



Public Document Pack

Arun District Council
Civic Centre
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
West Sussex
BN17 5LF

Tel: (01903 737500)
Fax: (01903) 730442
DX: 57406 Littlehampton
Minicom: 01903 732765

e-mail: committees@arun.gov.uk

Committee Manager - Jane Fulton (Ext 37611)

10 March 2021

CABINET

A virtual meeting of the Cabinet will be held on **Monday 22 March 2021 at 5.00 pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors Dr Walsh (Chair), 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 March 2021** in line with current 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

(Pages 1 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 February 2021 (as attached).

6. BUDGET VARIATION REPORTS

To consider any reports from the Head of Corporate Support.

7. ARUN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - UPDATE

(Pages 11 - 18)

The Arun Improvement Programme (AIP) considers proposals for new projects that enable process redesigns and service improvements typically using ICT capability to facilitate that change.

This report provides a high-level summary of the activities of the AIP over the last year.

8. OPTIONS TO PROGRESS WEBCAST IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (Pages 19 - 24)

Following previous reports, this report provides options to cabinet for progressing the Webcast Improvement Project with associated costs and address the technical requirements to host hybrid meetings and extend the contract for the operation of our webcasting facility.

9. PLACE ST MAUR AND ESPLANADE PROJECT, BOGNOR REGIS (Pages 25 - 28)

This report provides an update on the Place St Maur and Esplanade scheme and seeks approval for the sign-off of the preferred design following public consultation, in order to progress with the delivery of the Place St Maur.

10. CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY (Pages 29 - 44)

This report sets out the Customer Services Strategy 2021 – 2026 and includes the process for implementation to embed it into the organisation. This follows the report taken to the Housing and Customer Services Group in October 2020.

11. ANTI-GRAFFITI SYSTEMS LTD - TRADING AS AGS ONE - ADMISSIONS AGREEMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (Pages 45 - 52)

On 13 January 2020 Cabinet resolved to outsource the Pest Control Service giving delegated authority to the Group Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Technical Services and Section 151 Officer to award the contract. This decision was taken on 3 December 2020 to award the contract to Anti Graffiti Systems trading as AGS One.

The contract which will commence on 1 March 2021 involves the TUPE transfer of a member of staff. Approval is therefore sought to authorise entering into the required Guarantee in respect of pension liabilities in the event that these are not met by Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One as the admitted body, and to approve the entering into the Admissions Agreement itself.

12. CONTRACT AWARD FOR PASSIVE FIRE WORKS FOR COUNCIL OWNED HOUSING STOCK (Pages 53 - 56)

This report supersedes ICM/182/18022021 which has been withdrawn.

Further to actions arising from fire risk assessments that are being undertaken within the Council's housing stock, approval is being sought to award a 3-year contract, to a specialist accredited contractor from the Central Housing Investment Consortium (CHIC) Framework to carry out passive fire works.

13. THE COUNCIL'S FUTURE FINANCIAL ISSUES (Pages 57 - 64)

The Council's 151 Officer has provided regular reports over recent months highlighting the Council's current financial position and the scale of our possible financial position for 2022/23. Whilst acknowledging various uncertainties, this report provides an update on possible financial measures to help future deficits.

Officers request that Cabinet considers the items identified and advise on the way forward

14. COMMERCIAL MANAGER POST (Pages 65 - 68)

Members agreed the principle of creating a new post of Commercial Manager for 2020/21. The report proposes, that due to the Coronavirus, the process of appointing to the position is delayed.

15. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION (Pages 69 - 78)

This report updates Cabinet on the Council's response to the pandemic situation.

16. PLANNING REVIEW WORKING PARTY - FEEDBACK FROM MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2021 (Pages 79 - 82)

Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Planning Review Working Party held on 11 February 2021, which are attached.

ITEMS PUT FORWARD BY THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

17. HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP - 4 (Pages 83 - 86)
FEBRUARY 2021

The minutes from the meeting of the Housing & Customer Services Working Group held on 4 February 2021 are attached.

There is a recommendation for Cabinet to consider at Minute 22 [Gaining Access to Residents' Homes Policy]. To view the report and Appendix that was submitted to the Working Group – please click here - [Report](#) and [Appendix – The Policy](#)

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 Policy](#)

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Agenda Item 5

Subject to approval at the next Cabinet meeting

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CABINET

8 February 2021 at 5.00 pm

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

Councillors Bicknell, Bower, Charles, Clayden, Mrs Cooper, Cooper, Edwards, English, Gunner, Mrs Pendleton and Roberts were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

458. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members, members of the public and Officers to what was the tenth virtual meeting of Cabinet. He 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.

459. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

460. QUESTION TIME

The Chairman confirmed that no questions had been submitted for this meeting.

461. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman confirmed that there were two urgent items for this meeting.

The first was a verbal update from himself as Leader of the Council confirming that the Government had confirmed on 5 February 2021 that the May 2021 Elections would be going ahead. That same day the 'May 2021 Polls Delivery Plan' had been published setting out how the Government would be supporting the elections.

The Plan set out how the elections would be run because of the Coronavirus pandemic safely, not just for the voter, but also for candidates and staff. Households within the District had been written to in January 2021 to explain how the elections would be different this year and were being encouraged to consider voting by post or proxy. All details could be found on the Council's web site and further and regular updates would be made closer to the election date in May 2021.

Cabinet - 8.02.21

The Chairman also announced that a second supplement pack had been uploaded to the Cabinet web pages earlier on in the day. This urgent item was to provide a facility on request for commercial tenants meeting the criteria of small and medium enterprises in the retail, leisure and hospitality industry sectors to defer rents invoiced in January, February or March 2021, provided a repayment was agreed, due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The Chairman explained that the reason this was an urgent item was that this was the first available opportunity (since the last Cabinet meeting held in January 2021) to bring the associated paperwork before Cabinet. The Chairman outlined that Cabinet was being asked to note and endorse the action that had been taken to allow the deferral of rent to be paid from qualifying business tenants.

Having had some points raised by a non-Cabinet Councillor questioning the urgent nature of this item, the Chief Executive explained that, in future, he would hope such urgent items would not be necessary.

The Cabinet

RESOLVED

The Cabinet noted and endorsed the actions taken by Officers.

The Cabinet confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/050/08022021, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

462. MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 January 2021 were approved as a correct by Cabinet. The Chairman confirmed that these would be signed at the earliest opportunity to him.

463. BUDGET VARIATION REPORTS

There were no matters discussed.

464. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2020

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Oppler, introduced this item confirming that financial performance was monitored on a regular basis to ensure that spending was in line with Council policies and that net expenditure was contained within overall budget limits. The original budget for 2020/21 had been significantly affected by the Covid pandemic, detail of which had been set out in the report.

Councillor Oppler explained that this report had a close link to the next agenda item being the Budget 2021/22 as it provided the latest General Fund Balance forecast for March 2021 and provided an indication of the level of likely capital carry forward.

The Financial Services Manager then addressed the key highlights in the report covering Budget Monitoring for the third quarter. It was emphasised that this year had been subject to significant uncertainty due to the Covid-19 pandemic which had also resulted in significant additional expenditure and loss of income. To mitigate this, expenditure has been reviewed and controlled tightly. The Council had also been in receipt of significant additional government support which had been set out in the report at Page 15 showing that the General Fund (GF) variation against expected current budget was (£1.124m) favourable which was an improvement of (£278k) from the previous month.

The Council had been awarded £2.373m of non-ringfenced Covid-19 support and this had been detailed in Paragraph 2.3.1 of the report with the variation included (£723k) from the Sales Fees and Charges Compensation scheme, which had been claimed to the end of December 2020. It was this sound financial management that allowed the Council to be prudent and earmark the Council Tax and Business Rate in year losses to match the anticipated drop in income for next year as set out at Paragraph 6.2.

It was explained that the £7.865m s31 grants received for the retail hospitality and leisure needed to be earmarked to be available for the corresponding loss of income next year. The estimated outturn General Fund balance as at the end of December 2020 was approximately £6.9m. No further update was provided in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Finally, looking at Capital budget, it was pointed out that there would be significant carry forward into next year to enable the capital programme to catch up. The delays were again mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In discussing the report, the Cabinet Member for Residential Services, Councillor Mrs Gregory, asked a question in relation to the nightly paid monitoring in December 2020, the Covid expenditure was £333k. Was the Council likely to receive any of this money back from Government? The Financial Services Manager responded confirming that it was unlikely that the Council would receive any specific grant and that it would be included as part of the non-specific general grant that the Council received.

The Cabinet

RESOLVED - That

- (1) The report in Appendix 1 be noted;
- (2) A transfer to earmarked reserves of £7.865 m for s31 Grant received in 2020/21 and £1.326m for in year Collection Fund losses be approved; and
- (3) The action taken to mitigate the Council's net expenditure due to the Covid-19 pandemic be noted.

Cabinet - 8.02.21

The Cabinet confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/051/08022021, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

465. ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET - 2021/22

Before inviting the Cabinet Member to introduce this item, the Chairman made a statement about an item that had become entangled with the Budget and had made press headlines leading to speculation and some ill-informed comments to do with beach patrols in Littlehampton and Bognor Regis. Councillor Dr Walsh confirmed that the proposals did not appear in the Budget and were still under review. The situation last year was that the Council only had beach inspectors in place for a very short time due to the Coronavirus pandemic which began in March 2020. Due to Covid-19, the Council was not able to recruit these posts at the current time and that no recruitment would commence until the Covid-19 emergency was over and the decision was taken by Officers and the Cabinet to proceed.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Oppler, explained that the annual Budget provided the financial parameters and direction for the year ahead. It was excellent that the Council had managed to achieve a balanced budget for 2021/22. The pandemic had meant that the Budget process had been even more challenging than in recent years and so he wished to take this opportunity to thank the whole of the Finance Team and all Arun staff for their hard work during these exceptionally challenging times.

The Group Head of Corporate Support then provided a strategic overview of the Budget and the main highlights explained in his presentation have been summarised below:

- It was excellent news that the Council had not had to use its reserves to balance the Budget this had been clearly set out on the General Fund Revenue Budget Summary
- Another good news item was that the Council had been able to set aside around £0.5 m in contingency savings that could be used against any further Covid-19 emergencies should there be any
- The most significant variable was funding from Central Government. The New Homes Bonus (NHB) had been introduced in 2011/12 to create an incentive rewarding local authorities that delivered sustainable housing growth in their areas. This scheme had undergone major review and continued to be reduced and would likely receive a payment of zero in two years' time. This would be partly offset by a lower tier Service Grant, but it was assumed that this grant would be a one-off grant and not a replacement of the NHB.
- It had previously been flagged a number of times that the Government was planning a funding review of funding streams through the Fair Funding Review which could result in reset of business rates which would effectively mean that the Council would lose all the growth it had accumulated since the inception of the scheme in 2013. Although this had been further delayed due

to Covid-19, it was anticipated that the Government would still be carrying out these changes [the Fair Funding Review]. It was worth noting that although the Council had done well out of some of these schemes, there were other Councils elsewhere in the country that had not done so well and so were asking for this sort of funding to be shared more evenly.

- Given the balanced budget, it was anticipated that the Council's balances would remain at around £6.7m. The major variation to the Budget had been set out at the Table in Paragraph 4.6 of the report.
- On the General Fund, a Council Tax increase of £4.95 was proposed to £191.52 for a Band D Council Tax. 2.65%
- On the HRA, this reflected the priorities of the Business Plan as presented to the last meeting of Cabinet on 11 January 2021 and included a significant investment in affordable homes. For 2021/22 HRA rents would be increased by 1.5% in accordance with the provisions of the rent standard.
- Finally, on Capital and Asset Management and other projects, the report set out the significant investment in essential infrastructure. Cabinet was asked to note that in addition to what was outlined in the report, funding had been approved at the last Full Council meeting for funding for the enhancement of the Sunken Gardens and Place St Maur projects in Bognor Regis.

Questions were asked by Non-Cabinet Councillors in relation to the Council's proposed increase in Council Tax which was proposed to be increased by the maximum amount allowed. The Leader of the Council was asked if a threshold was not in place, would his administration be proposing a much higher percentage rise. Councillor Dr Walsh confirmed that the 2.65% increase proposed was the right amount as the Council had produced a balanced budget and so did not need to raise its Council Tax any more or less than what was proposed which represented a fair amount for the District's tax payers.

Other questions asked were around the number of new dwellings built against targets set. The Cabinet Member for Residential Services responded confirming that to date 90 properties were being purchased, 24 had been handed over with one existing 5 bedroomed house being refurbished into two 2-bedroom flats for temporary accommodation. Councillor Mrs Gregory confirmed that she had to hand all the dates for the handovers with last being in early 2022 which she would be happy to share. Councillor Mrs Gregory stated that with the 70/30 monies from properties sold from the Right to Buy Scheme, it was hoped to be able to push those figures further.

Further clarification was sought from Non-Cabinet Councillors in relation to the Foreshores Team. The Chairman confirmed that it was not part of the budget proposals to alter the situation or to either increase or decrease the budget.

The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, Councillor Mrs Yeates, confirmed that she had not been made aware of this situation.

Suggestions were made for the foreshore team to be recruited now in readiness for the start of the new season. Councillor Mrs Yeates confirmed that she needed to check on the exact status of the personnel.

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The Director of Services was asked to expand on this issue. She reminded Councillors that the foreshore staff employed were temporary staff and she explained the reasoning for the reduced service last year reminding Councillors that this service was supported by the important service of lifeguarding which had also been reduced last year as the RNLI had prioritised Littlehampton over Bognor Regis, due to the fast flowing River Arun.

Statements were made that the answers being provided were not clear in terms of when Foreshore staff operated. The Director of Services reconfirmed that no recruitment had yet been undertaken for this season for the reasons she had already provided.

Following further debate, the Chairman confirmed that this situation was under review in line with the pandemic and that when it was appropriate to review the situation, this would occur.

The Cabinet

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL – That

- (1) The General Fund Revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1 is approved;
- (2) Arun's Band D Council Tax for 2021/22 is set at £191.52, an increase of 2.65%;
- (3) Arun's Council Tax Requirement for 2021/22, based on a Band D Council Tax of £191.52, is set at £11,994,514 plus parish precepts as demanded, to be transferred to the General Fund in accordance with statutory requirements;
- (4) The HRA Budget as set out in Appendix 2 is approved;
- (5) The HRA rents for 2021/22 are increased by 1.5% (CPI plus 1%) in accordance with the provisions of the new rent standard;
- (6) HRA garage rents are increased by 5% to give a standard charge of £12.93 per week (excluding VAT), and heating and water/sewerage charges increased on a scheme by scheme basis, with a view to balancing costs with income; and
- (7) The Capital budget as set out in Appendix 3 is approved.

The Cabinet also noted

- (1) that the Group Head of Corporate Support, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, has approved a Council Tax base of 62,628 for 2021/22; and
- (2) the budget report in **Appendix A, 1,2 and 3**;

The Cabinet confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/052/0802021, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

466. ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CONTRACT FOR CORPORATE AND RESIDENTIAL SITES

The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Technical Services, Councillor Stanley, to introduce this item. Councillor Stanley explained that when the current electricity supply contract was entered into last spring, it was the first time that Arun District Council had obtained its electricity supply from renewable sources via a Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certified contract. It was an important step in reducing the carbon emissions from the Council's activities, in support of its resolution on 15 January 2020, to work towards making the activities of the Council carbon neutral by 2030.

In identifying a successor supply contract, the Council was committed to ensuring it obtained value for money, but also retained a REGO certified renewable supply. The Group Head of Technical Services then briefly expanded on what was proposed.

Having responded to a range of questions where reassurance was provided that this was the greenest product available to the Council, the Cabinet

RESOLVED – That

- (1) it approves the appointment of LASER for a new electricity supplier by running a Mini Competition from an existing Framework Agreement;
- (2) it approves LASER for the managing of the resulting contract with the supplier on behalf of the Council;
- (3) following the initial contract set up with a new supplier of 12 month fixed period, to approve the continued appointment of LASER to negotiate an Evergreen contract for the year on year supply of electric rather than repeating the tender and appointment process ever few years;

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- (4) approve the supply contract for an Evergreen Period via LASER; renewable every 12 months following the initial 12 month fixed rate agreement period; and
- (5) give delegated authority to the Group Head of Corporate Support to enter into the necessary contracts.

The Cabinet confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/053/08022021, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

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

The Chairman, as Leader of the Council, introduced this report explaining that it provided the most recent collation of issues around the Council and the District's position on the Coronavirus pandemic. It related particularly to the 4 January 2021 Lockdown and since the last Cabinet meeting on 11 January 2021.

It was reported that Officers had again set up a weekly Emergency Management Team to oversee issues that arose quickly, and thanks were extended to the sterling work of that team of Officers, who were working over and above their normal duties. The Chairman outlined that he and the Chief Executive had continued with the weekly briefings to all Members and the Council's partner organisations, which he hoped were still helpful. Any feedback on how to improve the briefings would be most welcome. At this point and in view of some emails received from Councillors, the Chairman provided some further information on the Community Champions Fund.

Finally, the Chairman confirmed that locally, Arun's Covid prevalence remained high, but it was slowly improving, and he thanked the public for their diligence. The Chief Executive then added some additional points – these were that:

- The Council had had to change its position on skateparks when the guidance changed overnight;
- It continued to look after rough sleepers, who were very vulnerable anyway, and that the Council would be proactively working with them to assist them;
- Environmental Health had been working with businesses that remained open to ensure the safety of their staff and customers;
- That the report included an update on the numerous grants that the Council continued to administer for the Government; and
- To re-emphasise that pressure on staff remained very high as they managed the demands of Covid-19 whilst undertaking the day to day job.

A range of questions were asked. Firstly, in providing some feedback, a request was made for the report to provide more information on Covid Marshalls in terms of where they operated, which was provided by the Chief Executive. Looking at Appendix A, and the grants received by the Council, it would be helpful to know how much had been paid out on top of what had been received. It was felt that this might urge those

who were entitled to grants to apply for them when perhaps they had not claimed in the past to avoid missed opportunities.

The Chairman responded confirming that the weekly report issued to all Councillors jointly from him and the Chief Executive did indicate how much had been paid out by each grant headline. Councillors were reminded that the rules on closing dates for entitlement were not set by the Council but by Central Government and so flexibility could not be applied if a deadline had been missed. The Chief Executive confirmed that on the issue of grants, he would look to see if any changes could be made in terms of showing the most accurate picture. On the issue of Covid Marshalls, an update was provided by the Group Head of Technical Services. Returning to the Covid grants [Appendix A] a request was made to provide more commentary and for those that contained no details. The Chairman confirmed that he would liaise with the Chief Executive to ensure that information would be provided.

Following some further questions regarding the 3D street art at Littlehampton and where the funding for this project had come from, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

That the report and actions to date be noted.

The Cabinet confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/054/0802021, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

468. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE - 26 JANUARY 2021

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Corporate Support, Councillor Oppler referred Cabinet's attention to Minute 438 [Update from the Residents' Survey Working Party] which set out a range of recommendations for Cabinet Members to consider.

The Cabinet

RESOLVED – That

(1) the Council carries out its 2021 Residents Satisfaction Survey using methods identified by the Working Party to improve participation across age groups, which can be implemented within budget, these are:

- a) Increase number of surveys, potentially offsetting this cost by not sending out follow up letters, numbers to be determined with the survey provider
- b) Carry out an open online survey alongside the targeted survey
- c) Explore options for incentives for survey completion to be vouchers for local businesses

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- d) Explore options for invitations to participate being sent in a more appealing format.
- e) Carry out an additional sample geographically targeted survey to target younger respondents

(2) delegated authority be given to the Group Head of Policy to work with our chosen provider to deliver the most representative survey for 2021, within existing budgets based on the recommendations of the Residents Satisfaction Survey Working Party and in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Party; and

(3) the effectiveness of the changed methodology be reviewed in the 2021 survey report and developed for future years.

The Cabinet confirmed its decision as per Decision Notice C/055/0802021, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the Minutes.

(The meeting concluded at 6.32 pm)

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: ARUN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME – ANNUAL UPDATE

REPORT AUTHOR: Paul Symes, Head of Technology & Digital

DATE: 15 January 2021 EXTN: 37585

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Arun Improvement Programme (AIP) considers proposals for new projects that enable process redesigns and service improvements typically using ICT capability to facilitate that change.

This report provides a high-level summary of the activities of the AIP over the last year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Cabinet is requested to note the activities of the Arun Improvement Programme.

1. BACKGROUND:

In 2001 Arun District Council introduced a corporate programme management approach for the way we deliver change using supporting technologies. Governance for this programme is provided by a board known as the Arun Improvement Programme Board, which was introduced by the current Chief Executive in 2012.

Its purpose is to ensure that corporately we invest in the right projects, resource is allocated on a priority need basis, outcomes are delivered, and an environment is maintained to support successful delivery.

The Board meets quarterly and consists of the Head of Technology & Digital, ICT & Digital Manager, Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Technical Services (with responsibility for digital).

The group report progress to Cabinet annually and this report is to update Cabinet on the activities of the programme.

Covid Projects

This has been a very busy period for the Technology & Digital Team with resources being re-prioritised to focus on technical projects that enabled the authority to continue delivering key services during the pandemic.

Listed below are just a few examples of how the team mobilised and delivered new capability during the pandemic to support staff, members and customers:

Homeworking

One of our first priorities was to get staff working safely from home and within weeks we had built and delivered around 100 laptops to allow staff that did not already have a homeworking setup to work from home; we also provided additional home office equipment across our userbase to maximise home working effectiveness and productivity.

Central Infrastructure

As the underlying technical infrastructure was not designed to support 'all' staff working from home changes were made adding additional processing capacity to support the increased number of remote connections.

Website

There was a lot of extra work for the web team to create new content and update existing service pages. The pandemic information pages have been designed to help customers stay up to date with the impact on council services, provide guidance on keeping safe and explaining where they can get help and support.

Communications & Collaboration

With communicating and collaborating being key to an effective homeworking userbase we rolled out new software and functionality to provide different ways of working to all staff and members such as video conferencing.

Business Grants

The Government introduced two new business grant schemes that needed to be up and running quickly. The team worked with the Revenues Team to automate the correspondence process to get invitations and reminders out to eligible businesses as quickly as possible and to make it easier for businesses to apply, the team also built a set of interactive forms for the website so businesses could do it online.

Financial Questionnaire for Council Tax Non-Payment

The contact centre started receiving lots of calls from customers struggling to pay their Council Tax (due to being placed on furlough or losing employment) and were unable to send paper forms to everyone. To cope with the volume and speed up the process the team built an interactive form so that those in difficulty could complete it online and not have to wait in a phone queue.

Even in these difficult and busy times the team have managed to deliver (or start) a number of major AIP projects too:

Revenues & Benefits System

A project has been completed to move the revenues and benefits system to the cloud, this was much more than a 'lift and shift' project and at the same time added additional functionality.

The system has provided resource efficiencies through:

- automation of tasks
- reduced double handling of information
- improved fraud detection using risk-based verification
- providing more options to residents, businesses and landlords through new self-service digital channels
- reduced paper and postage costs usage via electronic billing; so far over 5,000 customers have signed up for e-billing saving £5,000 annually (and much greener)

During the pandemic the service has seen a 100% increase in emails and 30% increase in benefit claims, the efficiencies from the new system have allowed the service to keep on top of these, along with absorbing some of the additional work related to track & trace payments and business grants.

Once the effects of the pandemic reduce and things start moving back to normality the service will be undertaking a review looking at how these efficiencies may be realised as cost savings.

Legal Case Management System

Technology & Digital had been working with Legal Services to evaluate and procure a new modern case management system to replace the ageing system which was starting to fail, cause operational difficulties and reduce the efficiency of the team. Having reviewed various systems a preferred supplier was chosen, and an implementation date agreed, then the pandemic struck.

The council had not implemented a new system of this scale before where all staff and suppliers were working remotely, and we knew it would present challenges. Both teams rose to the task and with the technical team burning a lot of midnight oil to balance other high priorities the system went live as planned; although not ideal having a completely remote project team it did show us it was possible to do with the right tools and mindset.

Some of the benefits from implementing the new system are:

- cloud based, reducing reliance on ICT
- improved business continuity and disaster recovery
- stable system with no increase in annual costs

- templates, workflow and automation helping turn work around quicker
- allows performance management and resource monitoring

Remote Contact Centre System

The Council's contact centre system is built around on-premise telephony technology and the systems cannot be used through our current remote working solution.

To allow the Contact Centre to quickly re-locate and become homeworkers during the pandemic the ICT Team built a temporary work-around system utilising the main Council's telephone network. Although this works and the customer sees very little difference it does not provide all of the functionality the service needs.

We are currently working with the service to implement a fully functioned remote contact centre solution that will support them fully working from home.

Geographical Information Systems

The team have completed a major upgrade to the corporate Geographical Information Systems (GIS) which also saw us move the infrastructure and data to the cloud.

The new system makes it quicker for staff and customers to access electronic maps and related spatial information; enhancements have also been made to the self-service elements and customers can now find even more information including listed building status and parish & ward boundaries.

Digital News

The Technology and Digital Team were asked to look at how the organisation could send regular news updates to customers. Having looked at various options some of which were very expensive and others not mobile friendly the Digital Team decided on something called 'Gov Notify'.

Gov Notify is a 'free' central government development and delivery platform provided by Government Digital Services (GDS) and designed to be secure, trusted, mobile friendly and accessible.

The inhouse development team created a solution which includes a news editor, delivery engine and self-service subscription manager (avoiding manual administration).

www.arun.gov.uk/register-news-updates

So far around 1,700 people have signed up for this service and we have sent over 20,000 electronic bulletins. Unlike some other systems in the marketplace there is no delivery costs associated with sending a news bulletin.

The solution is targeted at customers whose time is precious and want punchy, to the point communications that allow them to drill down further if interested. It has been designed to scale on mobile devices and provide personalised communications too, this is a cost effective (free) delivery method and we have been in discussions with other service areas about how it can be used.

Webchat

Ownership of the council's website was passed to the Technology & Digital Team in 2020 and we have been working closely with Customer Services on providing complimentary services to support the Customer Service Strategy and our Digital Strategy.

During the pandemic we expedited a project to provide an additional contact option for customers by introducing webchat to our website where customers are able to communicate directly with an adviser using live chat.

The benefits of web chat are:

- adds an additional access channel for customers that want to talk, but want to do it digitally
- an adviser is able to handle three live chats simultaneously, which is estimated to be around 60% cheaper than a phone call
- includes automated knowledge bot that runs 24/7 and uses custom built intelligence to answer questions without the need for a human adviser being present
- the knowledge bot adds to our always-on digital channels allowing customers to transact with us at a time and place that is convenient to them
- the knowledge bot is cost-effective, if satisfying 30 automated chats a day the average transaction cost is around £0.11 compared to £2.83 for a phone call

The pilot went live with three service lines and Customer Service are continually adding new ones and improving the knowledge bot answers. Revenue & Benefits is being added and will be ready for annual billing.

Although web chat is not suitable for all types of customer contact it is starting to prove a popular channel and in the first 4 months following launch received around 1,800 chat requests.

Website Redesign

Our website provides the digital shop window for the council and is one of the first places people come to access self-service.

The website was redesigned in 2015 and ownership recently passed to Technology & Digital who have been reviewing its effectiveness and how it can be improved to better support customers and encourage more self-service.

A review and gap analysis between the contact centre access channels and our website has been completed along with a study of website user behaviour, navigation routes and service demand.

We have spent a lot of time looking at design best practice, user research, consumer trends, reviewing content, understanding accessibility issues and talking to other councils.

Work has started on a complete redesign of the website both in terms of look and feel and how the content is written (or readability) and we will be engaging with customers to check we have got it right.

The new design-blueprint focuses on prioritising content based on customer demand, providing information in a simple and easy to read format, making content groupings more logical for customers to find information, improve the experience for mobile users and offer as many digital opportunities as possible for customers to self-serve.

An accessible website can help people with disabilities participate more actively, improve their life experience and promote greater inclusion. We are making the new site accessible for as many customers as possible including those with vision, hearing, motor and cognitive issues.

The project team are working with the individual service areas to rewrite content specially for a web audience and first phase of the new site will be launched in June / July 2021.

Planning Application Viewer & Notifications

One of the first new digital applications the inhouse development team have built is an online planning application search and notification service; similar commercial products cost around £7,500 annually.

www.arun.gov.uk/planning-application-finder

The team worked closely with Planning Services developing a customer storyboard and from this a number of requirements were agreed.

The first development sprint saw the team deliver a digital service that allows customers to enter a postcode and search by radius, then see related applications on a list / map and drill down deeper into specific planning history and documents.

The second development sprint has added a notification service. This allows customers to sign-up and register to receive an email when new applications are submitted within their selected postcode area.

Since its 'soft launch' three months ago it has seen around 1,400 users a month.

Video Conferencing

The speed of take up in using video conferencing by staff and members during lockdown has been phenomenal and is proving to be a very effective communicating tool.

When we start moving back to more normality, we see video conferencing continuing to be a great tool that can support 'future ways of working' and provide benefits beyond just communications such as becoming a greener Arun.

We have setup three video conference rooms and are working on two more. Once we start returning to the offices these rooms will support mixed physical and virtual meetings whereby some participants will be seated around a desk and others join from a computer with everyone able to see and hear each other.

Gigabit Full Fibre

The rollout of gigabit 'ultra-fast' full fibre internet is progressing with phase 1 almost complete and new fibre now connects approximately 20 council buildings providing internet speed capability of up to 1,000 Mbps.

Work on phase 2 (connecting 100 public assets) has not progressed as quickly as we had hoped. Part of this is down to the pandemic slowing CityFibre from securing suitable digital exchange sites, however they are now close to securing suitable sites.

As part of the work with West Sussex County Council we are working with Biffa to install surveying technology onto refuse lorries. This is so that a survey can be carried out across the district analysing mobile telecommunications availability and where there are areas with poor availability (not-spots) it will help with planning future telecommunications opportunities.

What's Next

Many of the digital changes we have made to support staff, members and customers during the pandemic already formed part of our Digital Strategy.

Our vision is to provide as many digital opportunities as possible to make dealing with us easier through frictionless digital services and offering an improved customer experience.

The outputs from these changes along with the additional work undertaken during the pandemic will act as key building blocks for other council initiatives such as those found in the Customer Service Strategy and Future Ways of Working Programme.

Partly through necessity and partly through pre-planned changes we have seen a rapid shift in digital working practices and customer behaviours. We have proved that applying digital technologies can make services easier to access, desirable to use and more efficient - we need to keep that momentum going.

We will continue moving forward with our plans and build digital options that services can adopt and offer as digital choices to their customers and at the same time look to improve the processes that sit behind that.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

Cabinet is requested to note the activities of the Arun Improvement Programme.

2. OPTIONS:

N/A

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
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Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify)		✓
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 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		✓
Safeguarding		✓
Other (please explain)		✓
6. IMPLICATIONS: Not applicable		

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

It is a constitutional requirement to annually report the work of the Board to Cabinet.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 31 March 2021

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT TO CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: Report on Options to Progress Webcast Improvement Project

REPORT AUTHOR: Karl Roberts – Director Place
DATE: 25 January 2021
EXTN: 37760

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following previous reports, this report provides options to cabinet for progressing the Webcast Improvement Project with associated costs and address the technical requirements to host hybrid meetings and extend the contract for the operation of our webcasting facility.

RECOMMENDATION:

Cabinet is asked to make the following recommendations to Full Council:

- 1) Determine what upgrades to the webcasting system are necessary from those items listed in Table A and approve a supplementary estimate for that amount for the one-off projects cost for the webcasting hardware installation. The amount that this equates to for a Band D property in terms of equivalent Council Tax will be reported to Full Council.
- 2) Note the proposed action to purchase the hardware required to facilitate hybrid meetings.
- 3) Subject to the approval of recommendation (1) to approve the additional on-going revenue costs for annual maintenance and broadband subscription of £21k per annum to be included in the budget for 2021/22.
- 4) Cabinet resolves to extend the contract with the current provider of webcasting facilities for a further 12 months until June 2022.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As Members will be aware the Minutes from 21 September 2020 Cabinet meeting were eventually considered at Full Council on the 26 November. Following a debate on whether a supplementary estimate of £65k should be approved the Leader of the Council agreed to withdraw the item. The relevant passages for the Minutes are set out below.

“There was much debate on this item. Many Councillors confirmed that they could not support the cost of £65k for this project at this time and in view of the financial situation that the Council found itself in as a result of the Pandemic. There were other more vital priorities to address which was to continue in supporting residents and businesses in the area. It was also felt that the technical issues experienced in the past could be overcome. What was required was a more flexible approach to the webcasting of meetings and that a hybrid

option should be investigated to provide flexible resilience allowing some Councillors to be present in the Council Chamber and others attending virtually and in view of the fact that it was likely that virtual meetings would continue for some time.

Others spoke in support of the recommendations confirming that the upgrades were required to allow the Council to continue webcasting some of the Council meetings once normality returned – this being a physical presence again in the Council Chamber, especially as the public had become used to being able to watch all meetings live.

Following a lengthy debate, and in view of the fact that it could be some time before meetings could resume in the Council Chamber, it was felt that this project should be looked at again in line with what other guidance might be available in terms of hybrid and virtual meetings. Requests were also made to receive the viewing figures of meetings since lockdown and if these could be compared to viewing figures from the year before as this would then indicate how vital this service was to the viewing public.

Having again made points that this was not the right time to be spending money on anything other than services that were vital to the public, the proposer, Councillor Dr Walsh, confirmed that he was happy to withdraw this item and he asked Officers to reconsider the proposals and to find the most technically up to date solution for further consideration by a future meeting of Cabinet.

1.2 This report seeks to fulfil this requirement.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

2.1 Cabinet may recall that the proposal to spend £65K was based upon a soft market testing exercise, from which a full and comprehensive performance specification had been written, setting out expected functions and features of an upgraded, reliable, fully integrated, fit-for-purpose, and future proof webcasting, presentation, and conferencing system. Soft market testing had allowed the project group to engage with suppliers and ensure that the specification is realistic and thorough. In line with the specification previously presented to Cabinet, the project group have been asked to present the following costed (including contingency) options to Cabinet.

2.2 Therefore, what Officers have done (see table below) is break down the £65K cost into its constituent parts so that Cabinet can decide what investment (if any) should be made in modifying the existing arrangements.

Item	Cost	Benefit	Risk
3x HD pan/tilt/zoom cameras	8000	To eradicate 'creep' of existing cameras caused by worn belt drives, and to improve broadcast quality from SD to HD	Continue using existing cameras which are life expired and suffering from belt slip, causing them to lose position. Existing cameras are SD format.
Projector and screen upgrades	18000	To improve clarity (brightness) and colour	Continue using existing projector and accept the

– New laser projector and screen		rendering of the projected image in the Council Chamber. A laser projector will not require ongoing bulb replacements or filter cleaning, and has a projected life of 20,000hrs.	limitations in terms of brightness/clarity/colour.
Replacement screens at outlying desks	7000	To provide a more compact and higher quality solution for screens mounted at outlying desks.	Existing outlying screens are old and bulky, taking up a lot of desk space and providing low quality images.
Webcast capabilities upgrade	15000	Full dual feed (cameras and presentation) broadcast, Modern Gov synchronisation, meeting transcripts, broadcast bookmarking of agenda items.	Continue using existing broadcast solution, with limited capabilities:- no Modern Gov integration, no meeting transcripts, broadcasts not bookmarked. Note: Dual feed presentation can be achieved with existing equipment.
Install	13000	N/A	N/A
Cabling & sundries	4000	N/A	N/A

Items/features not included in the £65k option previously considered, and therefore not in the table above;

- Replacement wireless microphones for Committee Rooms
- Advance Microphone Control System (ACCS) – hardware and software for improved meeting management
- Extron Controller upgrade – required for hybrid meetings and improved room configurations (see 2.8-2.15)
- Committee Room webcam(s)
- Hearing Loop – the existing hearing loop (Chamber only) is a low-tech solution which causes significant ‘bleed’ and broadcasts beyond the Chamber (unsuitable for exempt discussions and the like)

2.3 Cabinet are invited to advise which elements (if any) should be taken forward.

2.4 There are number of key matters that Cabinet need to have regard to making their decisions.

2.5 Firstly, as reported in the previous report only the following meetings would be webcast (once meetings return to the Civic Centre) and all of these would be in the Council Chamber (Full Council & Planning Committee). All other Committee meetings would not be webcast.

- 2.6 There will be no webcasting from the remainder of the Civic Suite. Attempts continue to source new batteries for the remote microphones but to date these attempts have been unsuccessful. Therefore, there will be no microphones for Committee meetings not held in the Council Chamber.
- 2.7 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. Any decision not to proceed with the investment set out above generates the risk that meetings in the Council Chamber will be interrupted by similar faults.

Hybrid Meetings

- 2.8 In respect of holding hybrid meetings (with some Councillors in the Civic Centre and some attending virtually) a new IT solution is required to connect the online platform, with the chamber microphone system. This hybrid solution will allow for two-way communication from the Chamber camera & microphone system, to the Members at home using Teams/Zoom. This is achieved by installing a dedicated Windows PC and having a user account set up on Teams/Zoom on the PC. The operator would then split the HD camera feed from the chamber system and embeds the audio from the microphone system into an Extron HDMI – USB Capture device.
- 2.9 The USB output it is then connected to the new PC which will accept the USB as its camera feed, and when Teams/Zoom is launched, the program then shows the Chamber cameras as the video feed. Whenever the Council wishes to connect the two systems, the organiser of the online meetings simply invites the “Chamber Teams/Zoom” to the meeting.
- 2.10 The “Chamber Teams/Zoom” PC then needs to accept and join the meeting. Once the PC has accepted the meeting, nothing else is needed and the PC can be left for the duration of the meeting. When the Chamber microphones are activated, the online meeting will detect the “Chamber Teams/Zoom” PC is speaking and will display the video as if it was from a regular device using its built in webcam.
- 2.11 The output from the PC will be entered into an Extron 2-1 HDMI Switcher. The Extron USB capture device will also provide a loop through of the Chamber cameras and will be entered into the new switcher. Having both the original camera feed and the new Teams/Zoom feed entering a switcher, this will allow the Council to switch between Chamber video, or Chamber & Teams/Zoom video feed mixed.

- 2.12 The selected video feed, then (depending if the Council webcasts) would be passed through an amplifier to give one HDMI feed to the webcasting encoder and the second to the distribution system in the chamber to view on the visuals in the chamber.
- 2.13 An internet connection, with a minimum upload speed of around 5-10 Mbs is also required.
- 2.14 The cost of this equipment is up to £7000. Without this the Council cannot hold hybrid meetings. If Cabinet does not wish to incur this cost, then the Council will have to retain virtual meetings until meeting can again be held in the Civic Suite for all Councillors.
- 2.15 It is also important to note that at the time of writing the ability of the Council in law to hold virtual meetings expires on the 6 May. It is understood that primary legislation is required to allow virtual meetings to continue beyond that date. Members should note that there are also staffing implications with holding Hybrid meetings (similar to 2.17 below) because you need at least one committee person for each of the physical and virtual sides.

Webcasting Contract

- 2.16 Finally, because of the decision to refer this matter back to Officers for re-consideration it has not been possible to commence the procurement process for an operator of the webcasting due to the uncertainties highlighted above. Even if a decision is made at this Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council there would be insufficient time to undertake a comprehensive procurement process. Therefore, it is recommended that the current operator who has performed well with the virtual meetings be retained for a further 12 months to enable key decisions on the future of webcasting to be made and a comprehensive procurement process to be undertaken. The cost of this has been confirmed as £11,750 again.
- 2.17 The other main cost associated with webcasting are staff costs. Experience of operating webcasting successfully requires more than one person to administer the process. A lot of work is required in terms of setting up meetings and then ensuring they operate smoothly both technically and procedurally. To date the operation of virtual meeting has necessitated a combination of overtime and time in lieu for staff and significant amount of goodwill on behalf of the Committee staff. Should a decision be taken to broadcast Committee meetings to a wider audience then the increased staffing costs will need to be addressed.

3.0 OPTIONS:

3.1 To determine what actions are required.

4.0 CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		
Relevant District Ward Councillors		
Other groups/persons (please specify)		

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:

6.1 The ongoing use of webcasting, any expansion to include Committee Rooms and the need for hybrid meeting solutions will have financial and staffing implications. In terms of Equality issues providing a webcast for all meetings would provide the broadest and best solution to those persons with protected characteristics. However, this needs to be balanced against the resources available to deliver this. In due course after the Pandemic it will be possible to hold meetings again in the Civic Centre. Greater use of the Council Chamber to facilitate some meetings is considered to be an appropriate solution in the circumstances.

7.0 REASON FOR THE DECISION:

7.1 This updated report is intended to fulfil the outcome from the previous consideration of this matter at Full Council - 26 November 2020

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 12 May 2021 [Full Council]

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Cabinet Report and Decision from 8 July 2019

Cabinet Report and Decision from 9 December 2019

Cabinet Report and Decision from 22 June 2020

Cabinet Report and Decision from 21 September 2020 & Full Council 26 November 2020

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: Place St Maur Project, Bognor Regis

REPORT AUTHOR: Rachel Alderson – Principal Landscape & Project Officer

DATE: February 2021 EXTN: 37946

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an update on the Place St Maur and Esplanade scheme and seeks approval for the sign-off of the preferred design following public consultation, in order to progress with the delivery of Place St Maur.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet are requested to approve;

1. The designs presented at the meeting for Place St Maur and the Esplanade, and that the delivery of Place St Maur is progressed in line with the project programme.

1. BACKGROUND:

1.1 Project Summary

Place St Maur and the Esplanade are important public spaces in Bognor Regis, with the potential to form a strong connection between the seafront and town centre. The Place St Maur however has a particularly run-down appearance and is considered to make a negative contribution to Bognor Regis. Enhancing the public realm in this area will create a flexible and functional active space and encourage visitors to stay longer. In addition, delivering the missing link of the Bognor Regis public realm masterplan will strengthen links and encourage visitors to discover more of the town. The impact of visitors spending more time in the town will benefit businesses and boost the local economy.

Cabinet Decision (C/032/16112020) approved the Project Proposal and that the designs for the scheme will be presented at future Cabinet meetings. The Decision also recommended to Full Council the approval of a supplementary estimate of £370K as partnership funding and that should the £1.2m bid to Coast to Capital be successful, the Council enters into a funding agreement with Coast to Capital and approve the drawdown and expenditure of external funding. These recommendations were ratified by Full Council at their meeting on 13 January 2021 (minute 414).

1.2 Early stakeholder engagement

An initial stakeholder engagement process was undertaken in November and December to seek knowledge about the site as well as suggested ideas for potential inclusion within the designs. A range of stakeholders were contacted and included ADC Members and Officers, immediate neighbours of the site, local businesses, Bognor Regis Town Council, West Sussex County Council, Bognor Regis BID, Bognor Regis Regeneration Board and event organisers.

The consultants (LUC) worked with the information gathered to prepare concept designs which would test public opinion on a variety of elements through public consultation.

1.3 Public consultation process

The public consultation was launched on 11 February and will close on 8 March 2021. The plans are being displayed through an online hub and the consultation was widely publicised through posters, banners, press release, letters, emails and social media. The Covid-19 restrictions in place meant that it is not possible to hold an exhibition for people to visit. Members of the public who do not have online access are able to request a paper copy of the consultation material and survey.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

2.1 Public consultation outcome

At the time of writing the report, more than 250 survey responses had been returned. It is expected that a number of written representations from organisations within the town will also be received. A summary of the results of the public consultation will be presented at the Cabinet meeting.

It is intended that the most popular features from the concept designs will be used to develop the preferred option, to be presented at the Cabinet meeting. As part of this more detailed design stage the consultants will be considering a range of factors including the layout of events, new and existing service infrastructure, as well as materials and costs. The final layout will enable events such as the ice rink to continue to be held on the site.

It is proposed to approve the preferred design in order to progress with the delivery of Place St Maur in line with the project programme. The design will be frozen at this point to ensure that the design team are working to a fixed scope. Any further changes will impact on the project cost and delivery programme.

2.2 Technical design and procurement

Following approval of the preferred design LUC will work on the technical designs so that the scheme can progress to tender stage.

The tender process will invite companies to submit bids for the delivery of the project. The award of contract for the construction phase will be made in accordance with revisions to the Constitution.

2.3 Esplanade traffic surveys

The design scope for the Esplanade was for concept designs only and will conclude following the public consultation. Further design phases will depend on the outcome of traffic studies which will determine whether closing a section of the Esplanade can be undertaken successfully without affecting the surrounding road network. This would enable the space to be used for events and create a pedestrian-friendly environment at particular times of the year. The project team is working with officers from WSCC to produce a brief to procure consultants for this work. It is hoped that the traffic studies could be carried out in Summer 2021.

2.4 Project costs

The total project budget is £1,807,000 with an allocation of £1.5m for capital works. An external grant of £1.2m has been provisionally awarded from Coast to Capital with a partnership contribution from ADC of £370K plus a £237K revenue sum providing the remaining funding.

LUC are working with a cost consultant to monitor the expected cost of delivering the scheme throughout the design phase. The actual cost of the scheme will only be known following the tender period.

Once the construction phase is completed there will be ongoing maintenance costs to be considered and built into revenue budgets. This will need to allow for maintenance of water features, soft landscape, repairs and maintenance of site furniture. In signing off the preferred design there is an associated commitment to maintaining the completed scheme.

3. OPTIONS:

- a. To approve the recommendation as set out in this report.
- b. To not approve the recommendation.

4. CONSULTATION:

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken early in the design phase. A public consultation on the concept designs is running between 11 February and 8 March 2021.

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council	✓	
Relevant District Ward Councillors	✓	
Other groups/persons (please specify) All ADC Members, residents and businesses adjacent to Place St Maur, Bognor Regis Town Council, Bognor Regis BID, Bognor Regis Regeneration Board, wider public	✓	
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 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		✓
Safeguarding		✓
Other (please explain)		✓

6. IMPLICATIONS:

- Financial – In committing to delivering the project the Council will need to ensure there are sufficient funds in place to maintain the completed scheme long term.
- Legal – The Council is required to enter into a legal agreement with Coast to Capital.
- Sustainability – Sustainability is a factor when sourcing materials for the scheme and consideration of maintenance of the completed project.
- Asset Management/Property/Land – ADC will retain responsibility for the land on completion and therefore its maintenance.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To progress enhancement plans for the Place St Maur site in accordance with the project programme.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 31 March 2021

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Cabinet 9 March 2020 – Minute 499](#)

[Full Council 22 July 2020, Minute 114](#)

[Environment & Leisure Working Group – 3 September 2020 – Minute 14 refers](#)

[Cabinet 16 November 2020, Minute 285](#)

[Environment & Leisure Working Group 10 December 2020 – Minute 22 refers](#)

[Full Council 13 January 2021, Minute 414](#)

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CABINET ON 22 March 2021

SUBJECT: Customer Services Strategy

REPORT AUTHOR: Joe Russell-Wells, Group Head of Neighbourhood Services

DATE: 15th February 2021

EXTN: 37914

PORTFOLIO AREA: Neighbourhood Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out the Customer Services Strategy 2021 – 2026 and includes the process for implementation to embed it into the organisation. This follows the report taken to the Housing and Customer Services Group in October 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To formally adopt the Customer Services Strategy 2021- 2026 and approve the process of implementation to embed it into the organisation.

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1. In October 2020 a report was taken to the Housing and Customer Services working group which set out the process of implementation of the Strategy and how this would be embedded into the organisation.
- 1.2. The report presented the revised draft Strategy, together with setting out the next steps prior to recommending the strategy to Cabinet.
- 1.3. This report reviews progress, in addition it identifies the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Customer Services Annual Update – 2019-2020, taken to the July 2020 Housing and Customer Services working group, reviews the work of Customer Services and includes reference to the changes in working as a result of the pandemic.

2. THE CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY

- 2.1. A copy of the Strategy can be found at Appendix 1. It begins with the Council's Vision taken from the Corporate Plan which continues to be relevant in providing the best starting point where good customer services are concerned:
 - Offering an improved customer experience
 - Building better relationships with other organisations and the community

- Providing more digital opportunities to make dealing with us easier

2.2. The Strategy includes the following Vision which aims to address the Council's wider vision where customers are concerned.

2.3. Customer Services Vision

We aim to be a customer focused organisation – we will work to understand our customers better and put them at the heart of everything we do, and we will support customers to do more for themselves.

2.4. The Strategy is set out by a series of headings

- Aims and objectives
- Priorities, challenges and opportunities
- Community and partnership working
- What we will do, how and when

2.5. The Strategy introduces a Customer Charter which sets out what the customer can expect together with what the Council commits to.

2.6. A reoccurring theme within the Strategy is that ADC will strive to improve opportunity for customer feedback, and that our overall measure of success will be customer satisfaction with our services.

2.7. For the Customer Services Vision to become a reality every service area, and every member of staff in the Council, has a role and responsibility to play in providing the best quality for our customers. The Strategy will need to be further embedded into the culture of the organisation ensure that the vision is owned by all staff.

2.8. The Strategy will include reference to the next steps, a living document, which will be regularly updated to ensure work progresses as organisational changes are needed. Appendix 2 sets out the next steps which will be referenced on the Council website.

3. DIGITAL SERVICES

3.1. Digital services for ADC customers play an increasingly important part, and this is identified within the Strategy. The Council's 2020 Vision states that this is an important strand of work by 'Providing more digital opportunities to make dealing with us easier'.

3.2. The council's main website www.arun.gov.uk, is under review with the aim to having more transactional services which are easier and quicker to access. The content is also planned to be refreshed to make it clearer and simpler to read, at the same time it will be assured the site meets the latest accessibility standards that are now mandated for public sector websites.

3.3. The ongoing pandemic has confirmed the importance of digital services. The face to face inquiries received by the Council are now being dealt with by telephone or via the Council's website. The trend in using digital services has increased over recent years (see the Customer Services Annual Update – 2019-2020 report July 2020), however it will be important to ensure access to services is maintained for those customers that don't have access to digital services.

3.4. The Customer Services Strategy will work alongside the development in digital technology which is a key part of improving the access of services to the public.

4. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

4.1. A series of workshops were set out as a way of implementing and embedding the strategy. Workshops with the Customer Services teams and for the Senior Management Team were successfully completed. However due to the Covid-19 pandemic the final workshop, planned to be held with staff and Members could not be held and due to the ongoing pandemic, it is unlikely this can be held in the near future. However, an alternative method as to how this could be done by digital means are being investigated.

4.2. The draft strategy has been consulted on within the organisation. A presentation on the draft was made at a Senior Management Team meeting and comments have been input into the final draft.

4.3. In order that the strategy be successfully implemented the following is proposed:

- Include a section within the Induction course so that new staff members are made aware and understand the Council's customer service vision.
- On- going training and workshops with the Customer Services Team.
- Regular meetings with managers from all departments to provide feedback from customers and discuss ways of improving the customer experience.
- Develop and implement customer feedback channels to gain customer insight and review all feedback received to improve service delivery.
- Ensuring that key statistical information to improve customer services is recorded.
- Continually look to improve customer services by researching and adopting new technology and new ways of working.
- Inclusion of the new performance management system, Clear review, in which 'improving the customer experience' is one of the objective criteria.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

To formally adopt the Customer Services Strategy 2021- 2026 and approve the process of implementation to embed it into the organisation

3. OPTIONS:

Not to formally adopt the Customer Services Strategy 2021- 2026 and not to approve the process of implementation to embed it into the organisation

4. CONSULTATION:

Members of the Housing and Customer Services Working Group.

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify) Members of the Housing and Customer Services Working Group.	✓	
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 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. IMPLICATIONS: Improvement of Customer Access to ADC services		
7. REASON FOR THE DECISION: To implement a new Customer Services Strategy		
8. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 31 March 2021		
9. BACKGROUND PAPERS: Strategic direction of Customer Services - HCSWG October 2020 The Customer Services Annual Update – 2019-2020 – HCSWG July 2020		

Customer Services Strategy 2021 – 2026



SUPPORT



ASSISTANCE



CUSTOMER SERVICE



CONTACT US



Working together for a better future

The Council Priorities and the Vision



Your services

“Providing the best services



Supporting you

we can afford to help you



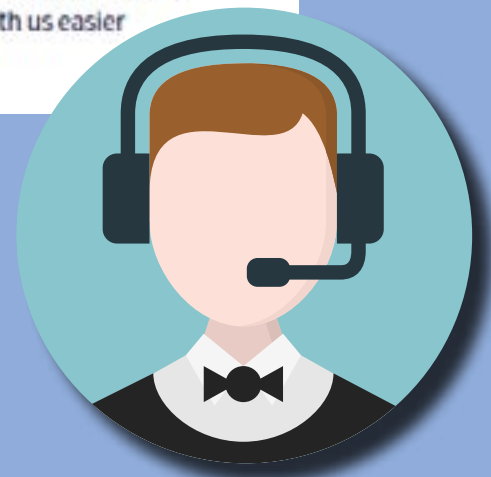
Your future

improve your life”

We will continue to deliver our priorities without it costing you more by:

- Offering an improved customer experience
- Building better relationships with other organisations and the community
- Providing more digital opportunities to make dealing with us easier
- Becoming smaller but more effective

The Customer Services Strategy aims to put customers first in everything that we do – the following pages sets out how we will do this, and what our customer should expect.



Customer Services Vision / Aims and objectives

We aim to be a customer focused organisation – we will work to understand our customers better and put them at the heart of everything we do, and we will support customers to do more for themselves.

This includes:

- encouraging all our staff to ‘think customer’ before acting
- invest in training for our staff to understand how to deliver the best customer care
- being committed to treating people fairly, to respect privacy and dignity and to pay attention to people who need more support
- continue to develop online services which are easy to access using any device, quick to use and available whenever they are needed
- asking customers for their feedback and use this feedback to improve our services
- Promote self-reliance whilst continuing to support those that need our help. Consult with focus groups to understand and accommodate access needs and assist with adapting our services
- Strengthen partnership working, and work with communities to achieve the long-term wellbeing of people in the district. We will encourage residents to play a part in their communities and help them to do this where possible
- Set out clearly how we share customers information with our partners by working with our partners to make it as convenient as we can for our customers to get help and support, whilst keeping personal information secure
- Measuring satisfaction with our services, reviewing measures of success and the Strategy and Charter each year and report our progress every year and publish on our website
- Working continuously to improve our Customer Services and have a detailed action plan in place to make sure we deliver efficiently and on time.

Priorities, challenges and opportunities

Our key challenges include:

Rising customer expectations and demands – customers expect to be able to contact us 24 hours a day, seven days a week using our website and social media. They expect flexible and more personalised services.

Using customer intelligence to inform and shape service delivery – we will use statistical information to understand what our customers need so that we can respond appropriately.

Digital exclusion – we must allow for people who don't have access to the internet at home, and which may mean that they can't access our information and services online. Where needed we will help people who don't have access to the internet by providing support to use at venues across the District including assisted self-serve.

Working Efficiently – We must develop more cost effective ways for our customers to contact us and encourage and support our customers to use them.

Workforce development – a training and development plan will be produced for customer services. This should be encouraged across all Service Areas.

We will:

- invest in training for all our staff which will include equality awareness and data protection training
- include customer service awareness in our appraisal process.

Response times to our customers

When you contact us we will aim to acknowledge receipt of your enquiry within 2 working days, and provide a full response within 10 working days. Where a full response may need more time we will let you know when this can be expected.

Complaints – if a customer wants to make a formal complaint, they are able to do so via our complaints procedure, the full details of which can be accessed via our website: www.arun.gov.uk

In return we expect that you will:

- be respectful and polite to our staff
- be considerate of other customers
- use our online services if you can, and be willing to try new ways of contacting us
- keep us informed of personal changes which may affect the services we provide to you
- keep to agreed appointments or let us know if you need to change them
- provide us with feedback about your experiences to help us to learn and improve.





What we will do, how and when

We're committed to providing a range of customer contact options supported by clear information, advice and guidance.

We will continue to develop well-designed options which customers can use whenever they need to request a service, complete an application, make a payment or report an issue.

We will promote online options and help customers to use them by:

- investing in online options including our website, automatic telephone lines, SMS text, social media and adaptive mobile services
- supporting the roll out of superfast broadband across the District to help more of our customers access the information they need and the services they want in the most convenient way
- providing equipment in a range of buildings and helping customers to use it
- identifying and working with individuals or groups who need extra help to access services
- helping customers to access online options through live web chat and our telephone contact centre teams.

Aim to resolve enquiries first time around

To achieve this, we will invest in staff training and make sure staff have access to good information. Key actions will include:

- gathering feedback from customers to help us design our services better

- developing common standards of service for all contact
- publishing clear information, reducing the need for customers to contact us
- reducing the number of different telephone numbers we publish
- providing automatic telephone options for simple requests and enquiries.

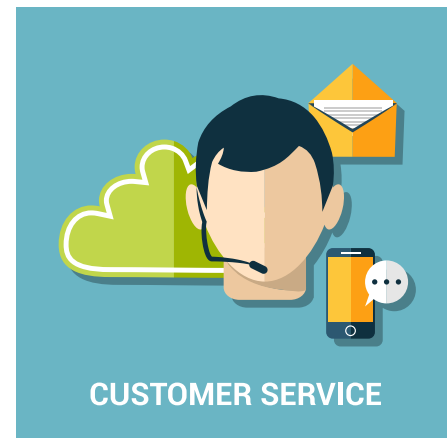
Email and paper communication

We aim to reduce the amount of direct email, post and paper communication by increasing the range of services available on our website and increasing the ability of customers to self-serve. We will only use letters where essential.

Next steps

Available on our website at:

www.arun.gov.uk/customerservices/nextsteps



Customer Charter

Values – Getting it right - Going the extra mile

Customers can expect:

Our knowledgeable and committed staff to put your needs first.

To be kept well informed.

Staff who want to help, and are courteous and engaged.

A single point of contact, and resolution of your enquiry, with clear signposting of services.

The Council commits to:

All our staff being committed to putting your needs first.

Ensuring that all information is up-to-date and correct.

Make sure you are always satisfied with the help and guidance we give you.

Taking ownership of your enquiry and not passing you around the organisation.

Innovating - Learning from experience

Customers can expect:

Us to put things right when they go wrong.

To be consulted about changes to the services we provide.

For us to improve our services based on your feedback.

For us to constantly think about ways of improving everything we do.

The Council commits to:

Apologising if we make a mistake and fixing it quickly and fairly, and learning from our mistakes.

Making it easy for you to have your say in what we do and how we do it.

Using your feedback to make changes and removing any unnecessary bureaucracy.

Delivering continuous improvement and increased satisfaction.

Spending wisely - Every penny counts

Customers can expect:

Information about what is being spent where and why.

Modern and responsive services based on what works for you.

That we continually look for ways of keeping costs down by becoming more efficient.

Simplified processes.

The Council commits to:

Being transparent and publicising service performance, budgets and expenditure.

Constantly looking for ways to improve our services.

Always looking for ways to save money.

Reducing the cost of a request through efficiencies.

Many talents – One aim

Customers can expect:

Knowledgeable teams who can help you when the unexpected happens.

A consistent standard of service, whichever part of the council you contact.

Us to do more when you need us most.

An integrated and seamless service.

The Council commits to:

Making sure we are here to help you quickly when things go wrong.

Ensuring that staff are clear about what is expected of them.

Working across the organisation to help you with any emergencies.

Having effective internal and external communication systems.

Listening - Responding

Customers can expect:

Clarity about the services we offer and honesty about what we can and can't do.

A prompt response to resolve enquiries with committed service standards, be it by phone, in person or online.

To be treated with courtesy, respect and understanding.

To be involved in decisions which directly affect you.

The Council commits to:

Keeping our promises by doing what we say, when we say.

Making sure your experience is as efficient and helpful as possible.

Understanding your needs, pressures and situation.

Providing you with choices where we can do so.

How will you know if we're improving:

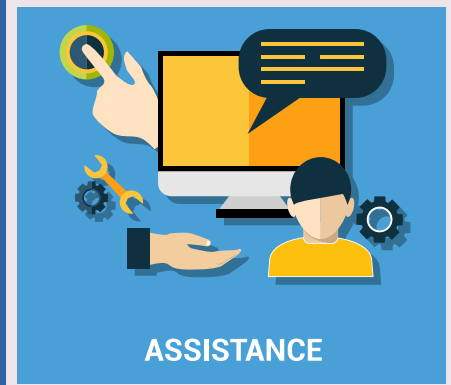
Our overall measure of success will be customer satisfaction with our services

Review the measure of success and the Strategy every year

Report our progress every year and publish on our website

Continuously improve our customer services using a detailed action plan to make sure we deliver efficiently and on time

Ensure improved customer service becomes part of the normal way we work.





Customer Services
Arun District Council
Civic Centre
Maltravers Street
Littlehampton
West Sussex BN17 5LF

01903 737500
customerservices@arun.gov.uk
www.arun.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Customer Services Strategy - Next Steps

- Introduce an on-line appointment system for visiting our receptions / services
- Re-introduce the Meet & Greet service at BRTH & CC to assist customers
- Develop our Webchat Service to include more Service areas
- Encourage customer feedback – identifying ways to make this easier for our customers
- Review all feedback received to improve service delivery
- Continue to provide Staff Training across the organisation

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ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2021

**SUBJECT: ANTI GRAFFITI SYSTEMS LTD TRADING AS AGS ONE – ADMISSIONS
AGREEMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME**

REPORT AUTHOR: Nat Slade, Group Head of Technical Services
DATE: 15 February 2021
EXTN: 37683
PORTFOLIO AREA: Technical Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On 13 January 2020 Cabinet resolved to outsource the Pest Control Service giving delegated authority to the Group Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Technical Services and Section 151 Officer to award the contract. This decision was taken on 3 December 2020 to award the contract to Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One.

The contract which will commence on 1 March 2021 involves the TUPE transfer of a member of staff. Approval is therefore sought to authorise entering into the required Guarantee in respect of pension liabilities in the event that these are not met by Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One as the admitted body, and to approve the entering into the Admissions Agreement itself.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

- (1) The Council acts as a guarantor in respect of any and all pension liabilities which may arise through the term of the Pest Control Contract and delegated authority is given to Legal Services to enter into the Admission Agreement and Guarantee.

1. BACKGROUND:

On 13 January 2020 Cabinet resolved to outsource the Pest Control Service giving delegated authority to the Group Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Technical Services and Section 151 Officer to award the contract. This decision was taken on 3 December 2020 to award the contract to Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One following a procurement process.

One member of staff who is an existing member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) will be transferred on 1st March 2021 under TUPE to Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd Trading as AGS One, when the contract commences.

Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One are required to offer the transferring member of staff equivalent pension provision and in order to do so have opted to become an admitted body of the LGPS.

For Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One to become admitted to the LGPS, West Sussex County Council require the Council to enter into a Guarantee in respect of pension liabilities in the event that these were not met by the admitted body. This is standard practice. The Council is also required to be a party to the Admission Agreement.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

That Cabinet recommends to Full Council:

That the Council acts as a guarantor in respect of any and all pension liabilities which may arise through the term of the Pest Control contract and that delegated authority is given to Legal Services to enter into the Admission Agreement and Guarantee.

3. OPTIONS:

That the Council does not act as a guarantor in respect of any and all pension liabilities which may arise through the term of the Pest Control contract and that delegated authority is not given to Legal Services to enter into the Admission Agreement and Guarantee. By not entering into the admissions agreement could potentially put the contract in jeopardy as finding a pension that is better, the same or no less favourable than the LGPS could be a challenge.

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		X
Relevant District Ward Councillors		X
Other groups/persons (please specify) Arun District Council HR, Legal Services and Finance	X	

5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial	X	
Legal	X	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		X
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		X

Sustainability		X
Asset Management/Property/Land		X
Technology		X
Other (please explain)		X

6. IMPLICATIONS:

Financial – To act as guarantor for pension liabilities in the event these are not met by the admitted body.

Legal – To authorise Legal Services to enter into the Admissions Agreement and Guarantee.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To allow the Council's Legal Services to enter into the required LGPS Admissions Agreement and Guarantee with West Sussex County Council and Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One.

To ensure the pension liabilities associated with the agreement are guaranteed through the duration of the Pest Control contract in the event these are not met by the admitted body.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 12 May 2021

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Equality Analysis.

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Equality Analysis for a Policy, Project or Report

<p>What is the name of your policy, project, or report?</p> <p>Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd Trading as AGS One – Admissions Agreement to Local Government Pension Scheme</p>	<p>Month/Year</p> <p>February 2021</p>
<p>Name and job title of lead officer: Nat Slade Group Head of Technical Services</p>	
<p>Briefly describe the aims of your policy, project, or report.</p> <p>On 13 January 2020 Cabinet resolved to outsource the Pest Control Service giving delegated authority to the Group Head of Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Technical Services and Section 151 Officer to award the contract. This decision was taken on 3 December 2020 to award the contract to Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One.</p> <p>The contract which will commence on 1 March 2021 involves the TUPE transfer of a member of staff, approval is therefore sought to authorise entering into the required Guarantee in respect of pension liabilities in the event that these are not met by Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One as the admitted body, and to approve the entering into the Admissions Agreement itself.</p>	

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination, both in the workplace and in wider society. It covers 9 specific groups of people who share 1 or more of these protected characteristics; age; disability; gender; gender reassignment; marriage & civil partnership; pregnancy & maternity; race; religion or belief; and sexual orientation.

As a local authority Arun District Council (and any other organisation that is carrying out a public function on our behalf) is further bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty. This means that we have to consider **all** individuals in their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to our own employees.

The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it – this means removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics and encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it – this involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Having due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies – such as in how they act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others.

The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Duty involves consciously thinking about the three aims as part of the process of decision-making. Doing this will entail understanding the potential effects of the organisation’s activities on different people. Keeping a simple record of how decisions were reached will help public bodies show how they considered the Duty. Producing an Equality Impact Assessment after a decision has been reached will not achieve compliance with the Equality Duty.

Analysis

Consider what it is that you are trying to achieve and write a brief equality analysis in the box below. You should mention each of the nine protected groups, plus any others (e.g. families, people on low incomes, people in remote areas, etc) who may be affected. The following questions should help shape your thought process and subsequent decision making.

- Who will benefit most from this? Will anyone be treated more favourably as a result?
- Is there any evidence to suggest that your action or policy could have an adverse impact on some groups of people and specifically those with a protected characteristic? Does it present barriers or problems for any groups or communities?
- Is there any data, research or other evidence available to help or support your decisions?
- Have you considered any existing examples of good practice.
- How do you intend to deal with any adverse impact, or lessen it?
- Who else will you need to be working with to do this e.g. partners, contractors etc and what is their approach? How will this help?

Anti Graffiti Systems Ltd trading as AGS One are required as part of the TUPE process to offer the transferring member of staff equivalent pension provision and in order to do so have opted to become an admitted body of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The aim of the report is to ensure that this is facilitated by the Council acting as a guarantor.

Therefore the report only specifically effects and relates to the existing Senior Pest Control Officer who will be transferring to the new company and will be

impacted by the decision. In view of this none of the nine protected groups will be affected or impacted by this report or decision.

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ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CABINET ON 22 March 2021

SUBJECT:	Contract Award for Passive Fire Works for Council Owned Housing Stock
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REPORT AUTHOR:	Steve Madell – Interim Asset Manager Satnam Kaur – Group Head of Residential Services
DATE:	4 March 2021
EXTN:	37718
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Residential Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report supersedes ICM/182/18022021 which has been withdrawn.

Further to actions arising from fire risk assessments that are being undertaken within the Council's housing stock, approval is being sought to award a 3-year contract, to a specialist accredited contractor from the Central Housing Investment Consortium (CHIC) Framework to carry out passive fire works.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- Calling off the CHIC framework to award Keystone Fire Safety Limited a 3-year contract up to £5m in value to undertake passive fire works.

1.0 BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The Council carries out periodic Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) in respect of council housing stock. This is a legal duty under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 and a requirement of the Regulator for Social Housing as part of its Consumer Standard.
- 1.2 Actions arising from the FRAs include, improvements required to the compartmentation within buildings and the installation of new fire doors. Compartmentation works reduce or stop the spread of fire and smoke from the source of the fire to other parts of the building. These are essential works that need to be undertaken to reduce the level of fire risk residents are exposed to.

- 1.3 In respect of compartmentation we do not currently have a contract with a competent contractor to carry out these works. These are specialist works and it is important the we use contractors who have the required accreditation, such as BMTRADA. BMTRADA Q-Mark fire stopping installation scheme accreditation requires all staff are trained and provide clients with assurance that fire stopping solutions are being fitted correctly, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The contractor will provide the appropriate certification for all work undertaken.
- 1.4 In respect of fire door installations two contractors (Keystone Fire Safety Limited and Gunstone) were appointed in 2020 on a one-year contract to install year one of our four-year programme. These contracts come to an end in November 2021 and do not allow significant levels of other fire stopping works to be undertaken.
- 1.5 In order to complete the four-year fire door programme and other passive fire works, we will call off the CHIC Framework and award Keystone Fire Safety Limited a 3-year contract up to £5m in value.
- 1.6 Arun District Council is a member of the CHIC framework which is a procurement consortium of housing associations and local authorities. The framework has been procured to comply with OJUE regulations. Keystone, who are BMTRADA Q-Mark accredited have been appointed to CHICs Building Works Framework Lot 5 Fire Spread Prevention.
- 1.7 Calling off Keystone Fire Safety Limited from this framework will enable us to utilise Keystone to carry out all compartmentation surveys and fire stopping works. It also enables us to continue to use Keystone to install fire doors via this contract negating the need to procure new contracts when the current fire door contracts end in November 2021.

2.0 PROPOSAL(S):

- 2.1 It is proposed that we call-off Keystone Fire Safety Limited from CHIC framework and enter into a 3 year contract, up to £5m in value to carry out passive fire works such as fire stopping works, compartmentation surveys and the Installation of Fire Doors.

3.0 OPTIONS:

- 3.1 To approve the award of contract to Keystone Fire Safety Limited.
- 3.2 To not approve the award of contract and delay the delivery of urgently needed work. This is not considered a feasible option.

4.0 CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify)		✓
5.0 ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES:	YES	NO

(Explain in more detail at 6 below)		
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:

- 6.1 Financial – The budget for these works has already been identified as part of the Housing Revenue Accounts Capital Programme.
- 6.2 Legal – Formal written contract to be entered into.

7.0 REASON FOR THE DECISION:

- 7.1 To enable the urgently needed work to be delivered in a timely manner and in compliance with the Council’s statutory duties.

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 31 March 2021

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

NA

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ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: The Council's Future Financial Issues

REPORT AUTHOR: Nigel Lynn, Chief Executive

DATE: 28 January 2021

EXTN: 37600

PORTFOLIO AREA: Corporate Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Council's Section 151 Officer has provided regular reports over recent months highlighting the Council's current financial position and the scale of our possible financial position for 2022/23. Whilst acknowledging various uncertainties, this report provides an update on possible financial measures to help future deficits.

Officers request that Cabinet considers the items identified and advise on the way forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to resolve to:

- i) Note the financial actions achieved and instruct Officers how to proceed with each proposal.

1. BACKGROUND:

The following budget reports have been presented to Cabinet in recent months:

- 29 April 2020 - Update on the Financial Consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic (Group Head of Corporate Support)
- 1 and 22 June 2020 – The Council's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Chief Executive)
- 20 July 2020 – Revenue and Capital outturn Expenditure 2019/20 (Financial Services Manager)
- 21 September 2020 - Budget Monitoring Report to 31 July 2020 (Financial Services Manager)
- 21 September 2020 - Financial Prospects Report 2020/21 to 2025/6 (Group Head of Corporate Support)

- 21 September 2020 - Financial Support to Freedom Leisure (Group Head of Community Wellbeing)
- 19 October 2020 – The Council’s future financial issues (Chief Executive)
- 16 November 2020 – Budget Monitoring Report to 30 September 2020 (Financial Services Manager)
- 14 December 2020 – Financial support to leisure operating contract (Group Head of Community Wellbeing)
- 14 January 2021 – Members Briefing on the Budget 2021/22 (Group Head of Corporate Support)
- 8 February 2021 – Budget Monitoring Report to 31 December 2020 (Financial Services Manager)
- 8 February 2021 – Arun District Council Budget 2021/22 (Group Head of Corporate Support)

The Chief Executive has also provided Covid-19 update reports to Cabinet since 1 June 2020 and has highlighted the Council’s financial concerns regularly for 2022/23.

Corporate Management Team, working with their Group Heads of Services, have been examining possible changes to service delivery that will assist the Council’s budget. The proposals are provided as Appendix A to this report.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

In the knowledge of the Council’s financial position for 2022/23, Cabinet is asked to note actions achieved and provide support for the officer proposals within Appendix A.

Alternatively, Cabinet can suggest alternative proposals to the Appendix.

3. OPTIONS:

- To support the officer proposals; or
- To suggest alternative proposals

4. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		X
Relevant District Ward Councillors		X
Other groups/persons (please specify) – Cabinet Portfolios	✓	
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		X
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		X

Sustainability		X
Asset Management/Property/Land		X
Technology		X
Other (please explain)		

6. IMPLICATIONS:

The Council needs to ensure a stable financial position to continue to provide quality services in the future. Financially, 22/23 is anticipated to be a very difficult year for the Council, as highlighted by the Council's 151 Officer. This report requests Cabinet support and guidance on the proposals put forward by Officers, so that we can work toward achieving these issues as soon as possible, whilst acknowledging that Council Officers have little capacity due to the ongoing Coronavirus.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

To enable Officers to investigate a series of measures to reduce the Council's revenue budget.

8 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 31 March 2021

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- 29 April 2020 - Update on the Financial Consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic (Group Head of Corporate Support)
[Report](#)
- 1 and 22 June 2020 – The Council's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Chief Executive)
[1 June 2020 Report](#) and [22 June 2020 report](#)
- 20 July 2020 – Revenue and Capital outturn Expenditure 2019/20 (Financial Services Manager)
[Report](#)
- 21 September 2020 - Budget Monitoring Report to 31 July 2020 (Financial Services Manager)
[Report](#) and [Appendix](#)
- 21 September 2020 - Financial Prospects Report 2020/21 to 2025/6 (Group Head of Corporate Support)

[Report](#)

- 21 September 2020 - Financial Support to Freedom Leisure (Group Head of Community Wellbeing)

[Report](#)

- 19 October 2020 – The Council’s future financial issues (Chief Executive)

[Report](#) and [Appendix](#) and [Appendix B](#)

- 19 October 2020 – The Council’s Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Chief Executive)

[Report](#)

- 16 November 2020 – Budget Monitoring Report to 30 September 2020 (Financial Services Manager)

[Report](#) and [Appendix](#)

- 16 November 2020 – The Council’s Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Chief Executive)

[Report](#)

- 14 December 2020 – Financial support to leisure operating contract (Group Head of Community Wellbeing)

[Report](#)

- 14 December 2020 – The Council’s Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Chief Executive)

- 14 January 2021 – Members Briefing on the Budget 2021/22 (Group Head of Corporate Support)

- 8 February 2021 – Budget Monitoring Report to 31 December 2020 (Financial Services Manager)

[Report](#) and [Appendix](#)

- 8 February 2021 – Arun District Council Budget 2021/22 (Group Head of Corporate Support)

[Report](#) and [Appendix 1](#) and

- 8 February 2021 – The Council's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Chief Executive)

[Report](#) and [Appendix](#)

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Appendix A to Cabinet report 22.3.21 – The Council’s Future Financial Issues

	Proposal/Saving	CMT comments 22.1.21	Timescale	£	Lead
Commercial Approach/Income Generation					
1	Additional Beach huts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers looking at additional locations. 	Urgent	£250k budget in 2021/22 Income £6,000-£8,000p.a.	Karl Roberts/Nat Slade
2	Pre-app Planning fees - our fees are generally low in comparison to other authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of fees ongoing. 	2021/22	TBC	Karl Roberts /Neil Crowther
Page 63	3 Car parks: Maximise car park/pay on exit/contactless payments to increase income and reduce overheads	Projects planned over the next 6 months	2021/23	Additional income £50-270k	Philippa Dart/Joe Russell-Wells
	Solar panels for car parks.	Quotes are being obtained.	2021/2022	TBC	Karl Roberts /Nat Slade
	Investing in a diversified fund, yielding approx. 3.4% as opposed to sub 1%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have placed £2M in the Diversifies Fund (in 2 tranches to spread risk) Achieved Also achieved a small amount of capital growth. 	2021/22	£70,000 income	Alan Peach
6	Woodland burial – consider extending current site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long lead-in time. A business case is required (£20k max) and officers to investigate further. Woodland burial at Chalcraft Lane. 	2021/22	Initially (£20,000) + business case cost	Philippa Dart
Reduce operational costs or change service delivery					
7	All chargeable services reviewed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All services to consider all their charges for 2021/22. 	2021/22	TBC	Nigel/Alan then Group Heads of Service
8	Digital agenda, website development, homeworking and receptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business case in development Currently holding 5 vacancies. 	2021/22	£70,000 Saved to date	Philippa Dart /Joe Russell-Wells

Appendix A to Cabinet report 22.3.21 – The Council’s Future Financial Issues

	Proposal/Saving	CMT comments 22.1.21	Timescale	£	Lead
9	Treasury Management partnership with Worthing BC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with HR and Unison. 	2021/2022	£15,000 Saved to date	Alan Peach
10	Audit partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions ongoing with Wealden 	2021/23	£15,000 Saving possible	Alan Peach
11	Performance Management System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract terminated Achieved. 	2021/22	£7,800 saved	Jackie Follis
12	Essential Car Users: reduce numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff/UNISON consultation complete Need to review in 2021/22. 	By October 2022	£16,000 to be saved	Nigel Lynn/Alan Peach
13	Fund staff engaged in Disabled Facilities Grant work from the Better Care Fund and cease use of two agency staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved 	2020/21	£120,000 saved	Karl Roberts/Nat Slade
14	Consider the impact of the new software systems post Covid.	Future restructures and new ways of working possible	2021/22	£70,000 Saved to date	Philippa Dart
15	Combine standby service and emergency planning to improve efficiency and resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved 	2021/22	£8,000 saving	Philippa Dart/Joe Russell-Wells
16	Reduce Age UK costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieved. New lease completed. £173k down to £80k 	2020/21	£93,000 saving	Philippa Dart /Robin Wickham

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2021

SUBJECT: Commercial Manager Post - Update

REPORT AUTHOR: Nigel Lynn – Chief Executive

DATE: 5 March 2021

EXTN: 37600

PORTFOLIO AREA: Chief Executive Directorate

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Members agreed the principle of creating a new post of Commercial Manager for 2020/21. The report proposes, that due to the Coronavirus, the process of appointing to the position is delayed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet

- (i) Support the principle of delaying the appointment process of the Commercial Manager post, until after the Covid pandemic has reduced demands on the resources of the Council.

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The Council agreed 10 Strategic Targets at Full Council on 13 November 2019. One target related to the Council having a more commercial, and therefore, less risk adverse, approach to its assets and asset purchases. In order to take this forward, the Council agreed to create a new position of Commercial Manager to provide strategic guidance and expertise in this area.
- 1.2 As such, £80k was identified in both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 budgets. However, due to the Coronavirus pandemic in March 2020 progress on this matter was delayed.
- 1.3 In late Summer 2020, the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Coster, and the CEO agreed to progress the appointment process as the pandemic appeared to be easing slightly, and a Job Descriptions/Person specification were prepared. However, the pandemic worsened, and it was agreed, in September 2020, that a temporary consultant be considered as an alternative to a full-time position, as the appointment process might not be successful in this difficult time.
- 1.4 Consultant CV's were obtained and examined, and a series of interviews took place on 30 November 2020. With only one possible candidate agreed upon, additional CV's were duly requested and obtained on 12 December 2020. One additional candidate was deemed suitable for interview, however as the Coronavirus National Lockdown took hold on 4 December 2020, the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Coster and the

CEO examined the current position that the Council was in. It was agreed that;

- i. Staff are under a tremendous amount of pressure due to the virus, and there is no capacity to progress this matter, at this time.
- ii. Should a successful consultant, or full-time person, be appointed, staff would be unable to assist the appointee at this time, due to their lack of capacity.
- iii. There are vacancies in several key areas of the Council that cannot be filled, including in Property Services, due to the Coronavirus. This has put additional pressure on other staff.
- iv. In relation to the work this individual might do, property values are low and developer costs high (recent procurement of Littlehampton public realm project resulted in 20% uplift in costs), due to COVID risks.
- v. Council owned property/land projects, such as The Bognor Regis Arcade and the Hothampton Lorry Park will struggle to move forward, even with the expertise of a Commercial Consultant or Manager at this time.
- vi. However, there are other projects that the Council could try to move forward, utilising the budget available, to progress smaller projects, such as fitting Solar panels on Council owned car parks, however, there are other commercial projects that the Council could try to move forward, utilising the budget available.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

Cabinet are asked to support the principle of delaying the appointment process of the Commercial Manager post, until after the Covid pandemic has reduced demands on the resources of the Council.

2. OPTIONS:

- (a) to support the recommendation
- (b) to proceed with an appointment
- (c) consider an alternative approach

4. CONSULTATION:

The Portfolio Holder and CEO agree with the recommendation within the report.

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		x
Relevant District Ward Councillors		x
Other groups/persons (please specify)		
5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial – less money spent from the budget in 2021/22	x	
Legal		x
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		x

Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		x
Sustainability		x
Asset Management/Property/Land – slow down progress on key sites	x	
Technology		x
Other (please explain)		

6. IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The Council has important and valuable sites that it wants to progress in a commercial way. Not having a Commercial Manager or Consultant in place will slow down progress on these projects.
- 6.2 However, as land/property values are currently low, and development costs high, both due to the Coronavirus pandemic, delaying progress by not making such an appointment, should prove more valuable for the Council, in the long term.

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

The Coronavirus has impeded progress on this appointment.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 31 March 2021

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Strategic Targets report to Full Council on 13 November 2019 and minutes - [Agenda - Full Council 13.11.19](#) and minutes [Minutes Full Council 13.11.19](#)

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ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET ON 22 MARCH 2021

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

REPORT AUTHOR: Nigel Lynn, Chief Executive
DATE: 8 March 2021
EXTN: 37600
PORTFOLIO AREA: Corporate Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This report updates Cabinet on the Council's response to the pandemic situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to resolve to:

- (1) note the actions taken to date.

1. BACKGROUND:

- This report provides an update on progress since the last Cabinet report of 8 February 2021 in relation to the Covid-19 response by the Council. Members are asked to note that due to the report being written in advance of the Cabinet meeting, the actual date range that this update is for, is from 21 January 2021 (the date of writing the report to Cabinet on 11 February 2021) to 8 March 2021 (the date of writing this report).
- Members are asked to note that the detailed work that all officers are doing across all departments in relation to responding to the Covid pandemic is causing significant strain and pressure on resources and many other projects and workstreams cannot be implemented to full capacity until after the Covid pandemic.
- On 22 February 2021, the Prime Minister gave a statement to Parliament on the roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions in England and published the 'COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021' roadmap. This roadmap sets out how the Government will begin to lift restrictions in England from 8 March, starting with schools and colleges. It outlines four steps for easing restrictions. Before taking each step, the Government will review the latest data on the impact of the previous step against four tests.
- The impact on the Council is (at the time of writing this report):
 - **Easing of restrictions** - The Council will be reviewing the latest guidance from Government in relation to the easing of restrictions and will implement the necessary actions to comply with each stage as directed by Government.

- **Office presence** - Staff attendance at the Council's buildings should be at an absolute minimum, with staff ONLY attending a Council building if they have agreed this with their manager. Councillors are not permitted to enter any Council building at the current time. After 21 June 2021, the government will complete a review of social distancing and other measures that have been put in place to cut transmission, in order to inform decisions on the timing and circumstances under which rules on 1 metre plus, the wearing of face coverings, etc, may be lifted. This will also inform guidance on working from home – which should continue wherever possible until this review is complete. The Council will not be allowing all staff back into the office or opening the Council offices (apart from the reception area for homelessness presentations) until guidance is received from Government.
- **Emergency Management Team** - The Emergency Management Team are meeting weekly to consider all current issues in relation to the Covid response. The EMT and CMT regularly review the capacity in each service area due to work pressures and staff absences. It should be noted that staff are under increased pressure from existing workloads as well as the Covid pandemic.
- **Leisure Centres, Play areas and Skateparks** - Our leisure centres and leisure facilities (such as adventure golf) have been closed and the Council will continue to work with Freedom Leisure to address the significant financial implications. Play areas remain open. Skate parks have been closed, as per Government guidance. In the Roadmap the following are anticipated reopening dates but these are subject to Government confirmation:
 - 29 March - Outdoor sports – tennis, golf, skateparks can reopen
 - 12 April - Leisure centres - reopening of gyms and swimming pools – no group classes
 - 17 May - indoor gym classes and cinemas may reopen
- **Covid Marshalls** – Arun has been working with East Hants to assist with this role including officers patrolling the District including hotspot areas. Arun's Environmental Health team have continued to patrol the smaller supermarkets, garden centres, click and collect premises, where they receive complaints from the public and where there are positive cases confirmed. East Hants have provided regular feedback reports to Arun so that appropriate action can be taken where necessary.
- **Environmental Health & Enforcement** - Work by Environmental Health continues advising and enforcing the business restrictions which have changed regularly, as well as managing workplace-based outbreaks.
- **Implementing Guidance** - The Council is working to ensure that all Government Guidance is adhered to and that all procedures for dealing with Covid related matters including grants, enforcement etc are followed.
- **Vulnerable assistance** - We continue to provide the necessary support to the most vulnerable in conjunction with WSCC, via the community hub.
- **Rough Sleepers** - We continue to work with partners such as Stonepillow and Turning tides to protect these individuals.
- **May 2021 elections** – officers are working to Government guidance to ensure that the elections are conducted in a safe and Covid secure manner. Information will be given to Councillors, the public and staff involved in the Elections as more clarification is received for all of the different aspects of administering and delivering the elections.

Communications

- Contact via social media continues to be a popular means of gathering information. Weekly reminders of our news bulletins and social media posts are issued including regular reminders about social distancing, avoiding busy places and considerate use of our beaches and town centres. The public are being kept well informed of all key messages.
- Councillors, Partners of Arun and the Town and Parish Councils have been updated with new information from partners, other authorities and Government bodies via emailed briefing notes from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. These have been issued every week since 24 March 2020 and there have been 52 editions to date.

Welfare of Staff, Members and the Public

- Following the announcement of the January National Lockdown, staff are working from home unless they have made specific arrangements. Staff attending an office location must take all Covid precautions set out by the CEO.
- The Council has not opened its reception areas (apart from providing a service to homeless presentations), meeting rooms or communal areas in line with Government guidance and officers are working hard to ensure that the public can access all services either online or via our contact centre.
- After 21 June 2021, the government will complete a review of social distancing and other measures that have been put in place to cut transmission, in order to inform decisions on the timing and circumstances under which rules on 1 metre plus, the wearing of face coverings, etc, may be lifted. This will also inform guidance on working from home (which should continue wherever possible until this review is complete) and the reopening of Council offices to more staff and customers. The Council will not be allowing all staff back into the office or opening the Council offices (apart from the reception area for homelessness presentations) until guidance is received from Government.
- Arun is continuing to liaise with the County Council so that assistance is coordinated via the West Sussex Community Hub. Directing enquiries to the Community Hub as a single point of contact will ensure that residents are properly identified, and their issues logged so that their enquiry can be directed to the most appropriate service.

Covid-19 Prevalence

- Councillors, Partners of Arun and the Town and Parish Councils have been updated on the prevalence of Covid in West Sussex by way of the regular briefing notes since the middle of March 2020 on a weekly basis.
- The West Sussex Covid Health Protection Board continues to monitor prevalence of Covid-19 cases. The Corporate Management Team, relevant Group Heads and our Communications Team are being informed of the numbers of Covid cases in both Arun

and the whole of West Sussex and this is being communicated to officers and Councillors on a regular basis. Covid prevalence in the District is finally starting to reduce, although still high. Data is being collated and analysed every day to identify outbreaks. Interventions to support and manage the outbreak are delivered by WSCC Public Health or our Environmental Health team.

- In December 2020, WSCC agreed to provide an additional £75k for each District & Borough (in addition to the £75k already received) in relation to the management of local outbreaks of Covid-19. This is being used to supplement the capacity of the Environmental Health team. That team works with businesses and organisations where there appears to be a workplace-based outbreak.
- The Council is ensuring that social media and our website communications are regularly updated with information relating to the roll out of the vaccination programme so that the public are aware that their GP surgeries will contact them directly to arrange for a vaccination to take place. Councillors are also forwarded the regular West Sussex Vaccination Updates as they are received.
- The Council has been giving information to local businesses via social media, our website and targeted Arun Business Partnership publications regarding the Community Testing Programme (Lateral Flow Tests) for which can be provided for the delivery of asymptomatic testing to the following groups:
 - Testing for Businesses with more than 50 employees (established within the last month)
 - Community Testing (from 8 March 2021)
 - Testing for Adults with school age children (from 8 March 2021)
 - Testing in Schools and Colleges (from 8 March 2021)
 - Testing of nominated visitor to care homes (from 8 March 2021)

Financial Impact of Covid-19

- The financial effects of Covid-19 have been severe for the Council, in common with other local authorities across the country. The pandemic will continue to have financial implications for the Council.
- Arun has received the following Covid funding from Government to address wider cost pressures. Arun's allocation to date is £498,760.00.
- Details of all funding received by the Council as a result of the Covid Pandemic are listed in Appendix A which is **attached** to this report.
- WSCC have a £10m "Contained Outbreak Management" grant and receive more each month on a per capita basis. WSCC and District and Borough Councils are currently working through the detail of how to distribute this fund and how it could be best spent to ensure the following areas are considered:
 - Where resource constraint is an issue
 - Where income has adversely affected the Council's financial position which will be detrimental to its capability to support the Covid response
 - Additional initiatives that can positively impact on Covid control and mitigation of the financial and health resulting from the virus and the impact of the restrictions.

- Officers are working with Freedom Leisure to address the ongoing financial implications and Cabinet approved further financial assistance to Freedom at their meeting on 14 December 2020. The Council has applied to the recent £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund to assist with the cost of our leisure centres. The fund will help meet the additional costs of operating the centres whilst the buildings have been closed.
- The Council has been giving information to local businesses via social media, our website and targeted Arun Business Partnership publications regarding the various grants available to them.
- Business premises forced to close in England can receive grants under the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) and Discretionary Grants via the Additional Restrictions Support Grant (ARG). The Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG - rateable value based mandatory grants) is being dealt with by the Council's Revenues Team. The Additional Restrictions Support Grant (ARG - Discretionary Grants) are being dealt with by the Economic Development Team. In addition, people who have to self-isolate can receive a payment of £500 (for those on lower incomes who cannot work from home and have lost income as a result) and the Council continues to make payments receipt of a valid application. As of 8.3.21, the following payments have been made.

The Additional Restrictions Support Grant (ARG - Discretionary Grants):

Scheme Name	Submitted Claims	Claims Approved	Claims Approved Value
Additional Restrictions Discretionary Grant - Businesses with RV or property costs up to £15K pa R3	453	235	£799,620.00
Additional Restrictions Discretionary Grant - Business- RV or property costs over £15k to £51k pa R3	66	17	£100,000.00
Additional Restrictions Discretionary Grant - market trader / taxi driver R3	25	23	£22,550.00
Additional Restrictions Discretionary Grant - RV or Property costs of over £51K pa R3	13	2	£18,000.00
Discretionary Grant - Businesses with RV or property costs up to £15K pa R4	199	155	£531,325.00
Discretionary Grant - Business- RV or property costs over £15k to £51k pa R4	26	15	£88,000.00
Discretionary Grant - market trader / taxi driver R4	14	12	£11,700.00

Discretionary Grant - RV or Property costs of over £51K pa R4	2	1	£9,000.00
Local Restriction Support Grant (Open) Tier 2/3/4 Discretionary RV over £51K -2.12 - 25.12.20	32	19	£30,201.60
Local Restriction Support Grant Open T4 Discretionary RV / property costs up to £15K 2 - 25.12.20	152	63	£46,770.75
Additional Restrictions Discretionary Grant - Businesses with RV or property costs up to £15K pa R3	72	35	£37,118.27

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSB - rateable value based Mandatory Grants) and Christmas Support payment to Wet-Led Pubs:

Grant Type	No. of Applications received	No. of Applications paid	Value	No. of Applications awaiting assessments
Tier 2 Restrictions Grant for Closed Businesses	40	29	£17,382.50	0
Tier 4 Restrictions Grant for Closed Businesses	721	678	£382,711.00	4
Business Support Package for Lockdown from 5.1.21	870	804	£7,662,656.00	4
Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs (AAA) Fixed Value: £1,000	57	51	£51,000.00	0
Grant for Closed Businesses – 2.12.20-25.12.20	49	38	£31,174.00	0
National Restrictions Grant – November 2020	851	756	£1,190,700.00	8

2. PROPOSAL(S):

Cabinet is requested to note the actions taken to date.

3. OPTIONS:

To note this update report or;
To request further information

4. CONSULTATION:		
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:	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)		
6. IMPLICATIONS:		
<p>6.1 The Council also has very limited funds to be able to make direct interventions to assist the public and businesses. The Council has continued to focus on good communication and Government grants available to businesses and the public. The Council has also been helping to provide community leadership.</p> <p>6.2 The Government has supported the Council with grants to assist our budgets, which covers a proportion of our losses, but there remains a significant shortfall of our income, which is concerning as we look to the future. This shortfall will affect the Council's finances significantly going forward, and, although the 2021/21 budget is balanced, this has been partly due to reduced spending to help cover our losses.</p> <p>6.3 The current Lockdown has increased implications on staff workload, capacity and mental health as we strive to continue to provide day to day services, whilst working from home, many with childcare issues (when the schools are closed). Members are asked to note that the detailed work that all officers are doing across all departments in relation to responding to the Covid pandemic is causing significant strain and pressure on resources and many other projects and workstreams cannot be implemented to full capacity until after the Covid pandemic. Despite the negative effect that the pandemic is having on normal officer duties, in the main, front line services remain fully operational.</p> <p>6.4 It should be noted that the easing of restrictions will be of benefit to all, however it will entail the continued hard work and dedication of staff to ensure that services are reopened and reintroduced over the coming months.</p>		

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION: For Cabinet to note the Council's response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
8 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE DECISION: 22 March 2021 – as this is a noting report
9. BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

Appendix A – Covid Grants received by Arun District Council to 8.3.21

	Amount (£)	Comments
Grants announced Since October 2020		
Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed) Addendum (LRSG)	955,941	Mandatory;
National restrictions grant (Closed) Addendum (LRSG);	2,583,864	Mandatory;
Closed Business Lock down payments	15,685,154	Mandatory
Closed Business Lockdown payment (05/01 to 15/02)		Mandatory; funded from above
Closed Business Lockdown payment (16/02 to 31/03)		Mandatory; funded from above
Christmas Support Package	51,200	Mandatory
Local Restrictions Support Grants (Open) Addendum (LRSG)	506,840	Discretionary/Mandatory
Local restrictions grant for staffing support		Funded from above
Additional Restrictions Support Grant allocations.	4,643,182	Discretionary
Surge enforcement funding for local authorities (Ring fenced), MHCLG	75,314	Mandatory; spend includes commitments; Marshals fund,
Covid prevention planning (WSCC)	75,000	WSCC; spend includes commitments;
Covid prevention outbreak work (WSCC)	75,000	WSCC; spend includes commitments;
Test and Trace support grant (self-isolation)	162,800	
Test and Trace staff support		Funded from above
Sales, fees and services support grant	722,888	Up to 31/12/2020
From March 2020 to September 2020		
Council Tax - Hardship fund	945,239	
Covid-19 Support grant (2019/20) 1st trench	64,612	This was received in 2019/20
Covid-19 Support grant (2020/21) 2nd to 4th trench	2,373,167	5th Trench in April 2021
Rough sleeping Initiative	21,000	Applied to Corporate spend
New burdens payment associated with SBGF, RHLGF	270,463	£170k applied to Corporate spend
Re-opening the High Street Safely Fund	143,718	to be claimed; Coordinated by Economy
Business Support Grants (SBGF) Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Busi. Grant (RHLBG)	30,025,000	Finished
Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund	1,528,500	Finished
BID Covid-19 support grant	6,990	Paid to Bognor Regis BID
Leisure Funding (Bid to the National Leisure Recovery fund)	311,542	BID successful
Lottery funding for Consultancy advice	4,980	
DWP Northgate Covid-19 changes		
Community Champions Fund	131,176	Covid community engagement officers

Tax Income Compensation - up to 75% loss of CTax and NDR loss of income in 2020/21		Amount to be calculated at year end
Next Step Accommodation programme	262,047	
Protect Plus	105,000	Homelessness beds funding claimed for.
Allocated for 2021/22		
Local Council Tax Support Grant (LCTS)	209,000	for 2021/22; not directly Covid-19
Additional C-19 support grant	831,000	for 2021/22
Total Covid-19 Grants	62,770,947	

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 16

Subject to approval at the next Planning Review Working Party meeting

1

PLANNING REVIEW WORKING PARTY

11 February 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Stanley (Chairman), Mrs Cooper (Vice-Chairman, Bennett, Chapman, Coster, Lury, Roberts and Ms Thurston.

[Note: Councillor Chapman was absent from the meeting during consideration of the items set out in the following Minute – Minute 9 [Part].

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors all declared their Personal Interests as set out below:

- Councillor Bennett as Chairman of the Development Control Committee;
- Councillor Mrs Cooper as a Rustington Parish Council Member
- Councillor Lury as Cabinet Member for Planning

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Working Party held on 8 December 2020 were approved as a correct record and it was agreed that these would be signed by the Chairman when it was possible.

9. CONSIDERATION OF RESIDENTS' NEEDS AND CONCERNS IN RESPECT OF PLANNING MATTERS

The Working Party received a report from the Chief Executive which confirmed that the Working Party needed to discuss measures that would ensure greater consideration of residents' needs and concerns in respect of planning matters (to include communication with the public) and to use the attached Appendix A (updated list of recommendations and improvements) to aid this discussion. As per Cabinet's request, the Working Party should also further consider Recommendation 58 'Embrace the opportunity to lead and deliver at strategic level rather than with the sub region'.

The Working Party noted that Appendix A had been updated since the version that was submitted to the Working Party on 8 December 2020 in line with Cabinet's Resolution of 14 December 2020 and had included any amendments which the Working Party agreed to. The suggested lines from Recommendation 52 had been removed from the table as agreed at Cabinet on 14 December 2020.

Planning Review Working Party - 11.02.21

Councillor Coster opened the discussion about how planning affected many residents directly and their opinion of the Council. The public needed confidence in the planning process. Issues to be debated should include the views of Parish Councils, dealing with Objectors and planning notices. Discussion followed and points raised included:

- How do we grow the knowledge of Councillors who were not on the Development Control Committee;
- More use should be made of the new application finder to enable residents to be better informed as soon as they contacted the Council about planning issues. The application finder had already been used over 7000 times in the first month of its release;
- There were good examples where planning had been community led and we should try to do more of this in the next Local Plan;
- Developers often did not involve the public in their proposals early enough and the Council needed to involve the public much more in its policy development, whilst acknowledging that this would be more resource intensive;
- Neighbourhood Plans do seem to involve communities in the development process but tended not to deal with controversial sites;
- It was important to reach out to the public proactively and continue to encourage officers to work with developers to get them on board to discuss matters with the public in a positive way, similar to the Advisory Groups;
- We need to engage better with Parishes to help them understand the planning process and meeting them more often would probably help;
- The CIL meetings and Advisory Groups had been positively received by Parishes;
- Online community consultation tools should be considered as they would help both the public and Parishes to understand the planning issues more easily. Thought needed to be given in looking at the opportunities to develop digital presence to include the wider community, especially younger members of the public;
- The need to work smarter and provide clear communications in everything we do on planning;
- The Chief Executive responded stating that resources for planning needed to be reviewed and this might lead to an increased revenue budget for planning.

Following discussion, the Working Party

RECOMMEND TO CABINET - That

- (1) the Council should influence developers to engage more constructively with Parish Councils and the public, utilising Arun District Councillors to help do this;
- (2) the Council should improve its communication, involvement and training of Parish Councillors.
- (3) Officers investigate the use of digital tools to improve public engagement;
- (4) Officers consider an online community guide to the planning system (possibly through short videos).
- (5) Cabinet to confirm that it understands that the previous four recommendations may result in resource implications (both people and financial).

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chief Executive explained that Officers were working on recommendations that directly related to Officers from the Planning Review and the intention was to bring together the Member Working Party Recommendations and the Officer Recommendations into one report. It was therefore agreed that to enable good coordination on Member and Officer Recommendations, the Working Party should be reconvened when this report was available.

It was also agreed that there would be a need to review the Planning Review on a regular basis, perhaps six monthly once the Recommendations were agreed.

Member training was discussed. The ongoing training for Members was a refresh and an update of the summer 2019 training and when completed should be sufficient for Members to sit on Development Control.

(The meeting concluded at 7.45 pm)

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 17

Subject to approval at the next Housing & Customer Services Working Group meeting

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HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

4 February 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Bennett (Chairman), Mrs Pendleton (Vice-Chair), Bicknell, Mrs Catterson, Mrs Haywood, Hughes, Ms Thurston and Edwards (Substitute for Mrs Cooper)

Councillors Mrs Gregory, Cabinet Member for Residential Services was also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Cooper

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

19. MINUTES

The minutes of the Housing and Customer Working Group meeting held on 5 November 2020 were approved and it was agreed that the Chairman would sign these as soon as practicably possible.

20. SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER

The Group Head of Residential Services presented her report to members, she explained that it had come from the green paper published in 2019. She summarised that this paper was to incorporate more responsibilities onto the Landlords and to ensure that accountability was held when needed. Homes would be inspected at least once every four years. The complaints process would have changes made to ensure that these would be dealt with properly, fairly and respectfully. The designated person role was to be removed and complaints would instead go to the ombudsman at this stage of the process. She explained that it was to ensure that the Council complied with its health and safety responsibilities.

Members took part in a full debate, where the following points were raised;

- Did the Group Head of Residential Services believe that the current procedure/process was up to scratch in terms of consultation with tenants
- Would there be an impact on the Council's housing stock

The Group Head of Residential Services provided full answers to the points raised, she explained that there was a review currently underway specifically looking at how resident engagement could be improved and that she did not believe that there would be a direct impact on the Council's housing stock.

The Cabinet Member for Residential Services highlighted to the Working Group that in section 1.4 of the report, that many of the required improvements were already being carried out by the Council. She further explained that it would be much easier to manage with the new IT system once implemented.

The Working Group noted the report and white paper.

21. GAINING ACCESS TO RESIDENTS HOMES POLICY

The Group Head of Residential Services presented her report to members where she explained that the policy set out exactly what legal remedies the Council would take should access be refused by tenants and that the detail of this had been set out at section 1.2 in her report and 2.1 in the policy.

Members took part in a full debate, where the following points were raised, were there a lot of instances where the Council had been refused access, how many times would the Council seek to gain entry before injunctions would be enforced and members welcomed the policy as it was very much needed for the safety of all the Councils tenants.

The Group Head of Residential Services provided full and detailed answers to all points raised.

The Working Party

RECOMMEND to CABINET that

- 1) the Access Policy be adopted; and
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Group Head of Residential Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Residential Services to make changes to the policy

22. REPORT BACK FROM CABINET/FULL COUNCIL

The recommendations made to Cabinet on 5 November 2020 were noted by members.

23. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Group Head of Residential Services advised members what would be covered at the next meeting of the Working Group.

There was a request for a report from Stone Pillow of which the Chairman advised that this would be better being received at the first meeting of the new committee under the new committee structure starting in May 2021, the Vice-Chairman

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also made comment that a presentation from Stone Pillow and other charities would be gratefully received

The Working Group noted the work programme update.

(The meeting concluded at 6.30 pm)

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