



MINUTES of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on MONDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2011 at 6.30PM

Present: Gammon (Vice Chair – in the Chair) Belchamber MBE, Britton, Caffyn, Emberson and Squires

2011/2012

14. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The evacuation procedures were noted.

15. 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.

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Charles and Neno.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers were invited to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. Councillor Britton declared a personal interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council relating to the item on the Youth Service.

18. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2011 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

19. CHAIR'S REPORT AND URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

20. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

21. OFFICER'S REPORT

21.1 A-boards in the Town Centre

Councillor Britton declared a personal interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council and Councillor Caffyn declared a personal interest as an employee of Shopmobility.

Members considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that there had been a number of concerns recently about the plethora of A-boards

in the High Street. A proposal had been developed from discussions with representatives of the traders and officers of the District and County Council. It was for the Town Council to take on the licensing and first stage enforcement of A-boards within Littlehampton. Members discussed the initiative in detail and were concerned that, particularly given the economic climate, no further financial burden should be placed upon traders. From further discussion, it was clarified that traders had been asked to move A-boards historically, but to date this had not been successful in all cases. The Clerk explained that the proposal, was to implement this scheme free of charge for the remainder of this financial year and then to implement a charge that would cover the Town Council's costs thereafter. This would be a pilot that could run until the end of March 2013. Furthermore, he emphasised he would not wish to progress this should the traders indicate that they did not wish this to happen. The matter would be discussed at the forthcoming Town Traders' Forum. Members were therefore supportive of the initiative, subject to traders' support and being kept informed and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. The principle of the Town Council taking on the licensing of A-boards within Littlehampton be supported, subject to the support of traders.**
- 2. The detail of these licences, including the cost, for a pilot period of eighteen months, be delegated to the Town Clerk on the understanding that the charges should not seek to turn the licensing into a money-making initiative, but at the same time should cover the Town Council's costs.**
- 3. The report otherwise be noted.**

21.2 Southern Water's Metering Programme

The Committee considered the latest update from Southern Water on their Metering Programme (previously circulated). Members were pleased with the lack of concerns raised to date, although it was understood some of the more difficult properties to access had still to be completed. Reference was made to need for garden taps to have a separate meter as these costs did not include the drainage element. Councillor Squires would forward the details of an article he had read on this to the Town Clerk to investigate further. It was **RESOLVED** that:

Subject to the comments above, the position be noted.

21.3 Open Public Services White Paper Consultation

The Committee considered a briefing and policy consultation from NALC (previously circulated) which informed Members of the new Open Public Services White Paper. It was hoped that the references made within the White Paper regarding neighbourhood plans would realise funding for parishes. Members also questioned whether it might lead to the demise of

District Councils and the introduction of new unitary authorities. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report be noted.

21.4 Standards of Conduct for Members

The Committee considered a legal briefing from NALC (previously circulated) updating Members on the latest position with regard to the Localism Bill and the implications of this for the Standards regime. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The position be noted.

21.5 Action in Rural Sussex

Members noted that both the Sussex Association of Local Councils and the Sussex Community Rural Council Annual General Meetings were to be held on 4 November 2011. Councillor Charles was the Town Council's representative on WSALC and subject to his availability, it was **RESOLVED** that:

Councillor Charles represent the Town Council at both AGMs and that his attendance be agreed as an Approved Duty.

22. ACCOUNTS

22.1 Finance Report 2011/12

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) highlighting significant variances from budget and income and expenditure related to this Committee's budget from 2011/12. Members also supported the new layout and also the proposal to "Opt to Tax" the land at Southfields Recreation Ground on which the community centre would be built. It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The revised layout of the Budget report be supported.

2. The contents of the Budget report be noted.

3. The proposal to "Opt to Tax" the land at Southfields Recreation Ground on which the Community Centre will be built be supported, with the final decision and timing delegated to the RFO and Town Clerk.

23. MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON

The Town Clerk reported that the planning application for the Courtwick site would be discussed at the meeting of the District Council's Development Control Committee on 8 September. He and the Mayor had met with representatives of Morrison's to discuss their proposals and he had no further update with regard to the North Littlehampton planning application.

24. 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.

25. OFFICERS' REPORTS (CONFIDENTIAL)

25.1 Youth Services/Project 82

(Councillors Britton, Caffyn, Emberson, Gammon and Squires all declared personal interests as District Councillors and Councillor Britton re-emphasised his personal interest as a County Councillor.)

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated to Members of the Council only) which sought Members' views as to the possible future of the Youth Provision from Littlehampton Town Council. The Clerk would incorporate these comments, together with those of other Committees, into a report that would be considered in the next Committee cycle, with a view to reporting to the November meeting of Council. Comments made at the meeting included the importance of having a Manager; the need to progress the "Keystone Project"; the importance of not detrimentally impacting upon other local organisations, particularly with regard to room hire; the need to work with other parishes where appropriate; a contrary view that closing Project 82 would be a retrograde step and a question about the best location for a youth provision. On the latter point, the Clerk clarified that the North Littlehampton planning application had proposals within it to develop a small youth facility to the North of the Town and that the new Southfields community centre would also be well-placed to take on some sessions. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Clerk be asked to prepare a further report incorporating the comments of the Committee to proceed through the next Committee cycle and finally to Council on 24 November 2011.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

CHAIR