

**MINUTES of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on MONDAY 13 JUNE 2011 at 6.00PM**

**Present:** Cllrs Gammon (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Belchamber MBE, Britton, Caffyn, Charles and Emberson

**2011/2012**

**1. EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

The evacuation procedures were noted.

**2. 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.

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Chair, Councillor Neno and Councillor Squires.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and Officers were invited to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interest that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. Councillor Emberson stated that she had a personal interest with regard to the presentation by Southern Water as her partner was employed by that company.

**5. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2011 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**6. CHAIR'S REPORT AND URGENT ITEMS**

There were none.

**7. PUBLIC FORUM**

No questions were raised by members of the public.

**8. PRESENTATION BY SOUTHERN WATER**

The Committee received a presentation by Joanne Fielding-Cook and Paul Graham of Southern Water who were attending to explain the introduction of water meters across the town. Some of the key points that emerged were:-

- 500,000 new meters were being installed in the Southern Water area, with an additional 100,000 meter exchanges where existing meters were more than nine years old.
- The whole programme would be completed in March 2015 with the most "water-stressed" areas being addressed first.
- Southern Water expected the changes to be budget neutral for the Company.

- Where this had been undertaken in the Isle of Wight water usage had fallen from 140-145 litres per person per day to 122.
- In their consultation exercises, 75% of people thought that the introduction of meters was the fairest way forward.
- 8% of properties could not be metered.
- Southern Water had undertaken a lot of work to combat the problem of bogus callers and it was commented that when work had been undertaken in Hampshire crime had fallen in the areas the work was being undertaken.
- 600 meters were being installed daily. This equated to 200 meters in each County.
- The meters had largely been installed in the pavement and would not involve any disturbance to residents.
- There was a dedicated website, call centre and exhibition for this piece of work.
- The changeovers would be made clear on the bills.
- For larger families, Southern Water would be offering a home saver check and any customer could also consider moving to a change over tariff over the next two years. This would mean that in year one the bill would relate to one third of the meter reading and two thirds rateable value. In year two that would revert to two thirds of the meter reading and one third of the rateable value with the meter taking over thenceforth.
- For those most in need, a support tariff would be introduced where the bill would be capped to the rateable value rate.
- Bills had increased across the Southern Water area by 1.4% to subsidise these special tariffs.

It was commented by one Member who had seen the work undertaken in her road that there had been little disruption and the pavements were now better than they were before. On behalf of the Committee the Vice-Chair thanked Joanne and Paul for attending and answering Members questions in such a clear fashion and it was **RESOLVED** that:

**The meter implication programme be noted.**

**9. OFFICER'S REPORT**

**9.1 Mayor's Discretionary Fund**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which summarised the awards made from the Mayor's Discretionary Fund for the year 2010/11. It was **RESOLVED** that:

**The report be noted.**

**9.2 Future Standards of Conduct of Members of Local Authorities in England**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which had as an attachment a legal briefing from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) detailing the proposed abolition of the current Standards framework

and the impact of this on local councils. The Clerk emphasised the direction recommended by NALC but explained that he did not believe that this was necessarily the best way forward for the Town Council. Some discussions might well be emerging with the District Council as to whether to retain a more robust arrangement and he would report on this to a future meeting of the Committee. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

**The current position be noted.**

**9.3 Councillors' Notification Under the Data Protection Act 1998**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) explaining that the Information Commissioner's Office had determined that individual Members should be registering under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the work that they undertook in their Ward. The Clerk explained that the report set out two options, namely for the Town Council to meet these costs or for Members to meet them individually from their allowance. He explained that the Districts in West Sussex and the County Council were following differing lines and that at this stage the way forward was unclear for parishes. The greatest impact of this determination would be on the Town and Parish Councils. In view of this the Clerk advised the Committee that it would probably be preferable to delay making a decision at this stage pending further information. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

**The Town Clerk update the Committee at its next meeting with a view to making a recommendation to Council at that point.**

**9.4 Sexual Entertainment Venue Licensing Policy**

(Councillors Gammon and Caffyn declared personal interests as Members of the District Council's Licensing and Enforcement Committee. They both stated that they would be voting on the matters before them, having regard to only such information as placed before the Town Council. If they came to consider the matter again, they reserved the right to make further comments once the comments of other consultees were received by the District Council). (Councillors Britton and Mrs Carol Emberson also declared personal interests as Members of Arun District Council).

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) that explained that the Police and Crime Act 2009 had introduced a new category of Sex Establishment, known as a "Sex Entertainment Venue". Arun District Council had indicated its intention to adopt new legislative provisions to control these activities and a copy of their draft proposals was attached as an appendix to the report.

Members were supportive of the draft policy and agreed to furnish the Town Clerk with any comments, should they have them by 23 June 2011. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

**The draft policy be supported, although comments of individual Members would be forwarded to the Town Clerk to be incorporated in any composite response to the District Council by the 23 June 2011.**

**9.5 East Arun Community Hospital**

9.5.1 The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which had as an appendix a response to a letter from the Town Clerk from the Chief Executive of the Sussex Cluster PCT. The Clerk and Vice-Chair reported verbally on the meeting of the Arun Hospital Strategic Forum held on Wednesday 8 June 2011. They explained that the meeting had not given rise to any optimism. There appeared to be a lack of ownership in terms of who might be progressing, if anyone, the project. The PCT explained that with the forthcoming changes to the NHS, responsibility was to transfer to GP Consortiums, although the roll out of this and details were under review. In the meantime, the PCT were not looking to progress such schemes, as they needed to be satisfied that the future Commissioners would also require this facility. Furthermore, the PCT had commissioned further reviews as to the need for the hospital which would delay any imminent progress.

9.5.2 Members noted this disappointing position and agreed that it would be appropriate for the Town Council to join with the District Council on a joint campaign to refocus the PCT on the need for a replacement Littlehampton hospital. The Clerk informed Members that there would be a photo call at 9.30am on Tuesday 14 June at the Littlehampton Hospital site. It was **RESOLVED** that:

**The Town Council join the campaign with the District Council and that otherwise the current position be noted.**

**9.6 NALC Conference: Communities In Action – Conference and Exhibition**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that there were to be three National Association of Local Council (NALC) one-day conferences in 2011. It was thought that the weekend conferences were more useful as much of a one-day conference was spent travelling. However, the content of the conference this year did seem to be very appropriate, covering many of the important aspects of the Localism Bill. It was therefore thought appropriate for the Mayor and Town Clerk to attend, subject to the agenda retaining its high relevance. However, it was noted that the London conference was on the same date as the September meeting of Council. Members thought it was important for the Mayor and Town Clerk to attend Council, and therefore that it was appropriate to move Council back one week to Thursday 29 September 2011. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

**1. The attendance of the Mayor and Town Clerk at the NALC conference: Communities in Action on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September be agreed and that the attendance be determined as an approved duty.**

**2. Council be RECOMMENDED to move the September date of Council from the 22<sup>nd</sup> September to the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011.**

**9.7 Consultation on Regulations under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated), together with an appendix which updated Members on a consultation by the Government on Regulations under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. It was **RESOLVED** that:

**The current position be noted.**

**9.8 Referendum, District & Parish Elections: 5th May 2011**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that the District Council were undertaking a survey of Parish Clerks and Councillors regarding the handling of the build-up and election day on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011. The Clerk asked individual Members to respond with regard to any pertinent points they picked up, but would incorporate any generic issues in a composite response. Members identified the difficulty some people faced where they lived by one polling station but actually had to travel some distance to another polling station to vote. It was also commented that it would be beneficial for the count to be held immediately after the election, not held over to the following day. It was **RESOLVED** that:

**These comments be forwarded to the District Council.**

**9.9 Guidelines on Flying Flags**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that two amendments needed to be made to the guidelines for flying flags from Town Council buildings. These related to Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday, which should be recorded as taking place on the second Saturday of June each year and the existing reference to Veteran's Day. Veteran's Day had changed to Armed Forces Day in 2009 and now ran for over a week at the end of June. It was therefore recommended that the Armed Forces Day flag be flown throughout Armed Forces Week unless it conflicted with another event. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

**Council be RECOMMENDED to approve the amendments to the guidelines for flying flags as set out above.**

**10. ACCOUNTS**

**10.1 Finance Report 2010/11**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which highlighted significant variances from budget and income and expenditure relating to this Committee's budget for 2010/11. It was **RESOLVED** that:

**The report be noted.**

#### 10.2 **Finance Report 2011/12**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which was the first of a number of periodic reports throughout the financial year on the Committee's budget. It was **RESOLVED** that:

**The report be noted.**

#### 10.3 **Audit**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) explaining the implications of the new Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, which came into force on 31st March 2011. Members noted the reduced audit costs and that an Annual Return would be produced instead of a full set of accounts. To assist Members and to be more open to the public, the Responsible Financial Officer would also produce a more comprehensive set of unaudited accounts. Members were asked to notify the Town Clerk of any potential conflicts between the Council's Auditor, Mazars and individual Members. None were reported. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

**The report be noted.**

#### 10.4 **Earmarked Reserves**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that at the end of each financial year appropriate underspends were identified to hold as earmarked reserves to meet known and predictable liabilities. In response to a question, the Town Clerk explained that the money received through allotment rentals was significantly less than the expenditure on that item. Therefore, they were not self-sufficient. Members were supportive of the allocation of earmarked reserves and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

**The allocation of earmarked reserves from the 2010/11 budget, as set out in appendix 1 to the report, be approved.**

#### 11. **MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON**

The Town Clerk reported that there had been a meeting of the North Littlehampton Steering Group earlier in the day where the two main items for discussion had been a proposal for a supermarket on the former Bodyshop site at Wick roundabout and the identification of priorities for the draft Section 106 Agreement for the Courtwick development.

#### 12. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

**Members of the public and accredited representatives of the press be excluded under Section 100 Local Government Act 1972 due to the confidential nature of the business to be conducted.**

**13. East Bank Tidal Wall Enhancement**

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated to Members of the Council only) which explained a proposal for the Town Council to contribute, through a loan, to the District Council so as to become involved in the hugely important proposals for supplementary work on the East Bank tidal wall. Members strongly believed that it was vital for the Town Council to be closely involved in the evolution of this work and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

**1. Council be RECOMMENDED to agree to a sum of £50,000 being loaned to the District Council to assist with the enhancement of the East Bank tidal wall scheme, subject to the inclusion of the Town Council on the design and roll out of this project and the repayment of the sum by 31 March 2018.**

**2. A Supplementary Estimate in the sum of £50,000 for this be approved, subject to Power of Well Being status being reacquired.**

The meeting closed at 7.03pm

---

**CHAIR**