

**Minutes of a meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held in The Fleming Room, The Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton, BN17 5EW, on Monday 10 June 2024 at 6.30 pm.**

**Present:**

Councillor Butcher – Chair  
Councillor Lee  
Councillor May  
Councillor Northeast  
Councillor Tandy  
Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ  
Councillor Woodman

**In attendance:**

Laura Chrysostomou – Town Clerk  
Juliet Harris - Assistant Town Clerk  
Jemima Craven – Events and Town Centre Strategy Manager  
Elise Bicknell - Town Centre Strategy Project Officer

**2024 to 2025**

**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 prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the agenda. The standing declarations were noted, and no further declaration made.

## **5. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

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

There were none.

## **7. Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present.

## **8. Officers Reports**

### **8.1. Events Review**

8.1.1. Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which set out a proposal to appoint a Task and Finish Group to review the community and town centre events programme. This included draft terms of reference and membership proposals which had also been considered by the Community Resources Committee at their meeting on 6 June 2024. The Community Resources Committee had agreed the terms of reference without any changes and appointed Councillor's Lee, O'Neill and Tandy to the Task and Finish Group with Councillor Tandy taking the role of Chair. Members were asked to review the terms of reference and appoint one Member from the Committee to complete the Group.

8.1.2. The Committee proceeded to review the draft terms of reference and supported the rationale for the approach that had been adopted in forming the Group. There were two nominations to fill the place allocated to the Committee on the Group, Councillor May, and Councillor Dr Walsh. There being no further nominations, the Committee proceeded to a vote.

#### **It was resolved that:**

1. Councillor May be appointed as the Policy and Finance representative on the Events Review Task and Finish Group.
2. The terms of reference of the Events Review Task and Finish Group be approved.
3. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

### **8.2. Town Centre Action Group**

The Committee was asked to appoint a representative to the Town Centre Action Group for 2024 to 2025. The Town Centre Strategy stated that the Town Council's nominees were the Mayor, the Chair of this Committee and

one other member. It was noted that Councillor Woodman had been confirmed as Arun District Council's representative for 2024 to 2025. It was proposed that Councillor Northeast be re-appointed in this role and there were no other nominations.

**It was resolved that:**

Councillor Northeast be appointed as the Town Council's representative on the Town Centre Action Group for 2024 to 2025.

### **8.3. Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan Update**

- 8.3.1. The Committee received a report, previously circulated, which contained an update on work being undertaken as part of the Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan including progress with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Town Centre Support Project. The Town Clerk reported that Officers had not lost sight of the Committee's wish for more timely reporting of the Town Centre Action Group and that the meeting dates would be revisited at the June meeting. Details of the UKSPF bid and the consultants tender had also been shared with the Committee.
- 8.3.2. Members proceeded to review the update regarding the UKSPF Town Centre Support Project, and the following points were noted.
- Vacant Shop Front Wraps – The artwork was ready however there were some fundamental issues to resolve before this aspect of the project could get underway. A balance needed to be struck between the landlord's requirements and that of the marketing agents. It was noted that representatives from local businesses would be meeting with the consultants, Matthews Associates later this week to discuss how this might be resolved.
  - Town Map – Development of the map was funded by Arun District Council and the design had been completed. It would be released aligned to the commencement of the Seafront Regeneration Project as it also contained details of the seafront car parking arrangements during these works. It would be reviewed after the Project was completed.
- 8.3.3. The Town Clerk explained that the consultants were primarily engaged in working directly with local businesses on several activities which aimed to bring about improvements to lift the Town Centre and support them to become an effective representative forum for local business interests in the Town. The Committee discussed the barriers to engagement with local businesses including tackling current issues such as low-level crime and antisocial behaviour, securing participation from all sectors of the local economy including the nationwide retailers and absentee landlords. The benefit of having the consultants on board and how they communicated with, and could

gain the confidence of, local business interests was highlighted. The value of the information gained from this engagement was essential if the forum was to become an effective body able to represent the range of businesses in the Town and importantly gain the confidence of those sectors of the local economy, for example restaurants and cafes, that were growing and at present not participating in the forum.

- 8.3.4. It was noted that the consultant's work was jointly overseen by the District and Town Council's with the District Council taking the lead on the UKSPF reporting. Members wished to have a better understanding of the work that was being undertaken by the consultants to achieve the wider representation which was considered essential for the long-term sustainability of the forum. More detail was therefore sought regarding the action plan that the consultants were working to including a time frame and it was agreed that this would be shared with the Committee.

**It was therefore resolved that:**

1. The update on the Town Centre Strategy and Action Group be noted.
2. The update on the UKSPF Project be noted.
3. The financial implications be noted.

**8.4. Town Centre Events Periodic Report**

Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which provided an update on the Summer Love your Local High Street Events Programme and set out feedback from the Easter High Street activities. The Committee placed on record its thanks to the Events Team for delivering a successful programme of Easter activities.

**It was resolved that:**

1. The feedback from the Easter High Street activities be noted.
2. The update on the plans for the Summer Love your Local High Street events be noted.
3. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

**8.5. Business Crime Reduction Partnership Proposal**

- 8.5.1. Members received a report, previously circulated, which contained further information on the proposed Business Crime Reduction Partnership. This included details on the costs, oversight of the managerial role, funding that had been committed by the partners, and options for taking the Partnership

forward. The Committee was requested to review the information before them and consider whether to support the updated proposal with a dedicated Manager and contribute of £12,500 to the Scheme.

- 8.5.2. The commitment of the other partners was acknowledged but Members still had significant reservations about how effective the partnership would be in addressing the long-standing issues around low-level crime and antisocial behaviour. Members also still held the strong view that this arrangement should not be seen as a substitute for a visible police presence and the enforcement powers that they brought with them. It was noted that the Town Council had already shown its commitment to supporting improvements in the Town Centre through the development of a strategy and action plan and funding the Community Wardens which led Members to question for how much resource would be needed to get results. It was however emphasised that participating in the Scheme would serve as a further demonstration of the Town Council's commitment to improving the Town Centre and encourage local businesses to come together and take a role in tackling these issues.
- 8.5.3. The Town Clerk explained how the managerial role was expected to work, and it was noted that their primary function was to act as an intermediary between local businesses and the police, gathering information to enable the police to direct resources to the areas that needed action. It was hoped that this role would encourage reporting, generating the data evidencing the need for the sustained police presence that it was considered was needed to deter crime. However, unease about the partnership remained as the proposal lacked crucial detail around how the effectiveness of the Scheme would be measured and how the BCRP Manager would be empowered to deliver the objectives set. Members considered that assurances on these points were essential if the Town Council was to make this commitment and that the Town Council's financial contribution should be no more than that of the individual partners, £12,000. In addition, the Town Council should signal that if it became clear that the partnership was not achieving its objectives, or there was a change in policing policy, it would want to review its role in the scheme. Members also considered that the Town Council should be recognised as key partner and funder in the proposed Partnership Board. Furthermore, in view of the lack of detail around the BCRP managerial role the consensus was that the Town Council should commit to the Scheme for a period of one year initially with quarterly progress reviews.
- 8.5.4. Returning to the matter of policing in the Town generally and noting a recent experience of public disorder where the local police had been unable to attend, there was a strong view that the Police and Crime Commissioner should be held to account and the matter raised with the incoming Home Secretary immediately after the General Election. It was noted that previous attempts to hold the Commissioner to account on the lack of a permanent

police presence in the Town had shown the importance of having reported data regarding crime and anti-social behaviour. In committing to the Scheme it was hoped that this would be forthcoming.

**The Committee therefore resolved to:**

1. Commit £12,000 to support the implementation of the Business Crime Reduction Partnership in Littlehampton for one year subject to review and on condition that:
  - (i) The Town Council be recognised as key partner and funder in the proposed Partnership Board and was represented by at least one Councillor.
  - (ii) The Town Council received quarterly progress reports.
2. Invite the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner to a business meeting to discuss Town Centre policing.

**9. Finance**

**9.1. Committee Budget Monitor**

Members received a report, previously circulated, highlighting significant variances from budget in Income and Expenditure relating to the Policy and Finance Committee. The report set out the Committee budget year end position for 2023 to 2024 and movements in the Committee's Earmarked Reserves. Observing the increase in income on investments from the previous year, it was also noted that this income went into the Town Council's General Reserve.

**It was resolved that:**

The report be noted.

**9.2. Debtors Update**

The Committee had before it a report, previously circulated, which contained an update on the progress with debt recovery. Members noted the efforts being made to bring down these figures and welcomed the progress that had been made over the year to reduce the outstanding balance. This was ongoing and progress would continue to be reported to this Committee.

**It was resolved that:**

The report be noted.

**10. Exempt Business**

There was none.



The meeting was closed at 7.33 pm.

---

**Chair**