

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

7 March 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gunner (Chair), Pendleton (Vice-Chair), Chace (Substitute for Cooper), Dixon, Goodheart, Oppler, Roberts, Stanley and Dr Walsh

Councillors Coster and Thurston were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

748. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Cooper.

749. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Goodheart declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 [The Regeneration of the Regis Centre, Bognor Regis - Update Report] as a Bognor Regis Town Councillor and a resident of Bognor Regis.

750. MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting of the committee held on the 9 February 2023 were approved.

751. 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

There were no urgent items.

752. 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 Council's Constitution. The chair confirmed that one question had been submitted. The question was asked by the member of the public and this was responded to by the Chair.

*(A schedule of the full questions asked and the responses provided can be found on the meeting's webpage at: [Arun District Council](#))*

The Chair then drew Public Question Time to a close.

753. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2026/27 [30 MINUTES]

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer introduced the report and explained to members that it was a requirement of the CIPFA prudential code that all councils produced a capital strategy that was approved by Members. The purpose of the strategy, which was not a budget report, was for it to be a framework that ensured that capital investment decisions were made in line with service objectives and was linked to the Treasury Management Strategy. Appendix 1 outlines the council's approach to asset management planning, governance and business case option appraisals for individual schemes. The council was currently debt free in terms of its general fund and he confirmed that the council would likely need to borrow to fund future capital projects. He explained that borrowing was an acceptable approach if it was affordable and responsible.

The Chair then invited the committee to ask any questions, a summary of the points raised is below;

- Concern was raised as one member believed that it would be premature of the committee to send this to Full Council given the outstanding issue regarding the council's budget meeting, which was currently adjourned until Thursday 9 March 2023. It was reconfirmed that the report before members was not a budget report.
- Questions were asked regarding the types of investments the council should be considering e.g., the location of investments as well as advice regarding investments that may provide a negligible return. It was confirmed that this detail was documented in a report that went to the Audit & Governance Committee on 28 February 2023, and that the council would complete the usual due diligence prior to committing to any investment to ensure that it was a sound decision.
- A question in relation to the councils Housing Revenue Account (HRA) where it was asked if the section 151 officer could foresee any issues or conflicts arising in the future regarding Right to Buy (RTB) receipts, the section 151 officer confirmed that a written answer would be given.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Pendleton and seconded by Councillor Dixon

The Committee

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

that the Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 be approved.

754. CARBON ACTION WORK PLAN UPDATE [30 MINUTES]

The Climate Change and Sustainability Manager presented the update report to members where he advised that it contained the emissions update for the 2021/22 financial year as well as updates to a number of projects that have been going on over the last year. . He then highlighted the following key points;

- Not all projects were able to have emission figures reported currently, these have been included where they are available.
- The main body of the action plan provides information on sustainable projects that the council had undertaken and completed, were currently being undertaken or were planned for as future work.
- Scope 1 – emissions directly attributed to the burning of fuels e.g., running the council's fleet and heating of council offices.
- Scope 2 – indirect emissions from the generation or purchase of electricity
- Scope 3 – the activities of the council occurring from sources not owned or directly controlled by the council, these are both up and down stream sources and included things such as commuting, business travel and procurement. Scope 3 was confirmed as the most challenging area to reduce.
- Scope 1 and 2 made up only 0.75% of total emissions with the remaining 99.25% lying within Scope 3

The projects detailed within the document are those which will result in the direct and indirect reduction of carbon usage. It was stated that it was important for members to note that the council must have a significant focus on its procurement as it was the highest and most challenging area to reduce and without a significant reduction in this area, an overall all significant reduction would not be achievable.

The Chair then invited questions and discussion from members. Discussion was had regarding the work being completed to reduce the number of diesel vehicles used by the council's waste contractor, Biffa. It was confirmed that a number of options were being reviewed, however, the Officer did not believe that the technology in terms of electric vehicles was where it needed to be, in order to provide the significant reduction, the council wanted to see made. It was also stated that the council would be guided by Biffa in terms of the consideration of vehicle types e.g. electric, hydrogen etc as Biffa would be the users of the vehicles. A request was made from the Director of Environment and Communities for confirmation of the addition revenue and capital figures were regarding the food waste collections, the Director of Environment and Communities confirmed a written response would be provided.

A request was made to obtain further information from Biffa in relation to the procurement emissions as it would be good for members to understand what Biffa's performance in this area was currently, including their own plans on future targets.

Policy and Finance Committee - 7.03.23

Discussion moved on to reviewing of opportunities to install additional solar PV on council estates, including car parks and leased buildings. It was commented that it would be beneficial for the Alexandra Theatre in Bognor Regis to be included in this work.. Moving on to action point 22 in the action plan, it was asked if there had been any additional research completed on the water usage at recreation grounds for which the council had responsibility. Further information was sought on the councils Climate Champions and the training being offered to employees; would this also be rolled out to members? It was confirmed that the council had recently undertaken several building audit, this work included reviewing options to install PV . Once the results of these audits are reviewed and details finalised these could be shared with members. The officer then advised that the climate champions were a group of officers who had shown a keen interest in climate change and biodiversity, this group of officers were being updated regularly so that they can spread the message to the wider employee audience around what the council is doing around climate change. In terms of training, some staff had completed a recent 8-hour training session called Carbon Literacy training, however there would be some e-learning being created to specifically be shared with members (and officers) in the future. A written response was agreed for the information requested regarding water usage at council recreation grounds.

Discussion then moved on to the financial figures included in the report, specifically how much had been spent on phase one and what was left to spend on phase two. It was confirmed that phase one had seen £28,000 spent with the remaining budget left for phase two. The officer agreed to review the figures to ensure that they matched correctly.

In summing up the Chair reminded members that the continuation of the weekly bin collections was the cheapest option and that the weekly food collection costs were the most expensive. Moving to the recommendations the Chair confirmed that each recommendation would be votes on separately as had been requested.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Goodheart and seconded by Councillor Stanley. Upon the vote being taken recommendation 2.3 was not carried and, therefore.

The Committee

RESOLVED that it

- 2.1. Continued to support the work of the Climate Change and Sustainability Manger in reducing the Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions produced by the Council
- 2.2. Notes the report, particularly the challenges identified in reducing Co2 emissions referred within the conclusion of the report.

755. LITTLEHAMPTON SEAFRONT PROJECT [15 MINUTES]

The Principal Landscape and Project Officer presented the update report to members and advised that the priority last few months of the project had been to define a clear procurement route for a design and build contract, but she explained that it had been a much more challenging experience than previously expected. The result of these challenges meant that it had been necessary to change the framework used for the process. The framework that would now be used was Pagabo. The remainder of the report provided members with an update on the projected costs of the project, the pre-application submitted to Planning and the ground water monitoring that was currently taking place on site.

The chair then invited members to ask questions. It was asked what the Pagabo framework was and what steps were being taking to improve the information in the council's information boards that are situated on the seafront? The officer confirmed that Pagabo was just the name of a framework that the council could use. She then confirmed that, the information boards would be updated for the public in the coming days.

Some questions were raised specifically relating to design specifics for the project and the officer reminded members that there was currently no further information on the design side of the project. This was due to the length of time the procurement route has taken; however, she would update members as soon as the project has moved forward to this phase.

Clarification was sought regarding specifically what the recommendation was asking members to agree to and this was explained by the officer. The officer also confirmed that the advice received had not raised concerns, however any cost incurred would be something that would require balancing out as the project moves to the next phase. Discussion then moved onto the financial aspect of the project where the expected overrun cost was discussed along with options to be considered to bring the overrun costs down. The Chair confirmed that this detail would be brought back to members at a later meeting.

Support for the project was voiced where it was stated that there had been a good level of public consultation, excellent work completed by officers thus far and that future information being presented to the public should remain clear and focus on the concept plan. It was also requested that any information being put up on the information boards was also to be emailed to members.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Chace and seconded by Councillor Goodheart.

Policy and Finance Committee - 7.03.23

The Committee

RESOLVED that

It notes the content of this report and agree the revised procurement route using Pagabo and not SCF.

756. THE REGENERATION OF THE REGIS CENTRE, BOGNOR REGIS - UPDATE REPORT [15 MINUTES]

*(Councillor Thurston left the meeting at 18:58pm.)*

The Interim Project Manager provided members with a presentation update on the regeneration of the Regis Centre, Bognor Regis. He confirmed that the Whitbread contract had been exchanged with an expected completion mid-May 2023. The project delivery had now moved into RIBA 3 design, he explained that the planning application submission would be expected towards the end of May 2023. The total project cost forecast was confirmed to currently be within the budget envelope.

The Chair then invited member's questions, where it was asked with the construction work forecast to start on 20 November 2023, how long do officers expect this work to take. It was confirmed that it was expected to be approximately an 18 month build programme. But this would be further informed by the procurement process (and related contractor programme) which is yet to take place and is being worked towards in tandem with RIBA 3. It was also confirmed that there were temporary locations being reviewed in order to relocate part of the Arun Arts operation and maintain a presence for them during the build period.

A member of the committee then expressed that he expected that this update would have provided more detail, he asked a number of questions on design, public and member consultation and raised concerns regarding public toilets. The officer provided reassurance to members that they would be kept informed throughout all stages of the project, he confirmed a PR & Communications campaign was due to be rolled out shortly. And all endeavours were being undertaken to ensure this project would be as good as the council can get it.

Discussion was then had regarding the SCF (Southern Construction framework) and the cost of using this framework, specifically how much did the 3% (OHPP) work out at, alongside had consideration been given to using Pagabo framework? The officer explained that currently the SCF was the most advantageous and preferred framework from a budgetary, programme and assured quality perspective. He explained that there was currently limited interest in the construction industry as it was extremely busy, this was therefore having an impact on achieving full contractor interest to tender due to resource issues, however expressions of interest were likely to be achieved through the SCF. He explained that there were a number of factors to consider during procurement and the process is not solely driven by cost. He confirmed he did not have the specific figures requested and would provide these at a later date

as designs were worked up and costed through RIBA 3 and via the procurement/tender process. As discussion was continuing the Chair expressed that he felt if members wanted to continue this discussion, then the meeting would need to move into private session. The Director of Growth reminded members at this point that of the two project updates they had received at this meeting, both were very different from the other, one was a regeneration project, the other a construction project therefore the frameworks used were needed to be suitable to the different needs of each project, the two projects were not the same.

The Chair advised members that this update was not about the rest of the building. Further attempts to discuss confidential elements of the project were made and the Chair took advice from the Group Head of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer who agreed that the line of discussion would be required to move into exempt business. There was no appetite from members to move into exempt business and therefore the discussion was moved on.

It was asked if the officer could provide more detailed on the list of potential temporary sites being considered for Arun Arts. It was confirmed that officers would be in a better position in a few weeks' time to provide more detail on this once the location and nature of these had been agreed with Arun Arts and the programme had been confirmed.

The Chair, with the agreement of the committee invited a non-committee member to speak where he stated that the Littlehampton project had detailed excellent consultation for the public, however, there had been limited public consultation for the Regis Centre/Alexandra Theatre project.

Members then noted the update provided.

757. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2022-2026 - QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL TO 31 DECEMBER 2022 [15 MINUTES]

The Group Head of Organisational Excellence advised members that the report detailed Quarter 3's performance. She advised that all the KPI's had been reported into all relevant committees and there were no questions for this committee to consider.

The Chair invited comment from members, where there were comments made regarding CP12, it was sad to see that there had been a slight increase in the number of missed refuse collections and this was unheard of. Were there any specific reasons as to why this had happened? It was confirmed that there had been some problems (breakdowns of vehicles) experienced, however the outlook was now much better that the new vehicles had been received. A further question was raised regarding CP42, occupied retail units in Bognor Regis, clarification was sought regarding the figures reported. The Director of Growth confirmed that these figures are reported on a 6 monthly basis. He confirmed that the 91% was calculated by a number of units occupied in a defined area and that figure was the result of the last check.

Subject to approval at the next Policy and Finance Committee meeting

526

Policy and Finance Committee - 7.03.23

758. WORK PROGRAMME [5 MINUTES]

The Committee were advised by the Chair that the first meeting of the committee in the new municipal year would receive its new work programme for the year 2023/24.

(The meeting concluded at 7.21 pm)