strongly supportive of the need for a Town Centre Plan and stated that they wished this to be progressed as soon as possible. It was **Resolved** that:

- 1. The proposed town centre events initiative be supported, subject to agreeing provision under the 2020/21 budget and approving the delivery mechanism**

2. **The need for a Town Centre Plan be strongly supported and that the Town Clerk be instructed to investigate this further and report back as soon as possible.**
3. **The business rate fund proposal be supported, and the full report be otherwise noted.**

32.3. Town Centre Public Realm

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which explained the rationale for a decision that had been taken under the Urgent Action procedure to agree in principle, and subject to Council approval, to join with Arun District Council to jointly meet the shortfall in funding that would allow the public realm enhancements in the Town Centre to extend to cover Beach Road. Members strongly supported the action taken to date and **Resolved** that:

1. **The Urgent Action be noted.**
2. **Council be RECOMMENDED to approve a Capital Sum of up to £200,000 for expenditure on the Beech Road Public Realm Enhancements.**
3. **Council be RECOMMENDED to agree that the approval to release these monies be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with Councillors Chace and Long.**
4. **It be noted that the dispensations referred to in the report no longer needed to be sought as it had been identified that these already existed in the Town Council's Code of Conduct.**

32.4. Town Council Priorities

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that during the Summer a list of prospective Town Council Priorities had been created from Major Capital Projects to Small Location-Specific Initiatives. Some of these were, at least initially, outside of the Council's control being services or land run by other bodies, generally Arun District Council. Members went through the Priorities in detail making the following amendments: -

- **(3) North Littlehampton Community Centre and Youth Facility:** last bullet point of section A to read "large facility, with option to include "surgery" (including medical) facilities for other services".
- **(14) Tree Planting & Wildflowers on new Fitzalan Corridor, also including Rosemead Conifers:** The Chair of the Committee would look to progress this matter through the Joint Eastern Arun Area

Committee Highways and Transport Sub Committee, and that the Tree Planting should state that semimature and mature trees were required.

It was therefore **Resolved** that:

With the inclusion of the amendments above, the priorities and proposed timescales to deliver these be RECOMMENDED to Council for approval.

33. Exempt Business

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7:26pm.

CHAIR