

ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

26 July 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Cooper (Chair), Gunner (Vice-Chair), Bower (Substitute for Dendle), Dixon, Edwards, Roberts, Seex, Stanley, Dr Walsh and Yeates (Substitute for Purchase)

Apologies: Councillors Dendle, Northeast and Purchase

173. WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Members of the Committee, the Public and Press, other Members and Officers participating in this meeting of the Economic Committee, noting that it was the first in person since the easing of restrictions.

174. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gunner declared a personal interest in item 7 as a member is a lessee of one of the contracts for this item, they are in the same political party and Councillor Gunner is the leader of this party.

Councillors Bower, Cooper, Edwards, Roberts and Seex all declared a personal interest in item 7 as they know the lessee of one of the contract for this item.

175. MINUTES

The minutes of the Economic Committee meeting held on 8 June 2021 were approved by the Committee.

176. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

(Councillor Dixon arrived at the start of this item.)

The Chair advised the Committee that he had one urgent item to be discussed at the meeting which was the London Road Lorry Park (Bognor Regis). He then invited Councillor Roberts to present and propose his motion to the Committee.

Councillor Roberts presented the following motion to the Committee.

Economic Committee - 26.07.21

This Committee instructs;

- 1) Officers to immediately re-market the London Road Lorry Coach Park (Bognor Regis) for sale, and to report back a marketing and level of interest update to the next meeting of the Economic Committee.
- 2) When re-marketing, Officers are to advise interested parties that the Council would prefer a developer to retain 100 public car parking spaces, re-provide public toilets, and facilitate a quality entrance route to Hotham Park.
- 3) The land area under consideration incorporates the adjoining car park. In marketing the site, Officers will use an agent, and the terms of sale will be as before, with no end use defined.
- 4) Officers are given authority to exceed their £100,000 delegated authority in respect of a fee which could become payable to an agent.

This was seconded by Councillor Edwards. The Chair then opened debate where several members queried the urgency reason for the item and why the motion was only being shared with members at the meeting. The Chair confirmed that the reason for urgency was due to the length of time the re-marketing process can take and that should the Committee be minded to approve the motion this would allow for the process to start earlier and an update report to be brought back to the Committee for its meeting on 12 October 2021. It was also confirmed that the reason the motion was shared at the meeting was due to final advice being sought from the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

Advice was sought from the Director of Place who provided answers to all points raised during the debate.

On turning to the vote, a recorded vote was requested. Those voting for were, Cllrs Bower, Cooper, Edwards, Gunner, Roberts and Seex (6). Those voting against were, Cllrs Dixon, Stanley, Dr Walsh and Yeates (4).

The Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers to immediately re-market the London Road Lorry Coach Park (Bognor Regis) for sale, and to report back a marketing and level of interest update to the next meeting of the Economic Committee.
- 2) When re-marketing, Officers are to advise interested parties that the Council would prefer a developer to retain 100 public car parking spaces, re-provide public toilets, and facilitate a quality entrance route to Hotham Park.

- 3) The land area under consideration incorporates the adjoining car park. In marketing the site, Officers will use an agent, and the terms of sale will be as before, with no end use defined.
- 4) Officers are given authority to exceed their £100,000 delegated authority in respect of a fee which could become payable to an agent

177. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from members of the public who had submitted their questions in advance of the meeting in accordance with the rules of the Council's Constitution.

The Chair confirmed that two questions had been submitted by one member of the public and their questions would be read out by the Committee Manager and responded to by the Chair.

There were no supplementary questions asked. The Chair then drew public question time to a close.

(A schedule of the full questions asked and the responses provided can be found on the meeting's webpage at: [\(Public Pack\)Economic Committee - Public Question Time - 26 July 2021 Agenda Supplement for Economic Committee, 26/07/2021 18:00 \(arun.gov.uk\)](#))

178. LITTLEHAMPTON PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS: PHASE 2 & 3 HIGH STREET / BEACH ROAD / EAST STREET / CLIFTON ROAD

The Director of Place provided members with an overview of the report before them and advised that the Committee were being asked to appoint the construction contract for the delivery of the regeneration works to Littlehampton Town Centre as well as to delegate authority for all approvals within the budget of £3,416,295.00 and to enter into a letter of intent to enable the ordering of materials, to the Director of Place. Further explaining that there were currently nationwide delays when ordering construction materials and that he was currently given a 20 week wait from the point of ordering the materials. He stated that the letter of intent was vital in terms of the decision the Committee was being asked to make at this meeting as without this authority the order for materials could not be placed. He confirmed that the earliest works would start would be after the Christmas period due to the wait time. He then confirmed that the issue that had been raised regarding the Lime Tree outside of the arcade has been reviewed and the Tree Officer has relooked and reconsidered his previous approach and the tree was now worthy of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and therefore it was now for the Committee to decide if they wished to retain the tree or not.

Economic Committee - 26.07.21

The Chair opened the debate where the following points were raised:

- The lost section of improvement work by the railway was disappointing and the Leader of the Council was intent on finding money to complete this work.
- Questions were asked regarding further design consultation with members. It was confirmed by the Director of Place that we were now at the delivery stage of the scheme and there was no further opportunity to make changes to the designs.
- Concern was raised regarding the 3 telephone boxes that were stated to be kept as data-hubs, it was felt that these were not needed and ultimately not used for that purpose. It was asked what the cost would be for removing all three, the Director of Place confirmed that the quote received for removal of all three telephone boxes was £35,000. It was also advised that it was more cost effective to leave them in place, as the cost to remove them was now outside of the budgeted plans.
- Discussion was also had regarding the trees outside the Dolphin pub and Peacocks. Where it was confirmed that there was planned work for the, but they were not being removed.
- There was a consensus amongst the Committee that the Lime Tree in place outside the arcade should be awarded a TRO and kept.
- Discussion regarding the street furniture was had and it was confirmed that discussion with Littlehampton Town Council (LTC) was being had and that where possible items that could be re-used would be.

The Chair then read out a statement on behalf of Councillor Northeast who could not be in attendance at the meeting so that the Committee could consider his comments.

It was then proposed by Councillor Seex that **all 3 telephone boxes be removed**, this was seconded by Councillor Dr Walsh. The debate on the proposal saw the Committee consider the following options:

- It was felt that the responsibility for the telephone boxes was British Telecoms (BT) and discussions should be had with them to either have them removed or for BT to ensure that these telephone boxes have work completed on them to ensure that they can not be abused and what work could be done between Arun and BT to ensure that if they are to remain they are looked after and kept in good condition.
- Could they be used as an advertising mechanism
- Consideration was given to the removal of 1 or 2 of the telephone boxes and the cost implications of this option.

Councillor Seex then made an amendment to her original proposal which was, that **officers seek to find other ways to remove the telephone boxes and report back to the Committee** ~~all 3 telephone boxes be removed~~. This was duly seconded and put to the vote, where it was approved.

The recommendations presented to the Committee in the report were then proposed and seconded.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. the Scope of intended works, as set out in the report, for the Littlehampton Town Centre construction contract be approved; and
2. The budget of £3,416,295.00, approved by Cabinet in December 2019 be noted and the Terms, as set out in the report, be approved.
3. Gives authority to the Director of Place to agree and sign a letter of intent on behalf of the Council, in favour of the contractor, to enable the ordering of materials and thus securing the material costs prior to entering into the construction contract.
4. Gives authority to the Director of Place to authorise Legal Services to enter into the NEC4 (Option A) contract for the construction of Phase 2 & 3 (High Street and Beach Road) to a contract Value not exceeding £2.97m and overall budget for the delivery of the Town Centre improvements of £3,416,295.00.
5. Officers seek to find other ways to remove the telephone boxes and report back to the Committee.

179. CAFÉ LEASES

(Councillor Gunner declared a personal interest as a member is a lessee of one of the contracts for this item, they are in the same political party and Councillor Gunner is the leader of this party. Councillors Bower, Cooper, Edwards, Roberts and Seex all declared a personal interest as they know the lessee of one of the cafes for this item. Councillor Dixon declared a personal interest as a member of the Bognor Regis Civic Society)

The Property, Estates and Facilities Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the report before them and reminded them that the report set out the commercial marketing strategy for various catering business opportunities across the Council's parks with a specific focus on service improvement, long term financial viability and the securing of increased revenue for the Council.

In turning to the debate, the following points were raised;

- Broad consensus of support for the recommendations before the Committee
- Was there the footfall for the Marine Park Gardens Café's and the need for public toilet amenities in the area was also raised

Economic Committee - 26.07.21

- It was requested that the diversity of business offerings be considered by officers to maximise the variety of offerings available across the district
- Concern for the turnaround timeframe of the process was also highlighted

The Property, Estates and Facilities Manager provide answers to all points and questions raised.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Economic Committee approve for the Council to proceed with the open marketing of the four separate catering business opportunities at each of Councils identified parks, those being;
 - a. Norfolk Gardens, Littlehampton
 - b. Mewsbrook Park, Littlehampton
 - c. West Park, Bognor Regis
 - d. Marine Park Gardens, Bognor Regis
- 2) the Economic Committee delegate authority to the Group Head of Technical Services to negotiate suitable commercial heads of terms for the four individual leases and, in consultation with the Chair of the Economic Committee, to proceed to enter into leases.

180. ARUN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND FUTURE PRIORITIES

The Group Head of Economy provided members with an overview of the report before them and reminded members that the report sets out the Arun Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025 action plan and proposed a number of future projects for their consideration.

The Leader of the Council expressed that he was delighted with the report before them, however, he proposed an amendment to the recommendation 2 to read;

2. **that officers explore the resources required to progress the priority projects and this is reflected in the 22/23 budget process. Also agree that more resources are required in the current year to progress projects and that this can be met through resource switching.** ~~Instructs officers to refine the list of priority projects (Appendix D) working through a Members Working Party and develops a prioritisation formula for these projects.~~

This was duly seconded by the Chair. During debate the following points were raised by members:

- a plea to ensure that the Council works with the Town Centre and its Planning Committee and to review what other Councils have done, in particular to look at the approach that Chichester District had taken

- a query on the priority given to the Arun Cycle way and should this be reviewed and moved to a high priority
- to also work with West Sussex County Council to make improvements across the district together
- a variety of suggestions were made by members regarding Appendix D, some of which were, Beach Huts seen as a quick win, palm trees along the promenade at Bognor Regis, the upper floors of the Arcade in Bognor Regis and the need to utilise this space and do something with it whilst retaining the ground floor units, more consideration on what to do with Bognor Regis Town Hall as it was felt that this could be better utilised.
- It was also asked if the Sunken Garden proposals to improve the area were supported by the administration
- Concern was raised regarding the amount of money that could end up being spent on partnership consultants and could this money be better utilised.

The Group Head of Economy provided answer to the questions asked and the Chair stated that as the seconder of the recommendations and given the thorough debate that had taken place, this was an example of exactly why setting up a Working Party was not needed.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan (Appendix C) and instructs officers to progress its delivery be approved.
- 2) that officers explore the resources required to progress the priority projects and this is reflected in the 22/23 budget process. Also agree that more resources are required in the current year to progress projects and that this can be met through resource switching.
- 3) officers estimate the resources (both capital and staffing costs) that may be needed to progress each project and brings a report back to this Committee for further discussion.
- 4) officers prepare, in partnership, a concise Town Centre(s) Strategy for 2022-2025.

181. REVIEW OF ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL'S TOURISM SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

The Group Head of Economy provided members with an overview of the report before them and reminded members that the review had considered all aspects of the Council's current tourism support functions and summaries the recommendations and findings made in the strategic review of the tourism service by Blue Sail Consulting and makes recommendations for the future delivery of its tourism services by the Council.

A questions was raised regarding the proposed future budget allocations and the suggested contribution to the Experience West Sussex project. The Group Head of Economy advised that the report had been written some time ago and that there would be opportunity for the figures to be reconsidered and adjusted. She also ran through a

Economic Committee - 26.07.21

number of benefits that the district would benefit from continuing to be involved with this collaborative initiative. It was also commented that the Levelling Up Bid (LUP) would be an opportunity to bring in new experiences to the district should the Council be successful in its bid.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded before turning to the vote, the Chair commended the team for the work completed and the report before the Committee.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1) the four strategic recommendations (also listed in para 1.14) contained within the Arun Strategic Review of Tourism (October 2020) – Appendix A be supported.
- 2) the proposed changes to the service be approved; and;
- 3) Instructs officers to implement these changes.

182. OUTSIDE BODIES REPORT

The Chair referred the Committee to the outside body report from Councillor Edwards that had been circulated separately to the agenda earlier in the day and invited any questions to be asked.

Councillor Dr Walsh stated that he and Councillor Stanley had also been in attendance at the meeting of Bognor Regis Regeneration Board and that he had found it to be a very useful meeting and that he came away with a heightened sense of optimism.

There were no questions asked.

183. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair asked the Committee to note the update Work Programme that had been attached to the agenda and invited questions. There was one question raised regarding Place Branding which was answered by the Director of Place.

The Committee then noted its Work Programme for 2021/22.

(The meeting concluded at 9.02 pm)