

ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE WORKING GROUP

19 December 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: - Councillors Hitchins (Chairman), Warren (Vice-Chairman), Ambler, Brooks, Buckland, Cates, Dingemans, Oliver-Redgate, Dr Walsh and Wells.

Councillors Elkins and Wotherspoon were also present for part of the meeting.

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors English, Maconachie, Mrs Neno, Purchase and Reynolds.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in relation to Agenda Item 6, Strategic Vision for the Future of Public Convenience Services in Arun:-

- Councillor Wells and Brooks declared a personal interest as members of Bognor Regis Trust as that body had submitted an application to the Council some years ago in respect of a community toilet scheme.
- Councillor Brooks also declared a personal interest as a member of Bognor Regis Town Council..
- Councillors Buckland, Dr Walsh and Warren declared a personal interest as members of Littlehampton Town Council.

24. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. REVIEW OF ROLE OF WORKING GROUPS

The Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer advised by way of this report that the Constitution Working Party had requested that the operation of the current Working Groups be reviewed as part of its ongoing work on reviewing the Council’s Constitution. Members’ views were therefore being sought to inform the review.

It was explained that there were two areas to be considered, particularly:-

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- Size of membership – the practice at the moment was to rely on volunteers, which had led to unwieldy numbers of 22 last year and 19 this year. A more practical membership was felt to be a maximum of 15. However, if there was a move away from volunteers then, under current rules, there would be a requirement to have political balance as that would be the only way to allocate seats.
- Past feedback from Members had indicated that it was felt that the Working Groups needed a clearer purpose and role in the decision making structure – the way forward could be to make changes to allow them some delegated authority as a decision maker.

It was being suggested that both Working Group could become Subcommittees; be politically balanced with a membership size of no more than 10 to 15; and have a degree of clearly specified decision making powers.

The Subcommittee was advised that initial consultation had been undertaken with the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the two Working Groups and the Group Leaders to gain support to this review being taken forward.

In the course of debate, views were put forward that the Working Groups should **not** be politically balanced and that the increased membership was due to the development of the Littlehampton Swimming Centre – that was well on course now and so interest would naturally diminish. It was felt that being able to invite interested parties and experts to attend Working Group meetings was essential to maintain; however, the Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer was able to advise that that would still be the case if it became a Subcommittee. Further comment was made that the decision making powers being suggested were “piffling” and there was a degree of scepticism expressed as to their value. The Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer referred Members to her report which confirmed the level of delegation that could be given to a Subcommittee if the proposals were taken forward.

The discussion highlighted that there was a divergence of opinion in that some Members supported change and others wished to maintain the status quo, albeit with a smaller membership. Officer advice was given that the Constitution was clear that there was a minimum number regarding membership of a Working Group but there was no maximum. Any change to introduce a maximum number would therefore be a decision for Full Council.

A proposal was put forward and duly seconded that there should be no change to the current arrangements, subject to the introduction of a membership of a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 15. The vote was tied and the Chairman used his casting vote to not support the proposal; it was therefore declared LOST.

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The Group Head of Council Advice & Monitoring Officer advised the Working Group that it could now consider the proposition detailed in the report or an alternative suggestion. However, if no consensus could be reached she would report that back to the Constitutional Review Working Party, together with Members’ views that the membership should be capped.

A proposal was then put forward that the move to becoming a Subcommittee should be rejected and that Members wished the Working Group to be maintained. Having been duly seconded, the Working Group

RECOMMEND TO THE CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY

That the proposals to change the remit of the Working Groups be rejected and no change be made to current arrangements.

26. STRATEGIC VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE SERVICES IN ARUN

*(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillors Buckland, Brooks, Dr Walsh, Warren, and Wells redeclared their personal interest and remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote.)*

The Greenspace & Cleansing Manager presented this report and advised that the Property & Estates Manager was also in attendance to answer Member questions as there was a cross over between Cleansing and Property & Estates.

Following the presentation, the Chairman thanked Mr Handson for another excellent and comprehensive report.

Members then participated in a detailed question and answer session with the relevant officers which covered a number of issues, in particular:-

- Confirmation was given that Bognor Regis Town Council would not be paying any contributions towards public conveniences in the town.
- No decision had yet been taken in respect of the future of the building at North Street, Wick but officers were aware of the anti-social behaviour taking place in the vicinity.
- The recently approved café to be built on the site opposite the Swimming Centre in Littlehampton would provide toilet facilities for members of the public even if not paying customers.
- Comment that signage was required indicating that toilets were available at the Norfolk Gardens Café would be taken up with ISS.
- The question was asked around when a policy decision had been made to move towards unisex facilities. The Property & Estates Manager advised that he was not aware of any such policy decision but rather it was a move in line with capital and industry practice. In order to provide the best facilities possible that were easier to maintain and were cost effective, unisex tended to be the

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best option. Comment was made that a lot of people were unhappy with such provision and a further question was asked as to what public consultation had taken place on customer preference? The Chairman stated that no public consultation had been undertaken but that the public wanted clean, high quality facilities. The Property & Estates Manager also advised that affordability and vandalism were major factors that had to be taken account of. He highlighted that unisex facilities were already in operation in the District.

- Disappointment was expressed at the lack of interest in a community toilet scheme and it was felt that efforts should be made to sell the idea, a number of suggestions were put forward at the meeting for officers’ consideration.
- Refurbishment of existing public conveniences was seen as a priority as some were in a pretty poor state.

In drawing the debate to a close, it was suggested that an additional recommendation be added to read:-

“Cabinet be asked to confirm or not a policy of moving to unisex toilets where possible.

Having been formally proposed and duly seconded, the additional recommendation was declared CARRIED.

The Working Group then

#### RECOMMEND TO CABINET – That

- 1) the proposal to investigate the potential for commercial development with retained public conveniences at Crown Yard remains, to be undertaken in due course by Property & Estates as part of their work plan;
- 2) the public conveniences at Ferring Village Green are retained, on the basis that the Parish Council are prepared to enter in to an agreement with Arun to support future capital refurbishment costs and continue with their current revenue contribution to Arun;
- 3) the Council aim to retain a public convenience facility at Ferring Rife, looking to achieve this through commercial partnership opportunity that will be explored by the Property & Estates Service and Ferring Parish Council in due course;
- 4) the Council withdraw the North St Wick public conveniences, but work in partnership to support the Wick Traders Assoc. over provision of a Community Toilet Scheme in close proximity;

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- 5) the Council retain Avisford Park public conveniences, on the basis that the Parish Council are prepared to enter in to an agreement with Arun to support future capital refurbishment costs and are prepared to offer a reasonable increase their current annual contribution towards public conveniences;
- 6) the Council retain West Meads public conveniences, on the basis that Aldwick Parish Council are prepared to enter in to an agreement with Arun to support future capital refurbishment costs and are prepared to offer a reasonable increase in their current contribution towards public conveniences;
- 7) the Council withdraw the Snooks Corner public conveniences. This decision is made on the basis that the Culver Road facility will remain open all year round in future. The Council will also look to set up a Community Toilets Scheme arrangement with an interested business in close proximity and will explore commercial opportunities for Snooks Corner;
- 8) the Council retain Shrubbs Field public conveniences, on the basis that Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council are prepared to enter in to an agreement with Arun to support future capital refurbishment costs and are prepared to increase their current annual revenue contribution towards public conveniences;
- 9) pending the formal agreement of Freedom Leisure, for free public use of their public conveniences at the new Littlehampton Leisure Centre, that the Council withdraw the Mewsbrook Park public conveniences on opening of this facility;
- 10) the Council retain Waterloo Square public conveniences at present, pending exploration of a commercial development opportunity of this site with retained public conveniences, to be undertaken Property & Estates as part of their work plan;
- 11) the Council finalises a detailed condition survey of retained public conveniences within the next 12 months. This will allow effective budget planning from both ADC & Parishes who have agreed to support capital refurbishment costs moving forward;
- 12) the delivery of the strategic vision by committing future capital funding sufficient to deliver the phased capital programme be supported;
- 13) the current seasonal closure trial at Culver Road Felpham cease, on the basis of representation received from the public

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and to ensure the site will be open once the proposed refurbishment works due this winter are completed;

- 14) the current seasonal closure trial at Sandy Road Pagham cease, on the basis of the representation received from the public and a reasonable maintenance contribution to be formally agreed with Pagham Parish Council;
- 15) the current trial seasonal closure at Norfolk Gardens continue due to the fact there is alternative provision continuing to be provided at the Norfolk Gardens Café;
- 16) the seasonal closure for Norfolk Gardens be lifted if the Council’s contractor and café operator ISS Facility Services formally requests this;
- 17) the current trial seasonal closure at West Beach be continued;
- 18) the proposed opening of the remaining sites under trial seasonal closure be rescheduled from Easter 2018 rather than the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018;
- 19) a further progress summary is provided to the Working Group in one year’s time; and
- 20) Cabinet be asked to confirm or not a policy of moving to unisex toilets where possible.

## 26. LITTER AND DOG FOULING ENFORCEMENT TRIAL

*(During the course of consideration of this item, Councillor Dr Walsh declared a personal interest as a member of Littlehampton Town Council. He remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote.)*

The Group Head of Technical Services presented this report which set out the results of a review into the one year trial to undertake littering and dog fouling enforcement across the District which had commenced in May 2017. Members were reminded that East Hampshire District Council was the contractor and there was a zero cost to this Council.

The Working Group was advised that, in order to maintain viability and sustainability, the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) fine levels needed to be increased. It was being suggested that littering FPNs would be £80, discounted to £65; and dog control FPN fine level would be £100, discounted to £75. Officers were asking for flexibility to negotiate.

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Members were extremely positive in their consideration of the report. A number of questions were asked and responded to by the Licensing Team Manager.

The Licensing Team Manager stated that the officers undertaking the enforcement activities were passionate about educating people so that there would be fewer repeat issues. They talked to people and listened to feedback and she commended them on their attitude. She was pleased to say that the scheme had exceeded her expectations.

Following some discussion and support for the scheme, the Working Group

RECOMMEND TO THE RELEVANT CABINET MEMBERS  
(for Technical Services, Community Wellbeing & Neighbourhood Services) - That

(1) the contract be extended for a further two years from 15 May 2018, subject to agreement of suitable terms and conditions;

(2) the contract be expanded in scope to allow the Street Scene Enforcement Officers to enforce Public Space Protection Orders, allowing them to enforce all dog controls and confiscate alcohol where appropriate and in accordance with guidance;

(3) the fixed penalty notice “fine” levels are adjusted to ensure scheme sustainability.

27. UPDATE ON LITTLEHAMPTON LEISURE CENTRE

The Working Group noted the update provided by the Principal Landscape Officer.

28. COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

The Chairman thanked officers and Members for their support and wished everyone the compliments of the season.

(The meeting concluded at 7.50 pm)