

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held in The New Millennium Chamber, The Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton BN17 5EW on Monday 28 October 2024 at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Butcher - Chair
Councillor Lee
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Tandy
Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ
Councillor Wiltshire
Councillor Woodman

In attendance:

Laura Chrysostomou – Town Clerk
Juliet Harris – Assistant Town Clerk
Sofia Chittenden – Communications and Marketing Manager
Beccy East – Artwork

2024 to 2025

31. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

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

The procedures were noted.

33. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillors May and Northeast, Councillors Wiltshire and O'Neill substituted respectively.

34. 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 Wiltshire and O'Neill also declared personal interests across the agenda as Arun District Councillors.

35. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

36. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

36.1. Consultation on Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority Meetings

It was reported that the Government had recently announced a consultation with proposals to introduce powers for Parish and Town Councils to enable Councillors to attend meetings remotely and permit proxy voting. Members were welcome to submit responses individually and Council would be considering a response to the consultation on 21 November. Full details would be circulated to members and could be found at the following link:

[Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings - GOV.UK](#)

It was resolved that:

The update be noted.

37. Public Forum

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

38. Officers Reports

38.1. Wayfinding Project

38.1.1. The Committee received a report, previously circulated, and presentation of ideas for a wayfinding project for the town. The Chair welcomed Beccy East from Artsworld who was leading on the project and was joined by a local artist and young people who had developed the proposals.

38.1.2. The aim had been to develop a creative wayfinding proposal that could improve the interconnectivity between the seafront, riverside and town centre and therefore achieve a strategic objective of the Town Centre Strategy. Workshop sessions held with young people throughout the summer had generated ideas. These had been developed by students from the Littlehampton Academy, working alongside a specially commissioned artist and they joined the meeting to explain their ideas.

38.1.3. The proposals comprised two seaside themed concepts, one using sea creature themed conventional wayfinding signage and one using beach hut styled boxes containing local young people's artwork. Members were invited

to consider how a combination of both ideas might work, the themes and designs, and where they might be positioned. There was a dialogue between the Committee and Project Team during which a number of suggestions were discussed as options for inclusion within the Project. These included how the concepts could be adapted for the visually impaired, having the design reflect specific areas, i.e. the beach, the river, the train and bus stations and the town centre and the importance of getting good signage coverage at key roads and junctions, including the railway and bus stations and the riverside.

- 38.1.4. Members were particularly impressed with the quality and creativity of the beach box design which they considered afforded a great opportunity to include young people and showcase and develop local creative talent. Discussing the concept in more detail it was considered that the installation of beach boxes should be focussed on the East Beach and could potentially attract sponsorship and advertising as well as provide links to facilities using QR codes. It was also thought that they should include the ability to rotate artwork to maintain interest. The use of mirrors and ability to facilitate photo opportunities that could easily be used on social media was supported.
- 38.1.5. In taking this work forward it was noted that the funding that had been secured was time limited and that the Arts Council element needed to be spent by the 31 March 2025. Arun District Council had confirmed that they could commit £10,000. It was felt that signage throughout the Town needed to be both more prominent and prevalent if was to have an impact and that this scheme had the scope to deliver this and potentially form the basis of future signage throughout the area, meeting an objective of the Town Centre Strategy. Alongside the funding and resources already committed by Artswork it was thought that a contribution of up to £10,000 from the Town Council would enable the project to move forward and deliver a mix of two beach boxes and up to ten wayfinding signs. In agreeing to support the project it was noted that proposals for the position of the signs and boxes would be brought back to the committee for consideration.

It was therefore resolved that:

1. The Wayfinding Project be supported to deliver a mix of two beach boxes and up to ten wayfinding signs, the positions of which will be brought back to the Committee for approval.
2. A contribution of up to £10,000 from the Town Council be approved for the Wayfinding Project and be met from the 2024 to 2025 Town Centre Strategy Initiatives budget and the Town Centre Initiatives Earmarked Reserves.

38.2. Town Centre Events Periodic Report

38.2.1. Members had before them a report previously circulated, which contained details of the activities planned for the Christmas Lights Switch on and progress with Events Review. The Town Clerk explained that with the help of feedback from the business community regarding the Christmas lights, the position of the illuminated bauble which had been popular last year had been confirmed and that premises had been secured for Santas Grotto, storytelling and for the museum to run an activity stall. Since the last meeting, plans for the Small Business Saturday initiative organised by Arun District Council were being finalised. A publicity campaign leading up to the event on 7 December was underway and the Town Council was promoting the event through its social media.

38.2.2. Regarding the Events Review, it was noted that a draft strategy document had been approved by the Community Resources Committee at their meeting the previous week. This would see the task and finish group move on to draft an action plan to underpin the strategy, establish an events forum and develop a three-year events programme. It would also see the responsibility for the Town Council's entire events programme transfer to the Community Resources Committee going forward. This was considered sensible.

It was resolved that:

1. The plans for the 2024 Christmas Lights Switch On event and update be noted.
2. The minutes of the Christmas Lights Working Group meeting held on 11 September 2024 be noted.
3. Responsibility for the Town Council's Town Events Programme be delegated to the Community Resources Committee going forward.
4. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

38.3. Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan Update

38.3.1. The Committee had before it 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 Centre Action Group (TCAG) had met on 8 October to conduct the first annual review of the Strategy and Action Plan. The Group had reviewed their terms of reference which had provided clarity in terms of review dates and membership including provision for a youth organisation representative which had been welcomed.

38.3.2. Following the decision by both the Town and District Council to take on direct responsibility for delivering the local business forum, work to get this underway had begun. This was focussed on developing a cohesive business

forum that would see individual business representatives taking on specific roles and championing various aspects of work such as events and communications. A contractor had been appointed to coordinate this and had already started to develop the necessary strands of work to take this forward. This included meeting business representatives, particularly those who had not yet engaged in the Town Centre Support Project.

38.3.3. It was acknowledged that the Action Group meeting had been challenging and the business representatives concerned about the new arrangements for delivering the Town Centre Strategy. This had highlighted how critical it was that the work completed by the consultants on establishing effective relationships with landlords and delivering the one-to-one support carried out with town centre businesses continued. This was the immediate priority and now being employed in the work being done by both the District and Town Council to complete the project as well as other ongoing work to firmly establish the business forum. Recognising the challenges of the Town Centre work, it was therefore considered essential that the Town Council moved forward rapidly with this revised plan utilising the District Council's expertise in this area and reflecting the earlier decision which had been made by this Committee.

It was therefore resolved that:

1. The updates on the Town Centre Strategy and Action Group and progress with the UKSPF Town Centre Support Project be noted.
2. The amendments to the Town Centre Action Group Terms of Reference as set out in paragraph 3.4. of the report be endorsed and noted.
3. The financial implications as set out in paragraph 6 of the report be noted.

38.4. Progress Newsletter Review

38.4.1. The Town Clerk presented a report, previously circulated, which detailed the outcome of this review. The Editorial Board had met recently and had conducted a thorough review of the Council's communication channels and was recommending that the printed newsletter be discontinued. Acknowledging the advances that had been made with technology and the increasing reliance on social media, the Committee supported this move. It was considered that the what's on guide was still valuable and Members also felt that it was worthwhile exploring ways to get better value for money from using the local press. This was noted for further research.

The Committee therefore resolved:

1. To cease production of the printed Progress Newsletter with immediate effect and explore options to utilise funding to support electronic

communication channels, predominantly social media, websites and eProgress.

2. That the financial implications be included for consideration as part of the December budget setting process.

38.5. Arun Flood Forum

- 38.5.1. The Committee had before it a report, previously circulated, setting out the terms of reference for this forum in which the Town Council had been invited to participate. It was noted that attendance would be rotated between the parishes in the district that were most impacted by flooding. The Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Committee, Councillor Butcher had indicated his willingness to be the Town Council's representative on this body and there were no other nominations.

It was therefore resolved that:

1. Councillor Butcher, as Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee be approved as the Town Council's nominated representative on this Forum.
2. The Arun Flood Forum be added to the Town Council's list of Outside Body appointments in future.

39. Exempt Business

The meeting was closed at 19:53 pm.

Chair