

**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 22 July 2024 at 6.30 pm.**

**Present:**

Councillor Butcher - Chair

Councillor Tandy

Councillor Long

Councillor O'Neill

Councillor Richards

Councillor Woodman

**In attendance:**

Juliet Harris – Assistant Town Clerk

Sofia Chittenden – Communications and Marketing Manager

Jemima Craven – Events and Town Centre Strategy Manager

**2024 to 2025**

**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. Apologies**

There were apologies from Councillors Lee, May, Northeast, and Dr Walsh KStJ. Councillors O'Neill, Richards and Long attended as substitutes.

**14. 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 Councillors Long and O'Neill both declared personal interests across the agenda as members of Arun District Council.

## **15. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

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

### **16.1. Littlehampton Harbour Advisory Body (LHAB)**

16.1.1. The Town Council had been approached by West Sussex County Council to see if it would consider nominating a member to sit on the LHAB. The Town Council was already represented on this Body, and it was understood that this would be in addition to that and filling the place allocated to the County Council under the Body's terms of reference. Any nomination would be subject to confirmation by the Littlehampton Harbour Board.

16.1.2. Members proceeded to discuss this proposal and it was noted that the LHAB was a consultative group set up by the Littlehampton Harbour Board comprised of representatives from stakeholders and harbour users. Should the Town Council choose to accept this extra role, the representative may need to report back to the County Council, but this was unclear, and it was agreed that clarification be sought. Councillor O'Neill proposed Councillor Woodman who confirmed she would be interested in fulfilling this role. There were no other nominations.

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

Councillor Woodman be put forward to West Sussex County Council as the Town Council's nominee to fill this vacancy and clarification be sought regarding the County Council's reporting requirements.

## **17. Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present, and no representations were made.

## **18. Officers Reports**

### **18.1. Standing Orders / Urgent Action**

Members had before them details of the Urgent Action, previously circulated, which had established the Policy Review Task and Finish Group. The Assistant Town Clerk reported that proposed meeting dates and a programme of work had been circulated and the meeting schedule would be confirmed in the coming days.

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

The Urgent Action be noted.



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

The Communications and Marketing Manager presented a report, previously circulated, which contained an update on work being undertaken as part of the Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan and progress with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Town Centre Support Project including an update on work to develop a Town Centre Trail.

### **18.2.1. Town Centre Update**

The notes of the most recent Town Centre Action Group (TCAG) meeting held on 18 June had been circulated alongside the Action Plan update. Since this meeting, Halifax had confirmed that the Littlehampton Branch would be closing in June 2025. Following this announcement, Cash Access UK had confirmed that they would be implementing a Banking Hub in Littlehampton to deliver banking services to the community. The Town Clerk and senior officers had subsequently had an initial meeting with Cash Access UK to discuss how this might work. During what had been a very positive meeting officers had explained the work that was already underway to improve the Town Centre including the Town Council's events programme, its links with community groups, the community stall, and its Business Plan objectives.

The meeting had highlighted the very tight deadline that Cash Access UK were working to. Having heard about the work that was already underway through the Town Centre Strategy, Cash Access UK were receptive to working with the Town Council to deliver a shared space encompassing wider community services. The timescale for implementation of the banking hub was a year and if a permanent location could not be found in that time, a temporary banking hub would be established at a temporary location. It was noted that the Town Council had put forward the Manor House as a possible temporary location should this be required. Cash Access UK also hoped to be present during the town centre summer events in the High Street to raise awareness. Both sides had therefore agreed to catch up on a monthly basis to review progress.

This had come forward earlier than envisaged in the Town Council's Business Plan, but it was considered that there was an opportunity for the Town Council to have a positive presence in this venture. With this in mind a member-led workshop would be held during August to explore options. This was welcomed as it would also provide an opportunity for members to consider how they would like a shared community space with the banking facility to look and inform the ongoing dialogue that had been opened with Cash Access UK.

### **18.2.2. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Town Centre Support Project Update**

The Committee had before it the notes of the second Agents workshop held on 12 June. The Communications and Marketing Manager explained that officers had only that day received the consultant's mid-term report. An initial review of the content had highlighted that the pace of work to develop a local business forum need to intensify. This was a key objective of the Town Centre Strategy and target for the consultants. Officers would therefore be addressing the need for more detailed information on the timeline and deliverables relating to this important piece of work with them as a priority. It was also noted that this information would be shared with the committee as soon as it was received.

On a positive note, the consultants would be launching a survey in September to gather information on a destination identity as it related to Littlehampton. It was also noted that discussions were underway regarding the shop front wraps for vacant units in the High Street.

### **18.2.3. Proposed Town Centre Trail**

Officers had had an initial discussion with Artsworld who had subsequently started to engage partners to develop a trail that would link the seafront, river side and town centre. Initial work was underway with the Littlehampton Academy and during the Summer, Artsworld would attend three events where they would run workshops for young people to engage with them about designs. A formal proposal including financial implications would be brought back to the committee in the Autumn for consideration.

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

1. The update on the Town Centre Strategy and Action Group be noted including the planned Member-led workshop in August to explore options for a shared community space including a banking facility.
2. The update on the UKSPF Project be noted.
3. The progress with the development of the Town Centre Trail be noted.
4. The financial implications as set out in section six of the report be noted.

### **18.3. Events Review**

The Events and Town Centre Strategy Manager updated members on the progress with this review. A full report and the notes of the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group held on 2 July had been published with the Community Resources Committee Agenda and the recommendations would be considered by that Committee at their meeting later in the week.

The Task and Finish Group discussed the outputs expected from the initial public survey that would be launched at the first of the summer High Street events on Wednesday 31 July. The Community Resources Committee would

be considering a draft survey format later in the week and the Group would meet again shortly to begin work on developing the strategy that would underpin the Town Council's events in the future.

**It was resolved that:**

The update be noted.

**19. Exempt Business**

There was none.

The meeting was closed at 7:00 pm.

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**Chair**