

‘Subject to Approval at the Next Working Group Meeting’

ENVIRONMENTAL & LEISURE WORKING GROUP

2 November 2016 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Hitchins (Chairman), English (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Bence, Bicknell, Brooks, L.Brown, Mrs Maconachie, Maconachie, Northeast, Oliver-Redgate, Reynolds, Dr Walsh, Warren and Wheal.

[The following Councillors were absent from the meeting during consideration of the matters referred to at the Minutes indicated:- Councillor Bicknell, Minute 18 to 21 (part); Councillors Northeast and Dr Walsh, Minutes 23 (part).]

Councillors Bence, Dendle and Chapman were also present at the meeting.

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Buckland, Cates, Dingemans and Mrs Neno,

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer has advised Members of interim arrangements to follow when making declarations of interest. They have been advised that for the reasons explained below, they should make their declarations on the same basis as the former Code of Conduct using the descriptions of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Reasons

- The Council has adopted the government’s example for a new local code of conduct, but new policies and procedures relating to the new local code are yet to be considered and adopted.
- Members have not yet been trained on the provisions of the new local code of conduct.
- The definition of Pecuniary Interests is narrower than the definition of Prejudicial Interests, so by declaring a matter as a Prejudicial Interest, that will cover the requirement to declare a Pecuniary Interest in the same matter.

Where a Member declares a “Prejudicial Interest” this will, in the interest of clarity for the public, be recorded in the Minutes as a Prejudicial and Pecuniary Interest.

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The following Members declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6, Strategic Vision for Public Conveniences in Arun, as members of their respective Town/Parish Councils:-

Councillors Dr Walsh & Warren, Littlehampton TC
Councillor English, Felpham Parish Council
Councillors Brooks, Maconachie and Reynolds, Bognor Regis TC

20. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

21. UPDATE ON LITTLEHAMPTON LEISURE CENTRE

The Principal Landscape Officer advised the Working Group that the Project Team had engaged with a wide range of stakeholders and various organisations and, following a public consultation, had put forward plans to Cabinet on 17 October 2016. Cabinet had subsequently approved that the outline design be signed off prior to the submission of the planning application on 25 October 2016.

The report summarised the top 5 issues that had been raised by the public and Members were provided with more detailed information at the meeting as to how those matters could or could not be taken forward. The provision of temporary seating for galas, etc was being explored and the request for a sauna would be included as a provisional item in the tender process. However, the requests for a splash park type facility would be considered but it was unlikely that this could be accommodated within the building’s footprint or the budget.

Members regarded this initiative as an exciting project for Littlehampton and a view was expressed that the design certainly had the wow factor by not looking like a municipal barn type structure. A number of positive comments were made and in the course of discussion some concern was again expressed that a 50m pool had not been considered for the site. Officers reiterated that the cost and site itself prevented that from being a viable option, with the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Amenities also adding that the provision of a seamless service meant that the existing building would not be demolished until the new centre was built, which further inhibited the footprint of the new building.

The Working Group noted the report.

22 STRATEGIC VISION FOR PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN ARUN

(Councillor Dr Walsh redeclared his personal interest as a Member of Littlehampton Town Council and remained in the meeting and took part in the debate.)

Prior to consideration of this item, the Chairman stated that this was a very comprehensive report which had taken into account Members' views expressed at the previous two meetings. There would now be time to talk to the Towns/Parishes with regard to alternative provision and he thanked the Greenspace & Cleansing Contract & Development Manager for his efforts.

The Greenspace & Cleansing Contract & Development Manager then highlighted to the Working Group the contents of the report and the recommendations that were being taken forward to Cabinet at its meeting on 14 November 2016. In essence, further feasibility work was being undertaken with regard to the provision of public conveniences in the Arun District and a further report would be presented to Cabinet in autumn 2017 seeking a final decision on the future of the facilities referred to in the report, namely

Crown Yard Car Park, Arundel
Ferring Village Green and Ferring Rife, Ferring
Snooks Corner, Felpham
Shrubbs Field, Middleton
North Street, Wick
Avisford Park and West Meads, Aldwick
London Road, Bognor Regis

Members were advised that officers did not necessarily agree with the various comments of the Parish/Town Councils relating to the scoring matrix as those organisations were looking at the provision of public conveniences in isolation with regard to their own areas whereas the District Council had to consider the matter strategically.

The Working Group welcomed the approach now being taken and participated in general discussion on a number of pertinent issues, such as

- Selling sites to the Town/Parish Councils
- A Community Toilet Scheme
- The need for the Council to resolve the ongoing situation relating to the West Beach Café Public Conveniences
- The sites at North Street and Norfolk Gardens, Littlehampton
- Use of public facilities at the new leisure centre

Officers were able to reassure Members on a number of the matters raised and reiterated that the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet allowed for flexibility to review the situation after a year. It was agreed that an update report would be brought before the Working Group in approximately 6 to 7 months time.

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In considering the recommendations to Cabinet, it was pointed out that recommendation (2) made reference to seasonal opening from 1 October 2016. The Greenspace & Cleansing Contract & Development Manager advised that that was an error and should be 1 October 2017, which would be corrected.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure & Amenities took the opportunity to thank Oliver Handson for his hard work in presenting a comprehensive and balanced report. He also highlighted that this Council would be investing £200,000 per annum for the next three years in the provision of public conveniences in the District.

The Working Group noted the report.

23. SHORT TERM POLLUTION EVENT FORECASTING AT BATHING WATERS

(During the course of discussion on this matter, Councillor Bicknell declared a personal interest as reference was made to Southern Water, of which he was an employee. He remained in the meeting and took part in the debate.)

The Environmental Health Manager presented this report which set out the work of the Council in relation to pollution forecasting which was provided at two of Arun’s six designated bathing waters, along with associated signage which was introduced in May 2016. The aim of the forecasting was to protect public health by allowing people to make informed choices about when to enter the sea. The forecasting information provided by the Environment Agency (EA) related to Bognor Regis (Aldwick) and Felpham.

In the course of discussion, a query was raised as to why the two main tourist beaches of Bognor Regis East and Littlehampton were not included - the Environmental Health Manager advised that the forecasting was carried out by the EA, which only provided forecasts for Bognor Regis (Aldwick) and Felpham because these were the only two locations where there was a statistically significant correlation between periods of high rainfall and poor water quality.

Serious concern was expressed that this initiative would harm the tourist economy at these two beaches. It was queried whether the risk warnings were accurate and a further suggestion made that the forecasting data be verified by sampling and analysis to determine its accuracy. Members were advised that the content of the signs was prescribed by the EA and the Council had to comply with that prescribed content. The Environmental Health Manager also stated that monitoring would have financial and resource implications for the service.

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The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services made comment that the surface water drainage was coming from a very large inland area which affected these two locations.

The Working Group noted the report.

(The meeting concluded at 7.50 pm)