



Public Document Pack

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11 June 2020

CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Monday 22 June 2020 at 5.00 pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors Dr Walsh (Chairman), Oppler (Vice-Chair), Coster, Mrs Gregory, Lury, Stanley, Mrs Staniforth and Mrs Yeates

PLEASE NOTE: *This meeting will be a 'virtual meeting' and any member of the press and public may listen-in and view the proceedings via a weblink which will be publicised on the Council website at least 24 hours before the meeting.*

Different meeting arrangements are in place for the period running from 4 April 2020 to 7 May 2021 from the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and the meeting regulations 2020, to allow formal 'virtual meetings'.

This Council's revised Rules of Procedures for 'virtual meetings' can be found by clicking on this link: <https://www.arun.gov.uk/constitution>

Any members of the public wishing to address the Cabinet meeting during Public Question Time, will need to email Committees@arun.gov.uk by 5.15 pm on Friday, 12 June 2020 on line with current Cabinet Procedure Rules. It will be at the Chief Executive's/Chairman's discretion if any questions received after this deadline are considered.

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact: committees@arun.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and officers are invited to make any declarations of pecuniary, personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda, and are reminded that they should re-declare their interest before consideration of the item or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

Members and officers should make their declaration by stating:

- a) the item they have the interest in
- b) whether it is a pecuniary, personal and/or prejudicial interest
- c) the nature of the interest
- d) if it is a pecuniary or prejudicial interest, whether they will be exercising their right to speak under Question Time

3. QUESTION TIME

- a) Questions from the public (for a period of up to 15 minutes).
- b) Questions from Members with prejudicial interests (for a period up to 15 minutes).

4. URGENT BUSINESS

The Cabinet may consider items of an urgent nature on functions falling within their responsibilities where special circumstances apply. Where the item relates to a key decision, the agreement of the Chairman of the Overview Select Committee must have been sought on both the subject of the decision and the reasons for the urgency. Such decisions shall not be subject to the call-in procedure as set out in the Scrutiny Procedure Rules at Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

5. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 1 June 2020 as *attached*.

(Pages 1 - 8)

6. BUDGET VARIATION REPORTS

To consider any reports from the Group Head of Corporate Support.

7. UPDATE ON WEBCASTING OF MEETINGS - PROCUREMENT OPTIONS (Pages 9 - 12)

Following the reports that were made to Cabinet on 8 July and 9 December 2019, this report feeds back to the Cabinet the findings from the corporate officer group that was set up to examine the future webcasting needs of the Council and associated costs but has been amended to reflect the Council's current financial position.

8. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC SITUATION (Pages 13 - 20)

This report updates Cabinet on the Council's response to the pandemic situation and its proposals for economic recovery.

9. JOINT ARUN AREA COMMITTEES (Pages 21 - 26)

To consider and note the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Western Arun Area Committee held on 11 March 2020 (as attached), noting that the meeting of the Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee scheduled for 17 March 2020 was cancelled.

ITEMS PUT FORWARD BY THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

To consider any recommendations from the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 9 June 2020.

Note : Report is attached for all Members of the Council only and the press (excluding exempt items).

Note : Members are reminded that if they have any detailed questions would they please inform the Chairman and/or relevant Director in advance of the meeting.

Note : Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings - The District Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision making and permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. This meeting may therefore be recorded, filmed or broadcast by video or audio, by third parties. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council and as available via the following link – Filming Policy [The Filming Policy](#)

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Agenda Item 5

Subject to approval at the next Cabinet meeting

19

CABINET

1 June 2020 at 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors Dr Walsh (Chairman), Oppler (Vice-Chair), Coster, Mrs Gregory, Lury, Mrs Staniforth, Stanley and Mrs Yeates.

Councillors Bennett, Bicknell, Bower, Clayden, Cooper, Mrs Cooper, Dendle, Edwards, English, Gunner, Mrs Pendleton and Roberts were also in attendance at the meeting.

32. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed two new Cabinet Members to the meeting being Councillor Mrs Staniforth [replacing Councillor Purchase as Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services] and Councillor Hugh Coster [Cabinet Member for Commercial & Business Development, which was a new Cabinet Portfolio] and had been reported and noted at the Annual Council Meeting held on 20 May 2020. The Chairman then welcomed Members, the press, officers and members of the public to this virtual Cabinet meeting.

The Chairman provided a brief summary of how the meeting would be conducted and the protocol that would be followed and how any break in the proceedings due to technical difficulties would be managed

33. ITEMS PUT FORWARD BY THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

The Chairman advised that no items had been put forward.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman, Councillor Dr Walsh, declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 [The Council's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic Situation] as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

35. QUESTION TIME

No public questions had been submitted.

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2020 were agreed by the Cabinet and would be signed by the Chairman as soon as practically possible.

Cabinet - 1.06.20

37. START TIMES

The Cabinet

RESOLVED

That its start times for meetings during 2020/21 be 5.00 pm.

38. BUDGET VARIATION REPORTS -

The Chairman introduced this item and then invited the Financial Services Manager to present a verbal update on Round 2 of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) return on the financial consequences of COVID-19.

The Financial Services Manager advised Cabinet that there were 2 significant changes to this return which had been submitted on 15 May 2020. The return now included the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as well as General Fund expenditure and loss of income.

The second return came with the specific instruction to base the Council's submission on the assumption that lockdown would continue until the end of July 2020 and then everything would return to normal. This meant that some figures would hopefully be better but some worse and only time would tell.

Starting with the General Fund, the estimated loss for the current year and beyond had increased to £2.9m from the £2.4m reported on 29 April 2020. The change was mainly due to the worsening assumptions which were stipulated by the Government.

The adverse effect on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was estimated to be around £730k for the current year and beyond, but this was based on the assumptions mentioned previously.

The Financial Services Manager stressed the level of uncertainty around the figures. No one knew what the new normal would be and how local circumstances would develop. It had been mentioned at the last Cabinet meeting (29 April 2020) that the Council had received £1.6m from Central Government but the figures suggested that there would still be a shortfall for 2020/21 and beyond.

The Chief Executive commented that it was hoped that a third tranche of funding would be released by the Government. It had been announced that there was a shortfall of £9billion across the country, with most local authorities experiencing a two-thirds shortfall. In addition, the Government had still not responded on the matter of the New Homes Bonus.

The Chairman invited questions and comments from Cabinet Members. A question was asked concerning the assumption of returning to 'normal' at the end of the

July. The Financial Services Manager advised that this was to ensure that all local authorities responded to the return on the same basis. The Financial Services Manager was asked to confirm what the projected year end revenue deficit would be, based on the current expenditure. She clarified the forecast was £2.9m, on the assumption that the situation returned to normal on 1 August 2020. This would also depend on the private sector businesses returning to 'normal' and re-establishing income streams for example parking charges and Council Tax payments. The Financial Services Manager confirmed that no further modelling had taken place as there was no further data to work on at this moment in time, but the Council would be looking to carry out further modelling in due course. The Chief Executive added that the Corporate Management Team had been looking at a number of options and would be reporting back to Cabinet on this in the near future. The current situation was producing a deficit of c£500k per month, but this could change if the lockdown continued further. Cabinet was asked whether any actions were being taken to reduce overheads in order to make savings. The Chief Executive advised that the Council was keeping expenditure to a minimum and that the budget was being closely monitored.

Cabinet then noted this report.

39. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION

The Chairman introduced this report and paid tribute to the staff and contractors of Arun District Council in maintaining the front-line services, and also to the residents of the District in observing the guidelines regarding social distancing. He then invited the Chief Executive to present his report.

The Chief Executive presented his report on the Council's response to the pandemic situation; its reaction to Government guidance; the continuation of service provision to its residents; and liaison with Members, Partners and Town and Parish Councils.

The Chief Executive started by clarifying that Paragraph 1.3.17 in the report referred to only the Business Rates Revaluation that had been postponed, not the Business Rates reset. It was still to be confirmed whether the reset would be postponed into 2022.

The report identified the timeline of actions taken to enable staff to work remotely in order to observe the social distancing regulations and to ensure their safety. It also referred to the actions taken to provide continued service provision to residents, particularly in relation to the financial support measures announced by Central Government. The Chief Executive gave verbal updates on how much financial support had been awarded since the production of the report.

The report identified some lessons that had been learned from the Council's reactions to the pandemic situation, which would be taken forward and fed into the Recovery Management Team meetings taking place on a weekly basis. These lessons included:-

Cabinet - 1.06.20

- Improvements to the communication plan
- Consistent messaging
- Limited finances to purchase necessary IT equipment to enable staff to work from home
- Time taken to test and trial various platforms for video-conferencing solutions, however caution was necessary due to reports of 'bombing' and hacking
- Confusion across West Sussex regarding differences in delivery of Community Hub

The final section of the report identified proposals for a Coronavirus Exit Strategy to prepare for the 'recovery' stage of the pandemic, and what the Council could look like as it moved into the 'new normal' phase. These included:-

- Revisiting our ambitions for the future with likely reduced resources
- Bringing forward work on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Plan
- The need to continue to move digital responses more quickly than previously envisaged
- Anticipating the different use of Town Centres, parks, open spaces and seafronts

The Chief Executive confirmed that a further report would be brought to the next Cabinet meeting to update on these matters.

The Chairman then invited questions and comments from Cabinet Members. Whilst Cabinet Members acknowledged the delay in setting up communications plans, the use of social media [in particular VLOGs from the Leader, the Chief Executive and staff] was a very well-received and supported move. Improvements in technology to enable remote working and virtual meetings had set the bar for future working arrangements. It was noted that the report referred to a staff survey and a summary of the outcomes of that survey was awaited.

Cabinet Members raised questions regarding the placement of rough sleepers and homeless households following the pandemic; potential ongoing work with climate change activities such as encouraging cycling and walking; concerns for the future of local businesses and the impact of continued social distancing on them and the local markets; gauging the expectations of the public in terms of what they would like us to do;

The Chief Executive responded to these questions and advised that the results of the staff survey were being analysed; the environmental and sustainability agenda was expanding in reaction to the activities of the pandemic situation; the senior management team were reviewing the increased use of digital contacts and would be working on this through the Arun Improvement Board; the Council would also be considering reviewing bylaws in relation to cycling and improving accessibility, and

pedestrianisation opportunities including road closures/restrictions; the Council's newsletter and social media responses would be used to gather feedback from the public to inform the Council on what they would like to see.

The Chairman referred to tourism and the attractions of the Arun District, the need to capitalise on this to increase the income derived from this, working together with local businesses, particularly the leisure and hospitality industry.

The Chairman then turned to the written questions submitted in advance of the meeting, received from Councillors English and Edwards. Councillor English advised that his questions were for Full Council, not Cabinet, but proceeded with his question regarding the reopening of London Road and the provision of a one-way movement through the Town of Bognor Regis.

A full schedule of questions, answers and supplementary questions and answers would be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes and would also be uploaded to the website as a separate document following the meeting.

The Chairman turned to questions from other Members and sought and received support from the Cabinet that questions asked at the meeting should be succinct and be in line with the procedure rules for virtual meetings, and that there would be an opportunity for a supplementary question arising from the response given.

A lengthy discussion on the report and associated activities then took place. Members asked for clarification and assurance that the Council would continue to support local businesses and residents throughout the emergency and beyond. The Chief Executive acknowledged that the Council's reactions may have been a little slow but there was pressures to deal with the guidelines issued by central government, particularly with regard to processing Business Grants, the guidance for which had been amended several times which impacted on speed of delivery of the financial assistance. This emergency situation was very fluid and there were frequent changes to guidelines in response to the changing situation. The Chairman commented that he and the Chief Executive have been in regular discussion with partners, stakeholders, Government offices, and other local authorities to consider and agree the Council's approach and understanding of the support services available and how these agencies could work collaboratively to provide the support that was needed.

There was a clear desire for a strategy to be taken forward to develop policies for how the Council would deal with the recovery phase and beyond. The Chairman clarified that the Chief Executive's report included suggestions for how the future may look, and that any strategy had not yet been formulated whilst the Council was still deliberating what measures needed to be considered, taking into account the lessons learned from this emergency situation. The Chief Executive added that he would welcome any comments and suggestions to contribute to the recovery strategy.

Cabinet then noted the contents of the report and supported the actions taken. A further report would be brought to Cabinet at its next meeting on 22 June 2020.

Cabinet - 1.06.20

The Cabinet then

RESOLVED

That the actions identified in the report be noted and supported.

40. FURTHER OFFICER DECISIONS TAKEN DURING THE CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY

The Chief Executive introduced this item which related to two further officer decisions taken, relating to contractual payments to the housing repair and maintenance contract and the reinstating of car parking charges.

The Cabinet then

RESOLVED

That the action taken by officers be noted and supported.

41. CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2022 - QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE OUTTURN REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2019 TO 31 MARCH 2020

The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support to introduce this item.

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Oppler, reported that the 2020 Vision programme was established to provide the strategic direction required to help the Council become a more effective and sustainable one and to enable it to meet future demands that would be placed upon it. The three Council Priority themes and the 2020 Vision were as follows:-

1. Your services
2. Supporting you
3. Your future

Behind upon these priorities were a series of targets that were measurable and, ideally, in the control of the Council. These were the Corporate Plan indicators. Service targets (Service Delivery Plan indicators – SDPs) sat beneath these corporate priorities to provide more detail about how the services were doing. Performance against these indicators was reported to the Corporate Management Team every quarter, and to Overview Select Committee and Cabinet every six months and at year end.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Support then invited the Group Head of Policy to present the reports and explain the outturn performance figures, as detailed in the report and associated appendices.

The Group Head of Policy informed Cabinet that the Council may need to consider implementing a new Corporate Plan in 2021 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, subject to the timing of the end of the lockdown period. Further consideration would be given to this and reported back to a future meeting. It was also highlighted that the outturns being reported would have been only minimally affected by the Covid-19 pandemic situation as the lockdown situation was implemented towards the end of the reporting period. The impact of the emergency situation would inevitably affect performance being reported at the six-monthly interval, particularly to indicators CP3, CP5, CP7, CP8, CP9, and CP10, which would require close monitoring.

The Cabinet then noted the report.

42. SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2018-2022 - QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE OUTTURN REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2019 TO 31 MARCH 2020

The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Oppler, to introduce this item. The introduction was much the same as the introduction for the previous item, referring to Council priority themes and strategic direction.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Support then invited the Group Head of Policy to present the reports and explain the outturn performance figures, as detailed in the report and associated appendices.

The Group Head of Policy advised Cabinet that there was an amendment to the number of indicators that had over-achieved. The original report referred to 13 indicators – the correct figure was 14. It was further explained that, in relation to SDP23, the outturn reported should have read 84% (against a target of 80%) so this indicator was actually over-achieving.

As with the Corporate Plan report, Cabinet were advised that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic situation was likely to adversely impact future performance. Accordingly, close monitoring of indicators SDP4, SDP5, SDP7, SDP16, SDP18, SDP18, SDP21, and SDP 23 will need to take place. SDP1, SDP3 and SDP10 would also need close monitoring in an attempt to improve performance.

Cabinet were asked to agree to an increase in the target figure for SDP21 – Average time from property vacated to being re-let - from the current target of 15 days to a new target of 24 days. The standard of 24 days 'key to key' was the standard as per the new contract with Osbornes which commenced on 1 April 2020.

Cabinet Members offered appreciation for the work undertaken by Officers to achieve the positive results for many of the indicators. Comments were also made on the indicators relating to empty commercial premises in the Towns and the Director of Place added that the current emergency situation would also contribute to that although plans were in place to encourage and assist smaller businesses to thrive during the recovery phase. The Chairman also clarified that public realm funding could only be spent on public realm works, and that investigative work was underway to explore the possibility of extending the timeframe for spending this funding as a consequence of the

Cabinet - 1.06.20

emergency situation. The Chief Executive referred to decisions made last year with regard to funding for town centre events and the provision of 'pop-up' retail opportunities, which would need further consideration once the Council moved into the recovery phase.

Cabinet were requested to note this report and to approve the increase in the target for SDP21 (Average time from property vacated to property re-let) for 2020/21 from 15 days to 24 days.

The Cabinet

RESOLVED - That

- (1) The report be noted; and
- (2) The performance indicator SDP21 be increased from 15 days to 24 days for 2020/21.

The Cabinet confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/001/010620, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

(The meeting concluded at 8.05 pm)

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT TO CABINET ON 22 JUNE 2020

SUBJECT: Update on Webcasting of Meetings – Procurement Options

REPORT AUTHOR: Karl Roberts, Director of Services
DATE: 28 May 2020
EXTN: 01903 737760
PORTFOLIO AREA: Technical Services/Corporate Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following the reports that were made to Cabinet on 8 July and 9 December 2019, this report feeds back to the Cabinet the findings from the corporate officer group that was set up to examine the future webcasting needs of the Council and associated costs but has been amended to reflect the Council's current financial position.

RECOMMENDATION:

Cabinet is asked to resolve that:

- 1) In view of the timescales involved for this project, to instruct Officers to extend the existing contract with Auditel, for the webcasting of all public meetings for the next twelve months the cost of which is to be met from existing budgets; and
- 2) To note that a further report will be provided to Cabinet setting out the anticipated costs and long-term financial implications of a range of options for webcasting; and
- 3) If within the next 6 months the public are allowed to attend meetings in the Civic Centre then the webcasting will revert to the Full Council and Development Control Committee meetings only.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As a result of the webcasting issues reported to Cabinet on 8 July and 9 December 2019, a corporate group has been working to specify and prepare a procurement exercise for the purchase of a reliable, fully integrated, fit-for-purpose, and future proof webcasting presentation and conference system. The webcasting service is currently provided by Auditel UK Limited. This company also provides and services the sound system in the Council Chamber.
- 1.2 Cabinet was updated on 9 December 2019 of the problems experienced in using more frequently the webcasting service. The last Civic Suite refurbishment was completed in 2015 having had numerous improvements made to the installed AV facilities, including the addition of the webcasting equipment. Alongside the installed systems, a service and maintenance agreement were entered into with the installer. From November 2018

onwards, webcasting has been used to a much greater extent highlighting deficiencies in the installed system and indicating a number of faults. These problems have prevented Officers from delivering the intended level of service to Councillors, members of the public and the press.

- 1.3 Separately, a wireless conferencing system was purchased in two phases around 2010 to serve the Public Gallery and Committee Rooms, as well as being available for mobile deployment. This system is battery powered and is now obsolete with batteries being unavailable either from the original manufacturer or aftermarket sources. Batteries for the system are now failing to hold charge and are frequently not lasting the duration of meetings.
- 1.4 The Committee Services Team; ICT and the Senior Estates Surveyor have worked collaboratively with Auditel's Senior Management Team in escalating and resolving the Council's dissatisfaction with the service, the result of which has been a much-improved client relationship. All outstanding issues have been resolved where technologically possible and the working partnership between the Council and Auditel is back on track. Since 9 December 2020, meetings of Full Council and the Development Control Committee have not been livestreamed and only been recorded and published the following day to eliminate any risk of a webcast failure, as agreed by Cabinet on 9 December 2019.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

2.1 The officer group has undertaken a considerable amount of work including a soft market testing exercise to understand the technical requirements of upgrading and extending the current webcasting arrangements to include the committee rooms. Key elements of the draft specification for a fully comprehensive system include:

- Replacement of the 3 existing SD webcast cameras with 3 high-quality HD cameras, greatly improving the viewable image and reliability of the camera positions.
- Addition of a further high-quality HD camera for webcasting meetings held in the Committee Rooms.
- Replacement of the existing wireless microphone system, with a full set of 40no. new portable wireless microphones capable of integrating with the overall system improving audio quality and functionality in the Committee Rooms, Public Gallery, and remote sites.
- Addition of 4 fully integrated infra-red hearing loops to serve each meeting room separately with zero bleed or overspill ensuring accessibility compliance while maintaining security.
- Full integration with Modern.gov systems improving accessibility and ease of use for customers.
- Webcast recordings to be bookmarked in accordance with meeting agendas.
- Webcast recordings to include subtitle text.
- Replacement of the 14 desktop screens at outlying Council Chamber positions with slimline 13" HD screens with improved image quality and reduced intrusion into desk space.
- Pre-programmed room configurations improving ease of setup and reliability.
- Provisional specification item for integration with telephone/video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams, allowing remote meeting participants to engage with on-site meetings.
- Provisional specification item for wireless presentation connectivity to each room configuration, improving flexibility and device compatibility.
- Fully defined Service Level Agreement terms and performance criteria including dedicated technical support with remote access and diagnostics, automated fault notification, call-out and contact response expectations, ticketed CRM system, account management expectations and regular contract meetings.

2.2 However, the current financial challenges faced by the Council as a result of Covid 19 are such that it is considered that Cabinet would wish to consider a range of options. These might extend at one extreme from simply improving the current system in the Council Chamber for the webcasting of Full Council and the Development Control Committee through to an option at the other extreme whereby any meeting in the Committee suite could be webcast. Each of the options identified has different technical and human resource implications which impacts significantly on the scale of any initial outlay and then ongoing revenue costs. Therefore, it is proposed to present a second report to Cabinet shortly setting out each of the key options together with the anticipated technical and human resourcing costs.

3.0 OPTIONS:

1. To accept the officer recommendations; or
2. To propose an alternative way forward.

4.0 CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leader of the Council has been updated on the findings from this work and requested this report be presented to Cabinet. 	✓	
5.0 ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail below)	YES	NO
Financial	✓	
Legal	✓	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology	✓	
Other (please explain)		✓

6.0 IMPLICATIONS:

There are none directly arising from this report but the advice of the section 151 officer regarding any growth in expenditure is set out below

Section 151 Officer advice

The annual revenue costs will result in base budget growth for future years and Members need to consider this in light of the estimated £2.9M of additional expenditure and reduced income reported to the last Cabinet meeting on 1 June 2020.

7.0 REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To respond to Cabinet's request for an update to be given on the procurement exercise undertaken with suppliers in a pre-tender stage by the corporate officer group.

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 1 July 2020**9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Cabinet report and decision from 8 July 2019

Cabinet report and decision from 9 December 2019

Link to Cabinet Reports: <https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=140>

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET ON 22 JUNE 2020

SUBJECT: THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION

REPORT AUTHOR: Nigel Lynn, Chief Executive

DATE: 5 June 2020

EXTN: 37600

PORTFOLIO AREA: Corporate Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This report updates Cabinet on the Council's response to the pandemic situation and our proposals for economic recovery.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to resolve to:

- (1) note the actions taken to date;
- (2) consider the way forward for this Council post-recovery;
- (3) as part of the work in (2) above, support the establishment of a Coronavirus Recovery Working Party based on the following terms:
 - (a) Terms of Reference – to conduct a review on the way forward for the Council post recovery
 - (b) Size of the Working Party – 10 Members with seats allocated as follows – Lib Dems [4]; Cons [4]; Ind [1] Green [1]
 - (c) Nominations to the seats – to be made by the relevant Group Leader and confirmed on 22 June 2020;
 - (d) Proposals for the allocation of seats if vacancies occur – to be for the relevant Group Leader to fill the vacant seat and report this information to the next Full Council meeting;
 - (e) Timescale for the work to be undertaken – over the next few months of recovery and to include whatever time is required in view of the uncertainty of Covid19
 - (f) To report back to Cabinet on 20 July 2020; and further meetings
- (4) If established, the Working Party can then:
 - (a) Review its terms of reference at its first meeting and recommend any change back to Cabinet;

- (b) Make any recommendations to Cabinet based on the terms of reference – it will have no decision-making authority; and
- (c) Meet in private unless it agrees that it will work to the Meeting Procedure Rules at Part 5 of the Council's Constitution.

1. BACKGROUND:

This report is divided into two main areas – an update on what we have done so far and our proposals for an economic and social recovery.

1.1. Part 1. AN UPDATE ON WHAT WE HAVE DONE RECENTLY

Welfare of Staff and Members

- 1.1.1. Restricted access to the civic buildings continues, with the majority of staff still working from home where they are able to, in line with Government guidance. Plans for limited return to work arrangements are underway, with consideration being given to the safety and wellbeing of staff, Members and contractors.
- 1.1.2. Considerable thought needs to be given to minimising the risk to people entering the building and a Recovery Team have been working on ideas to enable this, such as a 'one-way' route through the offices; identifying staff in 'teams' and considering 'shifts' to minimise the number of contacts. The Health & Safety team have requested a review of the risk assessments to determine which tasks are now safe to deliver.

Welfare of Our Residents

- 1.1.3. Covered under paragraphs 1.1.4 onwards.

Communications

- 1.1.4. Contact via social media continues to be a popular means of gathering information. There was a peak in demand as we approached the May Bank Holiday weekend, particularly as this tied in with the Government relaxing some of the lockdown regulations. We anticipated an increase in visitors from outside of Arun and the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services did a television interview to emphasise some of the key messages regarding social distancing. Weekly reminders of our news bulletins and social media posts are issued.

Homelessness

- 1.1.5. A total of 44 households have now been assisted and our focus is now on ways of accommodating those households once the lockdown status is lifted. Current arrangements for temporary housing of rough sleepers will continue until the end of July.

Waste Collections

- 1.1.6. Waste collections continue as normal.

Car Parking

- 1.1.7. On 13 May 2020, the Chief Executive – in consultation with Group Leaders - agreed to reinstate car parking charges with effect from Friday 15 May 2020. This was due to the need to address a possible influx of visitors following the Government's decision to slightly relax the lockdown rules, and also to inject some much-needed income into the Council's balances.

Support to Local Businesses

- 1.1.8. A further financial support opportunity was announced by Central Government on 13 May 2020. The Discretionary Business Grant Scheme is available for those businesses who were excluded from the initial Business Grant Scheme loosely based on a Rateable Value. The grant fund is based on 5% of our expenditure of the initial Business Grant as of 24/05/20. Arun received a total of £1.539m for the Discretionary Business Grant Scheme. The grant is being administered by the Economy Team as it was felt that they would have more information regarding (and contact with) local businesses. West Sussex-wide criteria for applying for this grant have been agreed and an online application process was launched on 1 June 2020.
- 1.1.9. Business Support Grant has now been paid out to 2254 businesses, a total of £27,615,000. There are still c350 businesses who may be entitled to this grant but who have either refused or haven't applied, despite several reminders. We are also processing around 80 appeal applications where grant payments have been refused.
- 1.1.10. Arun was recently allocated £143,718 from the 'Reopening High Streets Safely Fund', which will be used to support practical measures for Arun's businesses to re-open quickly (when they are allowed to). This includes providing signage, street markings and temporary barriers to help prepare for businesses to start trading again whilst observing the social distancing guidelines, and to restore customers' confidence in being able to shop safely.

The Council's Finances

- 1.1.11. A further financial return to the Ministry of Communities, Housing & Local Government (MHCLG) was submitted on 15 May 2020.
- 1.1.12. Further concerns arise from the reduced income from Council Tax payments as a result of residents being furloughed or losing their income. Arun District Council are still obliged to pay a substantial share of this income stream to the County Council, Town and Parish Councils, and the emergency services, regardless of whether we have received payments from residents.

Council Decision-Making

- 1.1.13. A virtual Full Council meeting was held on 20 May 2020, virtual Cabinet meetings were held on 29 April and 1 June, a virtual Overview Select Committee (OSC) meeting was held on 9 June and virtual Development Control Committee (DCC) meetings were held on 26 and 3 June 2020.

Parks & Open Spaces

- 1.1.14. Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs)/skate parks reopened from 18 May 2020. New signage is being installed which will include messages around social distancing. As the better weather continues, we anticipate increased use of these facilities.
- 1.1.15. In preparation for the summer 'season' and the recent slight relaxing of lockdown regulations, social distancing stencil markings have been painted on the promenades at Bognor Regis and Littlehampton. Banner signage has been placed in key locations to remind the public to remain socially distanced. We have also added further signage at 'pinch points' along the promenades to remind cyclists to slow down.

Community Hubs

- 1.1.16. As at 25 May 2020, Arun had received a total of 202 referrals from the Community Hub, of which 191 had been completed (11 were in progress). The most popular request for assistance (83 out of the 202) was for medication collection, with the second most popular request (79 out of 202) being for food. Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Rustington were the three top areas for referrals (as at 26 May 2020).

1.2. Part 2. OUR PROPOSALS FOR AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RECOVERY

- 1.2.1. The Council should now be turning its attention to what comes next for our community. The economy is an important part of a sustainable community, but it is not the only element. We also need to consider the social and environmental perspectives as well. This pandemic, whilst it has very severe negative outcomes, has created the opportunity for some positive societal change and could lead to long lasting benefits for the environment.
- 1.2.2. However, it must be recognised that the Council also has limited funds to be able to make direct interventions. Instead it is likely that the Council will need to focus on providing local leadership, policy changes to provide an economic stimulus and facilitate any necessary structural change and finally seek out external funding wherever possible. In the main, therefore, this Council will be facilitating the recovery process and helping to provide community leadership.

1.2.3. In reaction to the Government's proposals to "reopen the High Streets", the Council's Communication Team, working with the Economy Team, have been progressing a campaign to create an environment where people feel safe to return to Arun's shops, coast, parks and open spaces. This work began on 3 June with initial press releases and social media and has been escalating since to provide a broad range of positive messages. The recently allocated £143,718 (Reopening High Streets Safely Fund') which will be used to support practical measures to help with this campaign (paragraph 1.1.10).

1.2.4. Furthermore, it is not considered necessary to commission expert opinion on what initiatives the Council should embrace at this time. There is already much informed opinion available, along with the work the Council commissioned to support our recently adopted Economic Strategy, and any analysis commissioned or prepared by our partners such as the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership and the Coastal West Sussex Partnership. Ideas and initiatives which are relevant to our community should be embraced and resourced where possible as part of a recovery programme. Council Members should also play their part in advising Officers on any future initiatives to be considered.

1.2.5. The work of the Council going forward could be grouped into the short-term (less than 6 months), medium-term (6 months to 18 months) and long-term (beyond 18 months). To provide appropriate leadership and direction it is proposed that a Working Party be set up, as a "Think Tank" to help to work up feasible plans for officers to develop, subject to Cabinet support. It is anticipated that this Working Party will be politically balanced, will have 10 number of Members, plus relevant officers, and will meet between this Cabinet (22 June 2020) and 20 July 2020 Cabinet, and probably thereafter too. The Working Party will consider practical ideas, to then be considered by Officers and will reported into Cabinet.

1.2.6. Officers have already identified the following issues as a possible response to the current situation:

Short-term

- Work with partners to enable our Town Centres to comply with social distancing while providing a welcoming and reassuring experience.
- Develop a promotional toolkit for businesses to demonstrate their cleansing and distancing measures
- Continue to use the Arun Business Partnership to engage with local businesses.
- Explore creating an internet directory of local businesses to raise awareness of what can be sourced locally, within the Arun area.

Medium-term

- Develop a range of activities to stimulate footfall/visitor numbers in Arun in partnership with others.
- Consider investment in town centre infrastructure to redress long term lack of investment
- Explore the provision of free Wi-Fi in our town centres
- Identify broadband 'not spots' in Arun and consider potential solutions

Long-term

- Focus on delivering projects which will create jobs locally, or stimulate significant investment in the area or will have major social or environmental benefits
- Consider reduction in demand for office space, student accommodation, and retail and therefore what the future of town centres should look like.

1.2.7. We are now three months into Covid-19 and are familiar with references to “New Normal” and “unprecedented times” and the issues facing local government remain very difficult. Every Council now has a relatively short window in which to resolve three main issues, all of which were discussed at the 1 June 2020 Cabinet meeting:

- Address the financial gap created as incomes fall and customer demands change. The gap is substantial in the short term and it is far from certain what the medium/long term position will be for us
- Develop new strategic targets that fit the new economic and social conditions - Community and Economy are top of the pile, but we need to consider what this really mean in terms of outcomes and investments required to deliver them
- Learn from the crisis and shape a new operating model for the Council that builds on what we have shown to be possible over the past three months.

Whilst we remain uncertain of exactly how to approach each of these dilemmas, what is clear is that these three things need to be resolved in an integrated way. The process of resolving these issues in an integrated way will give rise to some questions.

- What are our priorities now?
- What do we need to change to be a different Council?
- How can we be financially sustainable?

We cannot underestimate how hard this is going to be, because many of the things we do in the Council have been that way for many years; so this will require a more flexible and bold approach to how we do things in the future. If we are clear of our priorities, how we need to change and how we become financially stable, then we will be able to continue to deliver an economic and social benefit to the Arun community.

But, because of the financial position we are in, we need to adjust our position very quickly. The next few months are crucial. The difficulty with doing things quickly however, is that we do not know the funding which will be received and the outcomes of other measures. We need to allow for radical thinking and recognise that some very difficult decisions around our priorities will need to be taken. We will, therefore, need to work at pace, take some early decisions and remain agile in our delivery, especially as we continue to work remotely.

We must also recognise that, at some stage Central Government may well intervene and impose something around Local Government Reform (a White Paper is anticipated by September 2020), so keeping this in mind as we develop the Council priorities is also important.

<p>The window for resolving the three-way dilemma will be relatively short and decisions taken now will shape the future of the Council for a long time into the future. Corporate Management Team's thoughts on our financial stability is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess commercial opportunities • Reducing operational costs • Reducing support costs, and • Raising new income. <p>1.2.8. This process of change will continually evolve, and we certainly do not have all the answers yet.</p>		
<p>2. PROPOSAL(S):</p> <p>Cabinet is requested to note the updates on actions taken thus far to respond to the crisis, and to note the proposals for economic recovery.</p>		
<p>3. OPTIONS:</p> <p>Not to support the actions taken.</p>		
<p>4. CONSULTATION:</p>		
Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		X
Relevant District Ward Councillors		X
Other groups/persons (please specify) - Cabinet	✓	
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial	✓	
Legal		X
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		X
Sustainability		X
Asset Management/Property/Land		X
Technology		X
Other (please explain)		
<p>6. IMPLICATIONS:</p> <p>The final picture regarding the Council's financial position will not be known until the emergency is over. We predict that the potential cost to the Council will be in the region of £2.9m, and we have already received £1.6m in funding from Central Government. These</p>		

figures, however, are only from our “snap-shot” Government returns in April and May; the true figure may inevitably be very different. Any future funding from the Government is unknown and is likely to be based on a more sophisticated formula this time than just population. Additionally, expenditure is difficult to predict as we don’t know how long the situation will last. Officers continue to work on the Council’s financial position using the limited data available to them.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

This is mostly for information only but asks the Cabinet to support the establishment of a Working Party which will review the recovery work of the Council.

8 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 1 July 2020

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- [Coronavirus Webpage](#)
- [Cabinet Report 01.06.20](#)
- [OSC report 09.06.20](#)

Joint Western Arun Area Committee

11 March 2020 – At a meeting of the Committee at 7.00 pm held at The Regis School (Main Hall), Westloats Lane, Bognor Regis, PO21 5LH.

Present:

Mr Edwards (Chairman) (Bersted;), Ms Flynn (Felpham;), Mr Oppler (Bognor Regis East;), Mrs Pendleton (Middleton;), Mr Coster, Mr Charles, Mr English, Mr Lury, Mr Stanley, Mrs Richardson, Mr Knight, Mr Goodheart, Mrs Wild, Mr Ratcliffe and Mr Pickthall

Apologies were received from Mrs Hall (Nyetimber;), Mr Patel (Bognor Regis West & Aldwick;), Mr Whittington (Fontwell;), Mrs Worne and Vac - General

Absent: Mrs Hamilton, Mrs Haywood, Mr Beaton, Mr Humphris, Mr Allington, Mr Ford, Mr Green and Mrs Brimblecombe

Officers in attendance: Monique Smart (Democratic Services Officer), Peter Lawrence (Partnership Area Manager)

31. Welcome

31.1 The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting.

32. Declarations of Interest

32.1 None declared

33. Minutes

33.1 RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34. 'Talk With Us' - Public Question Time (15 Minutes)

34.1 A resident from Aldwick asked if any progress had been made on moving a large campervan from High Trees in Aldwick. The Chairman responded explaining that unfortunately neither the local County Councillor, Mr Patel or the Area Highways Manager were in attendance this evening but that he was aware that both had been involved in this issue and had also been in correspondence with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure. The vehicle was parked safely and using the highway legitimately, so the County Council were not able to intervene in the short, to medium term. The Chairman suggested if there was any suspicion of illegal activities then this should be reported to Sussex Police. Acting Inspector Dave Lyons who was present at the meeting added that Sussex Police spoken to the campervan owner and West Sussex County Council and agree it is not a danger to other road users but have urged the owner to consider moving it.

34.2 A local Town Councillor asked why West Sussex County Council had asked for the control of roundabout planting and sponsorship management back from the Town Council. The Chairman agreed to get a formal response.

35. **Community Policing Update**

35.1 The Chairman welcomed Acting Inspector Dave Lyons who provided an update on neighbourhood policing in the JWAAC Area. A number of issues were discussed including those set out below:

- Following feedback on response times for non-emergency 101 phone calls changes to shift patterns had been made to cope with peak demand. Training had also been amended based on feedback.
- 90% of 99 calls were being responded to within the target of 10 seconds. Inspector Lyons was not aware of the target for 101 but would find out for the next meeting.
- Work was continuing with partners to identify and target addresses and vulnerable people associated with County lines.
- New PCSOs. 4 specifically for Bognor Town Centre. Other areas still being allocated but much more visibility of PCSOs locally. No plans to recreate Neighbourhood Forums at present but are working closely with schools to identify and assist vulnerable families.
- Also an additional 3 Police Officers in the Prevention Team in Bognor.
- Members asked if they could have the crime statistics circulated after the meeting and for future meetings attached with the agenda.

36. **Bognor Regis Public Realm Impact report**

36.1 The Chairman welcomed Caroline Gosford, Regeneration Manager, Arun District Council. Ms Gosford referred Members to the report (attached to the signed minutes) that detailed the evaluation following the public realm works in Bognor Regis Town Centre. Ms Gosford also showed some before and after photos that would be added to the website after the meeting.

36.2 Following the presentation Members made the following comments:

- Members praised the work undertaken.
- Ms Gosford confirmed that an Arun District Council Cabinet report this week had recommended development of Place St Maur. This was also welcomed by Members.
- There were some comments about the colour of the paving and the difficulty in keeping it looking clean.
- It was also suggested that further enforcement was needed to stop cars entering the high street or alternative options explored such as using Belmont Street.

37. **A259 Bognor Regis to Littlehampton feasibility study**

37.1 The Chairman welcomed Paul Eagle, Principal Planner, West Sussex County Council. Mr Eagle explained that following a recent consultation event, the County Council and their consultants were progressing a

feasibility study for improvements to the A259 between Bognor Regis and Littlehampton. Mr Eagle confirmed that would include Comet Corner, Grevatt's Lane, Oyster Catcher, Church Lane, Bridge Round about the Ferry Road Junction.

37.2 Mr Eagle confirmed that initial designs had been submitted by the consultants which included 3 designs for each junction. These were being reviewed by County and District Council officers prior to a second stakeholder consultation event that was planned for 2nd April.

37.3 Cllr Mr English raised concern that not all the relevant stakeholders were invited to the first event and asked for reassurance that this was looked at prior to the next event. Mr Eagle undertook to do so and also to keep JWAAC updated.

37.4 Mrs Pendleton thanked Mr Eagle and his team for progressing this work. Although she was aware that a North/South link was not included in the remit of this project she hoped that it could be planned for as much as possible to allow for it in the future.

38. **Community Initiative Funding (WA07(19/20))**

38.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

38.2 Resolved that:

The following applications were approved:

- 477/JWAAC – Bognor Regis Town Youth FC, 'Footballs for the girls', £719.00 – towards purchasing footballs.
- 502/JWAAC – 'Apulstock 2020', £2,500.00 - towards venue hire and event guide production for an inclusive, community music festival aimed at people with learning disabilities and their families.
- 445/JWAAC – Frame of Mind CIC, 'Picturing a brighter future', £3,806.58 - to hold two 10-week blocks of vocational training for ten adults, who have been long-term unemployed or who are living with mental health difficulties.

The following application was declined:

- 416/JWAAC – Bognor Regis Baptist Church, 'Bognor Church toilet facilities', towards installing a disabled toilet and improving baby change facilities. This was declined as Members felt the project had not gained the community support intended for a crowdfunding project.

It was also noted that application 457/JWAAC had been withdrawn by the applicant.

39. Partnerships & Communities Update

39.1 The Chairman introduced Pete Lawrence, Partnership Area Manager, West Sussex County Council. Mr Lawrence explained the work his team undertake supporting communities and linking them with appropriate services. He referred to a series of drop in sessions being planned with various partner organisations where residents could access information and advice on a range of topics aimed at helping them stay safe, well and independent. Details of these would be advertised soon.

39.2 Mr Lawrence also explained that his team offer advice and guidance to community groups apply for Community Initiative Funding and other funds such as Operation Watershed. They also provide the link between Communities and the County Councillors and provide the same advice and guidance to Councillors.

40. Items to be raised by Town and Parish Council representatives

40.1 The Chairman referred Members to the short paper circulated with the agenda regarding the Future Administration of the H&T Sub Group. Following discussion, it was agreed that an H&T Sub Group was very much still wanted.

40.2 It was agreed that a format similar to that of the Joint Eastern Arun Area Committee (JEAAC) H&T Sub Group could be followed. However, it was noted that their meetings took place in the daytime and were clerked by a Parish or Town Council clerk on a yearly rotational basis and that no charge was made between the Councils. JWAAC H&T Sub Group had always meet in the evening.

40.3 Members agreed that as they currently pay the County Council for the clerking, they would be happy to continue paying this amount to another body. However, most Members indicated that their Town or Parish clerks did not have the capacity to undertake the role.

40.4 The Chairman agreed to convene a meeting to discuss this further and agree a resolution.

40.5 Felpham Parish Council suggested that JWAAC invite the Environment Agency to a future meeting to discuss flooding and increased flow. Cllr Mr Jones confirmed that he had very recently written to all Parishes suggesting they all link together on this issue. It was also mentioned that it was discussed at Arun District Council Scrutiny this week. However, Members agreed that JWAAC would be a good format to bring this discussion together and agreed for the Chairman to contact Gordon Wilson at the Environment Agency to request he attend a future meeting.

41. Date of Next Meeting

41.1 It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Joint West Arun Area Committee would take place on 2 July 2020 at a venue to be confirmed.

Chairman

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

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