



30 August 2011

Notice is hereby given that there will be a meeting 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**

**Committee:** Cllrs Neno (Chair),  
Belchamber MBE, Britton,  
Caffyn, Charles, Emberson,  
Gammon and Squires

**PETER HERBERT**  
Town Clerk

## **AGENDA**

**2011/2012**

**1. EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

**2. MOBILE PHONES**

Members and the public are reminded that the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) is prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings.

**3. APOLOGIES**

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and Officers are reminded to make any declaration of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this Agenda.

You should declare your interest by stating:

- (a) the item you have the interest in
- (b) whether it is a personal interest and the nature of the interest
- (c) whether it is also a prejudicial interest
- (d) if it is a prejudicial interest, whether you will be exercising your right to speak under PUBLIC FORUM

You then need to re-declare your interest and the nature of the interest at the commencement of the item or when the interest becomes apparent.

5. **MINUTES**

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2011, circulated herewith.

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

7. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Members of the public are invited to ask questions or raise issues which are relevant and are the concern of this committee. A period of 15 minutes is allocated for this purpose. If possible, notice of intention to address the Committee should be given to the Clerk by noon of the day of the meeting.

8. **OFFICER'S REPORT**

8.1 **A-Boards in the Town Centre** – report herewith

8.2 **Southern Water's Metering Programme** – report herewith

8.3 **Community Action Pilot** – oral update by the Town Clerk

8.4 **Open Public Services White Paper Consultation** – NALC papers herewith  
A briefing and policy consultation from NALC are attached. Should Members require a copy of the whole White Paper, this can be accessed on [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/open-public-services-white-paper](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/open-public-services-white-paper)

8.5 **Standards of Conduct for Members** – NALC Legal Briefing herewith

8.6 **Action in Rural Sussex** – Notice of AGM herewith

9. **ACCOUNTS**

9.1 **Finance Report 2011/12** - attached

10. **MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON**

11. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

It is **RECOMMENDED** that:

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

12. **OFFICERS' REPORTS (CONFIDENTIAL)**

12.1 **Youth Services/Project 82 - report herewith for Members of the Council only.**

# LITTLEHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

## Non-Confidential

**Committee:** Policy and Finance  
**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011  
**Report by:** Town Clerk  
**Subject:** A-Boards in the Town Centre

### 1. Background

1.1 There have been a number of criticisms and concerns raised recently regarding the plethora of A-boards in the High Street. There is a difficult balance between encouraging the local retailers to advertise and thrive and the menace that this can cause, particularly for partially-sighted people. In addition, too many boards can mean that the High Street looks unattractive and can become very difficult to navigate. A proposal has been suggested to the Traders' Partnership that the Town Council might wish to take on the licensing and enforcement of A-boards in the High Street. This report updates Members on the progress of this initiative.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is RECOMMENDED to agree:

- (1) To support the principle of the Town Council taking on the licensing of A-boards in the Town Centre.
- (2) That the detail of these licences, including their cost, for a pilot period of eighteen months, be delegated to the Town Clerk on the understanding that the cost 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) To otherwise note the report.

### 3. Background

3.1 The growth in number of A-boards on the High Street has been of concern to residents, the Town Council and traders in recent times. There is a difficult balance between having an A-board outside a property in a way that does not obstruct the public and the huge number that are sometimes present currently. It is understood that no permissions have been currently sought for any of these A-boards and they could be removed at any time. However, this is not a priority with the principal authorities and it has been suggested that the Town Council could take on the role of licensing such use and also be the first line of enforcement. In broad terms, for the licensing of A-boards, the permission of the landowner is required and planning permission is also needed under the control of advertising regulations. For the High Street, the agreement of the District and County Councils is required, but then the Town Council could act as agents of the County Council, licensing these A-boards.

3.2 It is suggested that the Town Council would wish to limit the amount of A-boards to one per outlet and also be satisfied with their location.

3.3 A number of points have arisen during discussions with the principal authorities, namely:-

- The Town Council would need to chase the retailers with regard to obtaining and maintaining licences;
- Traders will need £5 million public liability insurance;
- There are no current licences in Littlehampton;
- A-boards should normally be kept against the side of premises, although there could be local conditions;
- The licence would there to protect the users of the highway;
- The licence should specify the type of board, including for instance no moving parts/swing frames;
- The licence could have times when A-boards could be used;
- It could include conditions for when the Market is happening;
- Horsham District Council currently charge £50 per annum per board;
- The Town Council could undertake the first enforcement of A-boards, including taking them away, but the County Council could back this up;
- The Town Council could introduce this scheme at no charge for the remainder of this financial year as a way of introducing this sensibly;
- The Town Traders' Forum later in the month will be asked to discuss this as it is unlikely the Town Council will wish to progress this if the traders are wholly opposed. However, a solution to this problem is required.
- Attached as an Appendix is a copy of the County Council's A-board Licence Conditions. These can be amended for local use.

3.4 If Members are supportive of this proposal, it is suggested that the progression of this be delegated to the Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Traders' Partnership and that an initial free trial period be introduced as soon as possible through to the end of this financial year. The pilot should then extend to 2012/13, where a charge would be levied that would cover the Town Council's costs, but would not appear in any way in trying to make money out of the traders. It is understood that at least some of the traders are supportive of this proposal, but this needs to be tested further.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 It is anticipated that this initiative would be broadly budget neutral, although there would be some staff time required in setting it up, and with no income, should a free pilot scheme for the remainder of this financial year be agreed.

Peter Herbert  
**Town Clerk**

**West Sussex County Council  
A Board Licence conditions**



This licence only applies to the named applicant detailed over and is only valid for A-Boards. It is not transferable and is conditional on the appropriate permissions having been received from the Local Planning Authority.

***See Attached note: (Proof of appropriate planning permissions obtained from the Local Planning Authority must be provided).***

The applicant is to indemnify the Council against any claims in respect of injury, damage or loss arising out of the grant of the permission. Public Liability Insurance of five million pounds must be held and evidence supplied to the Council prior to the issue of the permission. It is the responsibility of the licensee to ensure this insurance remains current for the duration of the licence and that details are available for annual inspection, and at any other time if requested by the Council or its representative.

It is a condition of this licence that all consents and permissions, all health & safety, environmental health or other legal provisions or measures required by WSCC or other legal authorities, are obtained and adhered to. Failure to comply with the reasonable and legitimate instructions of an authorised officer of the Council, Her Majesties Health & Safety Executive or the Police may be considered a breach of these conditions.

The Applicant may be required by an authorised officer to temporarily remove the A Board at any time for any reason and shall not be entitled to any compensation for any loss of trade or business as a result.

The A-board must be in good condition and appear professionally made, they must have no sharp edges or moving parts. Rotary Cylinder type signs are not permitted. Offensive content will not be permitted.

Only one A Board per premises is permitted. Boards lent against walls are not permitted. A Boards on grass verges will not be permitted.

A Boards must not exceed 0.6m.sq with a maximum base of 0.6m (24inches) The board must be two sided, or otherwise free standing causing an A shape or easel effect. Other designs, which achieve the same purpose, will also be acceptable. It must not be on wheels or a trailer. It must be of sufficient weight or design to prevent it being blown over by the wind and should be immediately removed from the highway in adverse weather.

A Boards must be positioned outside and in front of the premises frontage. A Boards must be placed, consistently on a day to day basis, at the back of the footway as near to the property as possible. Whilst a clear footway width of 1.8 metres should be aimed for, where this is not possible a minimum width to allow unhindered safe passage for wheelchair users and mothers with pushchairs must be maintained

Anything left on the highway outside of the businesses operating hours or the hours stated on the licence special conditions, or any item found chained or tied to any other object, street furniture or building may be removed and impounded without further warning and the Applicant will be responsible for any costs sustained by the County Council or its Agents associated with the said removal.

The Council may impose any additional reasonable conditions that may be required and may rescind or suspend the permission at any time.

In exceptional circumstances variations to some of the above conditions might be agreed, these must be clearly identified and recorded on the license agreement.

This licence remains valid for as long as the above conditions remain met or WSCC or its agents revoke it.

The applicant is deemed to have read and understood all of the above and accepts that in the event of a breach of conditions the following process will be undertaken.

- On any first breach of the conditions a verbal warning will be issued by an authorised officer of the Council and the licensee requested to conform with the licence conditions within one hour of the receipt of such a warning.
- Should the A Board still be found to be improperly placed after the one hour verbal warning period, they may be removed from the highway and impounded without further warning. Failure to comply with any of the above will result in a written warning. The Authority's costs for removal and storage of the items will be charged to the licensee.

**This licence must be displayed at all times in the window of the premises.**

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO PLACE A-BOARD UPON THE HIGHWAY  
(HIGHWAYS ACT 1980)

I.....OWNER/ MANAGER. AUTHORISED PERSON  
(name in full)

BUSINESS NAME.....

BUSINESS ADDRESS.....  
.....

.....TEL.....

WISH TO APPLY FOR A LICENCE TO PLACE AN A-BOARD ON THE HIGHWAY AT THE FOLLOWING  
LOCATION  
(If different from above)

I CONFIRM THAT I HAVE READ, UNDERSTOOD AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE CONDITIONS SET  
OUT OVERLEAF AND ANY ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS REQUIRED BY THE COUNCIL.

SIGNED..... POSITION.....

DATED.....

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL BEING THE RESPONSIBLE HIGHWAY AUTHORITY,  
OR..... COUNCIL ACTING AS ITS AGENTS, IN PURSUANCE OF THE  
ABOVE LEGISLATION, HEREBY GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE PLACING OF AN A-BOARD ON PART  
OF THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY OUTSIDE THE PREMISES AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:**

[Empty rectangular box for special conditions]

SIGNED.....

POSITION ..... COUNCIL.....

DATE.....



Mr Peter Herbert  
Clerk  
Littlehampton Town Council  
Manor House  
Church Street  
Littlehampton  
West Sussex  
BN17 5EW

Date:  
12 August 2011

Contact Tel:  
01273 663105

Contact Email:  
[joel.hufford@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:joel.hufford@southernwater.co.uk)

Dear Mr Herbert

**Re: Southern Water's metering programme**

I am writing to update you on the progress of Southern Water's metering programme in West Sussex.

Between now and 2015 we are installing more than 500,000 water meters across Hampshire, Sussex and Kent as part of our long-term plans to secure water resources. This is alongside tackling leakage and developing new resources.

Water resources in the South East are under pressure and our region is classified as one of 'serious water stress' by the Government.

We are introducing metering as households on a water meter tend to use 10 per cent less.

Together with the majority of our customers, we also believe that households paying for the water they use is the fairest way to charge. In addition, it puts our customers in control of their bills.

The new meters we are installing are 'intelligent' and are equipped with leak alarms which will help us, as a company, detect leaks on supply pipes and inside properties, as well as on our own mains network.

**Progress to date**

Since the metering programme began in late 2010, more than 16,000 meters have been installed in West Sussex, including the below postcode zones:

Postcode area	Area
RH12 4	Faygate/ Horsham
RH12 5	Roffey
RH12 2	Horsham
RH12 1	Horsham
RH13 5	Horsham
RH12 3	Horsham
BN17 5	Littlehampton
BN17 7	Littlehampton
BN17 6	Littlehampton

We are currently / soon will be installing meters in the following postcode areas:

Postcode area	Town / Area	Period of install	Total number of meter installations
BN16 3	Rustington	Summer 2011	2088
BN16 2	Rustington	Summer 2011	1908
BN16 1	East Preston	Summer 2011	1912
BN16 4	Angmering	Summer 2011	1267
BN12 5	Ferring	Summer 2011	1275
RH13 0	Horsham	Summer 2011	1025
RH11 9	Broadfield	Summer 2011	3826
RH10 5	Crawley	Summer 2011	2036
RH10 6	Crawley	Summer 2011	3265
RH11 8	Crawley	Summer 2011	4650
RH11 6	Bewbush	Summer 2011	831
RH11 0	lfield	Summer 2011	3076
RH13 9	Southwater	Summer 2011	2045
RH13 6	Mannings Heath	Summer 2011	2266
RH11 7	Crawley	Autumn 2011	3763
RH10 8	Crawley	Autumn 2011	1809
RH10 1	Three Bridges	Autumn 2011	1773
RH10 7	Worth	Autumn 2011	1941
RH10 3	Shipley	Autumn 2011	1874
BN18 9	Arundel	Winter 2012	1593
BN18 0	Ford	Winter 2012	30
BN12 4	Goring by Sea	Winter 2012	2187
BN12 6	Durrington	Winter 2012	2062
BN13 3	Worthing	Winter 2012	2138
BN13 2	Durrington	Winter 2012	2789
RH20 1	Pulborough	Spring 2012	1329
GU280	Graffham	Spring 2012	1113

### How the programme works

Southern Water will contact customers before their meters are fitted.

Installation is free and in most cases the meter will be fitted in the public footpath outside a property so there is no need to enter customers' homes.

Customers will be provided with lots of written information about their meter and metered bill, as well as easy ways in which they can save water, energy and money.

Our installation teams will work on a street by street basis and when they are in an area, an exhibition unit will be parked in the street so customers can talk to Southern Water's advisors directly.

### Keeping bills affordable

Using a phased approach, we have now begun switching customers with new meters onto metered charges, with the first six month bills set to be issued in early 2012.





Working closely with the water industry regulator, Ofwat, we have developed a range of tariffs to give people time to adapt to metered charges and make sure that water bills remain affordable for everyone:

- **Changeover tariff** – any increase in a customer's bills will be phased in gradually over three years to give people time to adjust to their metered charges and understand how to manage their water use and bills
- **Support tariff** – we have introduced this tariff to help customers whose bills go up on a water meter and who have genuine difficulty in paying.

We have identified around 100,000 customers across our service area to whom we are offering additional assistance with their water meter and bills, including the offer of free water and energy use checks (Home Saver Check) and more information on the tariffs and support available. We look to contact these customers directly when installing their water meters.

Please find attached a detailed briefing on our range of tariffs, as well as the other measures we have in place to help our customers to save water, energy and money.

We would be happy to provide any further information you may want, as well as a face to face briefing.

#### **How customers can find out more**

Customers can visit our dedicated exhibition unit, which is stationed in their area, on the day of their meter installation to talk face to face to an advisor. Alternatively they can speak to an advisor as they are delivering information packs before the meter is installed.

Customers can also call our Metering Customer Contact Centre on 0333 2003 012 to find out more.

Detailed information about our metering programme is available on our dedicated website at: [www.southernwater.co.uk/metering](http://www.southernwater.co.uk/metering). Customers can input their postcode to find out when their meter is due to be installed.

We would be happy to provide any further information you may require.

Please get in touch with our Public Relations Manager, Joel Hufford, via [joel.hufford@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:joel.hufford@southernwater.co.uk) or telephone 01273 663105.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DB", written over a faint, illegible printed name.

Darren Bentham  
Director - Universal Metering Programme  
Southern Water

# Southern Water's Metering Programme

## Update – August 2011

### **Meeting rising demand**

The South East has been classed by the government as an area of water stress. Population growth will continue to increase the demand for water, whilst at the same time climate change is likely to mean drier summers and more frequent droughts. That means we need to stretch our water resources further.

Our programme to meter households we supply, alongside tackling leakage and developing new water resources, is an important part of our long-term strategy to manage water resources for Hampshire, Sussex and Kent for the future.

The installation of 500,000 meters by the end of 2015 will reduce the amount of water people use to the extent that it would take until 2035 to return to today's levels of water use, even allowing for population growth in the region and the additional demand on water resources.

On average, households with a water meter tend to use 10 per cent less water and most of our customers believe that metering is the fairest way to charge for water as people pay for what they use.

By 2015, more than 9 out of 10 households in our region will be metered, compared to the current rate of about 40 per cent.

### **Moving customers to metered charges**

As the programme continues, customers will be converted to metered charges three months after their meter has been installed to give them time to adjust to having a meter. At this time customers will be sent a letter advising them of the switch, as well as what their final Rateable Value bill is.

After a further three months, six months after the meter has been installed, the customer will receive a letter explaining how much water the household is using and how much their first metered bill is likely to be.

At any point customers can choose to opt onto the Changeover Tariff (see over) if they think their metered bill is going to be higher than their previous rateable value bill. The Changeover Tariff introduces a bill increase gradually over three years.

For customers who may not be able to afford their metered bill there is the Support Tariff (see over).

All customers will also receive information on ways to save water and energy in their homes and take control of their bills.

Finally, nine months after the meter has been installed, the customer will receive their first metered bill and have the option again to opt onto the Changeover Tariff or apply for the Support Tariff.

## **Support for our customers**

Between April 2011 and March 2012, metered customers will pay £1.04 per 1,000 litres (cubic metre) of water and £1.877 per 1,000 litres of wastewater.

Our average metered water and sewerage bill is £383 for 2011/2012.

When asked, more than three quarters of our customers told us they believe that metering is a fairer way of paying for water as people pay for what they use.

We have calculated that about half of our customers will see their bills go down and half will see their bills increase when they switch to metered charges. This is as a result of the fact that currently water bills are based on the rateable value of the house, whereas on a meter they are based on the amount of water people use.

Working closely with the water industry regulator, Ofwat, we have developed a range of tariffs to give people time to adapt to metered charges and make sure that water bills remain affordable for everyone.

We have already identified around 100,000 customers across our service area to whom we are offering additional assistance with their water meter and bills, including the offer of free water and energy use checks (Home Saver Checks) and more information on the tariffs and support available. We look to contact these customers directly when installing their water meters.

Customers can carry out a free online Home Saver Check, as well as find advice and practical information on water saving at Southern Water's metering website [www.southernwater.co.uk/metering](http://www.southernwater.co.uk/metering)

## **New tariffs specifically for customers receiving a new meter**

We have developed a Changeover Tariff to help people who see an increase in their bills once they switch to metered charges and would like some time to change their water use.

On this tariff, any increase will be phased in gradually over three years to give people time to adjust to their metered charges and understand how to manage their water use and bills.

During the first year, customers on the Changeover Tariff will pay one-third metered charges and two-thirds unmetered charges. In the second year they will pay two-thirds metered charges and one-third unmetered and in the final year they will move to full metered charges.

The Changeover Tariff is optional because some customers may only see a very small initial increase and many customers could reduce their bills to the rateable value equivalent very quickly by making a few changes to their water use. When asked, the majority of our customers said they wanted the Changeover Tariff to be optional.

We have also introduced a Support Tariff to help customers whose bills go up as a result of moving to metered charges and who have genuine affordability issues. To move on to the Support Tariff customers must agree to a free Home Saver Check to help reduce their water and energy use in the home. This includes the installation of free water saving devices.

Customers are then offered a benefits referral service by an independent company which also includes a review of income and expenditure. This results in an assessment of affordability of metered bills which is based on the Common Financial Statement. This is a well recognised method of assessing affordability which is used by many organisations, including the Citizens' Advice Bureau. If recommended for the Support Tariff, the customer's bill will be capped at the equivalent rate of their rateable value bill.

### **Special circumstances**

There are a number of options to help customers who cannot afford to pay their bills, or have to use a lot of water for medical reasons, or have a large family and are on benefits.

These have been in place for some time, and so pre-date the metering programme, and are available for all our customers to apply for, regardless of whether they have received their new meter yet or not.

**WaterSure** provides financial assistance to customers on meters who use large amounts of water for essential purposes. Customers are eligible if someone in the household is receiving benefits or tax credits (restrictions apply) AND:

- someone is responsible for three or more children under 19 in full time education living in the property

OR

- someone has a specified medical condition which requires the use of more water than normal.

WaterSure caps charges at the level of the average Southern Water household bill.

We have existing metered customers already on the WaterSure tariff. Customers who are having a new meter installed as part of our metering programme can also go on to the WaterSure tariff once they are metered if they meet the eligibility criteria.

However, if they also qualify for our Support Tariff then we will place them on the tariff that gives them the most benefit.

**The Southern Water Charitable Trust Fund** is an independent grant making trust which helps people unable to pay their water bills.

**The Water Direct Scheme** allows people who receive Job Seekers Allowance, Pension Credit or Income Related Employment and Support Allowance to have their bills paid to Southern Water out of their allowance to help budgeting.

### **How customers can find out more**

Customers can visit our dedicated exhibition unit, which is stationed in their area, on the day of their meter installation to talk face to face to an advisor. Alternatively they can speak to an advisor as they are delivering information packs before the meter is installed.

Customers can also call our Metering Customer Contact Centre on 0333 2003 012 to find out more.

Detailed information about our metering programme is available on our dedicated website [www.southernwater.co.uk/metering](http://www.southernwater.co.uk/metering). Customers can input their postcode to find out when their meter is due to be installed.

**If you have any further queries**

If you would like more information on any aspect of our metering programme please contact:

Joel Hufford  
Public Relations Manager (Metering)  
Southern Water  
Southern House  
Lewes Road  
Falmer  
East Sussex  
BN1 9PY  
Tel: 01273 663105  
Mob: 07557 152393  
Email: [joel.hufford@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:joel.hufford@southernwater.co.uk)

Customers with a query or complaint regarding metering should, in the first instance, contact our dedicated Customer Service Centre for metering on 0333 2003 012 or visit our website [www.southernwater.co.uk](http://www.southernwater.co.uk)

## **Open Public Services White Paper**

You will be aware that the Prime Minister made a major speech on Monday to launch the new White Paper on the reform of public services .

The White Paper contains very significant proposals for the development of town and parish councils.

The key part for parish and town councils is Chapter 4 of the White Paper, which covers neighbourhood services.

The White Paper promises Government action to “do much more to reinvigorate the most local forms of government- parish, town and community councils.”

This is the most explicit statement we have seen of the Government’s commitment to an expansion of the parish and town council sector.

Later in Chapter 4 the White Paper sets out how Government plans to devolve power to local communities will create a “demand for new councils in urban areas which are not currently parished.”

Interestingly, the White Paper emphasises the need for local accountability to people through their elected representatives. It is believed that this increased accountability was not part of the original White Paper and has been added to address concerns in Government about powers being given, in non-parished areas, to unelected bodies. The Prime Minister addressed this issue in his speech.

In addition to the new powers contained in the Localism Bill, the White Paper promises new powers for parish and neighbourhood councils, including streetscapes, parking, leisure facilities, bye-laws and licensing.

Parish councils will also gain additional powers through community budgets which will pool funding streams to tackle specific local concerns.

The White Paper proposes that the Government will introduce new powers to allow principal authorities to devolve power to neighbourhood level councils; and the establishment of a national framework to make devolution easier to deliver.

The White Paper sets out the Government’s vision of new democratically accountable local councils helping to ensure that service delivery is more accountable to local communities, much more integrated to ensure that spending makes the most impact in meeting local needs and enabling the delivery of innovative ways to deliver services.

One of the key aspects of the paper is the promise to explore how the financial framework of neighbourhood councils can be improved, including looking at revenue raising powers and accountability. There is also a promise to work with communities to deliver a community budget model so that public spending at a local level is co-ordinated at community level, not by the principal authority.

The White Paper also refers to "exploring options for improving the capacity and delivery capability for neighbourhood councils", which is further indication that the Government accepts that there is a need for some investment to ensure that the sector has capability to work with them to deliver these reforms.

Delivery of this vision will be a key challenge. There will not be one piece of legislation which will deliver the changes, but a work programme which will emerge after the period of consultation and then specific action plans that each Department will draw up to deliver the proposals.

The Government will be consulting on the White Paper between now and September. We will be issuing a separate policy consultation briefing this week on the White Paper and the consultation questions it contains. County Associations and Local councils should feel free to respond accordingly.

To read the Prime Minister's Speech, please [click here](#) and to read the White Paper, please [click here](#)

**This briefing was issued by John Findlay OBE, Chief Executive**

## OPEN PUBLIC SERVICES WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION

The Government published its Open Public Services White Paper on Monday 11 July (<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/open-public-services-white-paper>). This was formally launched at a speech on the same afternoon given by David Cameron (<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speech-on-open-public-services/>). The National Association responded positively to the new powers which the White Paper recommends are given to local councils in delivering more and broader public services – in a media release issued on 11 July, 2011. The National Association's Chief Executive also issued a briefing on the broad policy thrust of the document (on 13 July, 2011), stating this was the most explicit demonstration yet of the Government's intention to expand the capacity of the local council sector. The key part of the White Paper for local councils is Chapter 4, which focuses on neighbourhood services. It is highly likely that the devolution of public services to the grassroots level will fuel the demand in urban areas for the creation of more local councils to help deliver these services.

The thrust of the Paper is to seek accountability for service delivery through elected representation and bodies which are already held to account in this way. Local councils as the most grassroots form of elected local government are obviously central to this agenda. The White Paper promises new powers for local councils, including in the areas of streetscapes, parking, leisure facilities, bye-laws and licensing. Local councils will also gain additional powers through community budgets which will pool funding streams to tackle specific local concerns. The Paper states that the Government wants to make it easier for principal local authorities to devolve public services to local councils and similar (accountable) grassroots bodies. This may be followed by a national framework to facilitate the easier devolution of services to local councils.

Instead of there being a raft of legislation which will cover the implementation of the White Paper, there will be a work programme for delivery after the drafting of specific action plans drawn up by each affected Central Government Department in order to deliver the proposals. In order to allow the Government to draft its Departmental action plans for proposal delivery, the White Paper itself contains consultation questions along the following thematic lines;

- Individual services;
- Neighbourhood services;
- Commissioned services; and
- Ensuring Diversity of provision.

The Cabinet Office consultation on the White Paper ends in mid-September and the National Association will be formally responding in due course. Since many local councils will have strong views on the issues the Paper raises, the Association wants to give them the chance to inform its own formal response. **County associations and member local councils are strongly encouraged to submit their views on the White Paper. In order to help shape our own submission we would welcome your responses by Noon on Wednesday 7 September to [chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk).**

We are particularly interested in your views on the Report's consultation questions contained in the Neighbourhood Services section of the White Paper.

This briefing was issued by Chris Borg, Policy and Development Manager © NALC 2011



## **THE FUTURE OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT OF MEMBERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND - UPDATE**

Legal Briefing L08-10 confirmed that the Localism Bill proposes the abolition of the present legal framework for the observance and regulation of high standards of conduct by members of local authorities. Legal Briefing L02-11 explained the practical consequences of the Localism Bill as it relates to the standards of conduct of councillors if it receives royal assent (expected to be late in 2011) without amendments.

The committee stage of the Localism Bill in the House of Lords tabled and considered amendments to the provisions in the Bill that relate to the standards of conduct expected of councillors.

At committee stage, the following views, which NALC supports, were expressed in respect of the Localism Bill's provisions in relation to standards.

1. A code of conduct for members of all local authorities should be mandatory, not voluntary.
2. The code of conduct for all local authorities should be uniform to ensure that there is no local diversity about what is appropriate conduct for all councillors in all local authorities.
3. A national uniform code of conduct does not have to be drafted by Government; it could be drafted by bodies or associations which represent local authorities.
4. Uncertainty about the introduction of criminal offences for councillors who fail to register and declare certain financial and other interests.
5. The continuation of independent standards committees (of principal authorities) to investigate and determine allegations about councillors' conduct.
6. The need for a councillor to have a right of appeal in respect of a decision concerning his/her conduct.

The committee stage produced views which (i) counter the Government's position in relation to the future of the standards of conduct expected of councillors and (ii) endorse NALC's manifesto which requires Government to 'champion high standards in local councils by endorsing the member code of conduct supported by proportionate, transparent and effective implementation at principal authority level and assured through independent national oversight.'

**L06-11****Date of issue: 20 July 2011**

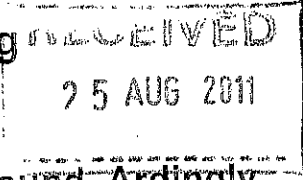
Despite the positive views expressed by the House of Lords at the committee stage of the Localism Bill, no amendments were made. However, the report stage of the bill (in September) presents the House of Lords with a further opportunity to debate and propose amendments to the bill. The third reading of the bill, which follows the report stage, is the final opportunity for the Lords to propose changes to the Bill.

NALC will be lobbying members of the House of Lords to make changes to the Bill which were highlighted at committee stage.

**This briefing was issued by Meera Tharmarajah, Solicitor and Head of Legal Services**

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**Annual General Meeting**



**Norfolk Pavilion  
South of England Showground, Ardingly**

**to be held on Friday 4 November 2011**

Sussex House  
212 High Street  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 2NH

tel: 01273 473422

fax: 01273 483109

email: [info@ruralsussex.org.uk](mailto:info@ruralsussex.org.uk)

[www.ruralsussex.org.uk](http://www.ruralsussex.org.uk)

Please note the above date and venue in your diaries for our Annual General Meeting 2011. We are very pleased to again be sharing the date and venue with the Sussex Associations of Local Councils (SALC) who will also be holding their formal AGM. Both AGM's will be held in the afternoon:

**SALC AGM – 2.00 pm**

**Sussex Rural Community Council AGM – 3.30 pm**

**Sussex Rural Community Council AGM**

Members of the charitable company may nominate candidates for election to the Board of Trustees at the AGM. If you wish to do this please contact the registered office in Lewes and the appropriate papers will be sent to you. Nominations must be with us after 15 September 2011 and received no later than 6 October 2011. Formal AGM paperwork will be sent to guarantor members only w/c 10 October 2011.

Only the appointed representative of each member organisation or individual member may vote at the AGM.

If you would like to join us please return the slip below or email [natalie.simpson@ruralsussex.org.uk](mailto:natalie.simpson@ruralsussex.org.uk) no later than Friday 14 October. Tea and coffee will be available for members attending the AGMs only without payment.

To: Natalie Simpson, Action in rural Sussex, Sussex House, 212 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 2NH

**SRCC Annual General Meeting – 4 November 2011  
Norfolk Pavilion South of England Showground Ardingly**

- I will be attending the Annual General Meeting
- I am unable to attend the AGM

Name .....

Organisation .....

Sussex Rural Community Council (SRCC) is a charity and company limited by guarantee  
Charity Reg N° 1035401  
VAT Reg N° 587 4943 79  
Company registered in England N° 2907172

Presidents:  
Mrs Susan Pyper, Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex  
Peter J Field, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex  
Chief Executive: J J Leggett  
**000026**  
Action in rural Sussex is a member of  
the Rural Community Action Network



# LITTLEHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

## Non-Confidential

**Committee:** Policy and Finance

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011

**Report by:** Town Clerk

**Subject:** Finance Report 2011/12

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The report highlights significant variances from budget in Income and Expenditure relating to the Policy and Finance Committee's budget for 2011/12. Actual figures are shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The report also discusses the 'Option to Tax' the land at Southfields Recreation ground prior to the building of the Southfields Community Centre.
- 1.3 The layout of the budget report has been changed and includes a projected (proportional to the time of year) budget and how expenditure to date varies from this projected budget.
- 1.4 Comments from the Internal Audit Report relevant to this Committee are included in section 3.6.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is RECOMMENDED to
  - (1) Comment on the revised layout of the budget report
  - (2) note the budget report.
  - (3) Support the proposal to 'Opt to Tax', the land at Southfields recreation ground on which the Community Centre will be built, whilst delegating the final decision and timing to the RFO and Town Clerk.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Members are reminded that Income and Expenditure is not always received, or paid out, evenly throughout the year. Therefore fluctuations will occur as to the percentage of the budget used even when the Income or Expenditure is expected to be in line with the budget by the end of the financial year.
- 3.2 Central Admin & Support Services
  - 3.2.1 £14,000 has been included in the budget for insurance which will not be billed until October.
- 3.3 Democratic Representation & Management
  - 3.3.1 The Members Stationery budget was set at £150 but has gone over budget by £435 due to additional printing costs of cards etc for the new Council Members.

3.3.2 From the Ward budget for River Ward £500 has been spent from committed earmarked reserves for the purchase of a Noticeboard at Rope Walk.

### 3.4 Town Centre Management

3.4.1 The budgets for the contribution to Arun DC toward free car parking (£28,250) and CCTV (£2,605) have been paid. These are annual payments.

3.4.2 All other budgets have been spent in line with expectations.

### 3.5 Corporate Management

3.5.1 £1,367 has been received in bank interest against a budget of £4,500. The target budget will be achieved by the year end.

3.5.2 A budget for Internal and External Audit was set at £13,000. Only £3,800 will be spent due to the new lighter touch audit regime.

3.5.3 The Council currently has the following investments.

- £250,000 on 6 months deposit @ 1.1%
- £100,000 on 6 month deposit @ 1.1%
- £300,000 on 1 year deposit @1.55%
- £300,000 on 1 year deposit @1.55%

### 3.6 Internal Audit

3.6.1 One of the functions of internal audit is to give assurance to Members of the Council that the systems, financial and otherwise, are operating correctly, compliant with all laws and regulations and can be relied upon.

3.6.2 The Internal Auditor found that

*“ In connection with my examination, and having regard to the items reported herewith, no matter has come to my attention that gives me reasonable cause to believe in any material respect that the regulatory requirements have not been complied with.*

*The Finance and Resources Manager and her assistant are very thorough and competent. They consistently show a high level of understanding of the internal controls and accounting systems to which they must adhere.*

*The accounting arrangements, procedural controls, records and documentary evidence are considered to be satisfactory, and accurately record the Council's financial position.”*

## **4. Option to Tax**

4.1 The supply of land (lease, tenancy or hiring) is normally exempt from VAT. The Council may give up the right to this exemption and charge VAT at the standard rate instead. This would allow the Council to reclaim input tax (VAT on purchases) when otherwise it would not be able to.

4.2 VAT incurred on purchases for exempt business activities cannot be reclaimed unless the amount of VAT incurred (input tax) is 'insignificant' e.g.

- Less than £625 a month on average (£7,500pa), OR
- Less than 5% of the total VAT incurred on all purchases, including those for non business activities.

- 4.3 This is called the 'partial exemption' rule and will have a serious effect on the financing of Southfields Community Centre. The VAT incurred will produce input tax attributable to exempt supplies in excess of the limits, and therefore not open to reclaim.
- 4.4 The indicative cost of building Southfields Community Centre is in the region of £650,000 plus VAT.
- 4.5 As this VAT is a significant sum, approximately £130,000, the only way to be able to reclaim all of the VAT on the building costs is to take a decision to 'Opt to tax' the land.
- 4.6 The disadvantage of this option is that VAT must be charged on ALL supplies (e.g hirings). Previously exempt supplies will become chargeable to VAT at the standard rate, making them 20% more expensive. It is probable that groups hiring the Community Centre will not be VAT registered and therefore unable to claim the VAT back.
- 4.7 Once exercised, this option is not reversible.
- 4.8 The Council is already registered for VAT so taking this option this doesn't present a further administrative burden. The Council took the 'Option to Tax' the Manor House when it was refurbished for the same reasons as highlighted in this report.
- 4.9 Once the decision to 'Opt to Tax' the land has been taken HMRC must be informed within 30 days. It is therefore recommended that the decision is delegated to the RFO and Town Clerk.

Peter Herbert  
**Town Clerk**

## LITTLEHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

## BUDGET REPORT 2011/12

## POLICY &amp; FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 5th September 2011

SERVICE		Actual I & E as at 22/08/11 £	Budget 2011/12 £	Projected budget 2011/12 £	Variance from Projected Budget £
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT SERVICES*	Expenditure	7,418	31,630	13,179	(5,761)
	Income	3	50	21	(18)
DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION & MANAGEMENT	Expenditure	13,729	33,205	13,835	(106)
	Income	4,957	-	-	4,957
TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT*	Expenditure	35,044	47,000	19,583	15,461
	Income	5,000	5,000	2,083	2,917
CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	Expenditure	3,028	15,930	6,638	(3,610)
	Income	1,367	4,500	1,875	(508)
Total Expenditure		59,219	127,765	53,235	5,984
Total Income		11,327	9,550	3,979	7,348
Net Expenditure		47,892	118,215	49,256	(1,364)

\*ONLY THE PART OF THE BUDGET THAT P & F IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IS SHOWN

FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE SALARIES OR RECHARGES FROM CENTRAL ADMIN,  
A TEAM OR MANOR HOUSE

In addition to the above budgeted expenditure the following has been spent  
from Earmarked Reserves

Ward Budget-River	500
Past Years Mayors Allowance	447
	<u>947</u>