

ECONOMY COMMITTEE

26 July 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Cooper (Chair), Gunner (Vice-Chair), Dixon, Edwards, Northeast, Pendleton, Dr Walsh, Mrs Cooper (Substitute for Roberts), Smith (Substitute for Stanley) and Oppler (Substitute for Yeates)

Councillors Mrs Staniforth were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

Apologies: Councillors Roberts, Stanley and Yeates

181. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

182. MINUTES

Cllr Dixon raised an inaccuracy with minute 784 [Closure of Trisanto Development Corporation LTD], where it had been recorded that Cllr Yeates voted twice on the item, once against and once abstaining. The Chair confirmed that the Committee Manager had checked the recorded vote sheet and verified that Cllr Yeates had only voted once, that vote was recorded as an abstention and the minute would be corrected.

Then the minutes of the Economy meeting held on 29 March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

183. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions for this meeting.

184. MEETING START TIMES

It was proposed by Cllr Cooper and seconded by Cllr Gunner that the meeting start times be 6pm.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That its meeting start times be 6pm for the remainder of 2022/23

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185. CHANGING PLACES TOILETS IN ARUN DISTRICT

(Cllr Cooper & Mrs Cooper declared a personal interest in this item as Councillors of Rustington Parish Council. Cllr Northeast declared a personal interest in this item as a Littlehampton Town Councillor)

(Cllr Pendleton arrived at the meeting at 18:11pm)

The Director of Growth explained to members that the report before them was a technical overview of the delivery for the changing places toilets. He confirmed that the council had been successful with its bid and had just under £400,000 for the delivery of the toilets and confirmed it was looking to proceed with the locations detailed within the report.

The Chair then opened the debate and took questions from the committee where it was requested that the toilets be labelled as 'accessible' toilets rather than 'disabled' as there were a number of users who would benefit from being able to use these toilets without the fear of judgement from others. It was confirmed by the Director of Growth that he would take the suggestion back to the officers who would take this request into consideration at the appropriate time.

One member expressed his thanks to everyone involved in the process so far, however he wanted assurance that 6 toilets would be delivered and that there would not be any reason why the council would lose 2. It was confirmed that the funding had been specifically given for the 6 changing places toilets and that would be what was delivered.

The Chair and vice-chair expressed their thanks to the officers involved on the work completed and were pleased that these toilets were another good offering for the town residents and visitors.

The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Cooper and seconded by Cllr Edwards.

The Committee

RESOLVED

- 1) that the budget of £389.8k for the delivery of Changing Places Toilet (CPT) facilities including where relevant procurement and all associated works at 1 – Crown Yard Public Conveniences, Arundel, 2 – Wildfowl & Wetlands Centre, Arundel, 3 – Hotham Park, Bognor Regis, 4 – The Street, Rustington (Rustington Parish Council) be approved
- 2) Delegates Authority to the Group Head of Technical Services, to authorise, place orders for and enter into contract for the tendered CPT facilities with the most economically advantageous contractor(s) following the procurement exercise.

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

(Cllr Dr Walsh arrived at the meeting at 18:21pm)

In introducing his report, the Director of Growth stated that hopefully members have had the opportunity to have walked down the high street to see the works that had already been completed. He explained that in managing the budget of the project the council had applied a 'lean' management process. However, economically, the world is in a difficult place currently and that brings with it additional challenges when fulfilling a project such as this. He confirmed that when issues had arisen, they were flagged up and if they fall out of scope a review was undertaken in order to make a decision regarding continuing to deliver as planned or the council make the changes as needed. Turning to the report he explained that the report detailed some of the issues that had cropped up since the project started. He confirmed that the project was now estimated to cost an additional £250,000 but were not currently expecting any further overspend. To ensure a contingency, the report was also requesting for an additional £150,000 to be placed in reserve. In summing up he stated that some of the underground services had not been properly mapped previously. Until work had started we did not conclusively know what pipework and other services were beneath the pavements or what condition they were in. He then referred members to the recommendations in the report.

The Chair confirmed to members that the contact he had from traders raising issues or concerns had been dealt with swiftly and he thought the Town Centre was looking excellent from the work completed so far. He then opened up the debate and invited members to ask questions or make comment.

One member stated that he was a regular visitor of the Town Centre and he was pleased to report he had not had many negative comments made to him, however, he did state that given the very dry weather we'd had recently that the council needed to be mindful about washing the dirt away from the pavements. It was confirmed by the Director of Growth that built into the maintenance and upkeep of the town centre the pavements would receive a deep clean throughout the year.

Members then raised the issue of graffiti on the new street furniture that had appeared. The concern was that should the graffiti not be removed swiftly that this issue would get worse and that the purpose of the work to upgrade the area would be lost. It was confirmed that the graffiti had already been dealt with and removed. Discussion continued with suggestions made that a dedicated PCSO or Town Warden was needed in order to stop these acts of vandalism along with other more serious vandalism such as broken shop windows. It was felt that should actions not be taken to stamp out this behaviour that people visiting the area would be put off, damaging the tourism opportunities available to the area. The vice-chair confirmed that he had raised these

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very issues at the Housing & Wellbeing Committee meeting last week and had reached out to Detective Inspector Nick Bowman and the Police and Crim Commissioner Katy Bourne.

Moving the discussion on, the chair reminded member of the recommendations before them. A query regarding the junction of the high street and Arundel Road having been slimmed down was raised to understand why this action had been completed. It was confirmed that this was part of the original design document signed off by members and it was designed to create a loading bay on the southern side of the road.

It was asked if there was a plan to incorporate extra watering of the new trees that had been planted to ensure that they are maintained and cared for until the project is completed and the work to look after these trees is handed over to the council's parks team. It was confirmed that the contractor had upped the watering regime during the summer months.

Final comments were that members were pleased to have received the report with the extra spend detailed rather than finding out about the additional spend without having been involved.

The recommendations were proposed by Cllr Cooper and seconded by Cllr Dr Walsh.

The Committee

RESOLVED

- 1) Review the contents of the report regarding progress on the delivery of the public realm phases 2 & 3.
- 2) Approve the projected overspend on the project of £250k and £150k contingency sum (a total of £400k), to be funded from the creation of an earmarked reserve in 2021/22.

187. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair invited Cllr Edwards to address the committee with a work programme suggestion for members to consider. Cllr Edwards explained that he wanted to propose that a new extreme sports facility be considered for Bognor Regis. He talked members of the committee through the vision of this facility, where it could be located, who the facility would be available to and his reasons why Bognor Regis would benefit from a facility such as this.

The Chair advised members that this was put forward as a suggestion to be considered by the committee at the meeting. Members were not being asked to agree this as definite decision to take place. He confirmed that officer's workload would need

to be taken into consideration should members decide that they wish to see this item added to the work programme.

Turning to the debate there were mixed feelings across the committee, some were of the opinion that in presenting this suggestion to members it contained unprovable statements within the detail. Others were of the opinion that there could be some complications regarding the shared ownership issues with Butlins of the proposed site, as well as concern for where the funding for a project of this size would come from. It was worth asking officers to provide a report on the suggestion so that a more informed decision could be debated.

It was confirmed by the Director of Growth that a report could be produced that would effectively be a scoping report. It would outline the options around procurement, broad information of the feasibility and how resource challenges would be addressed.

Members then voted to add this item to their work programme and for officers to provide a report at a future meeting of the committee.

In turning to the work programme before the committee, disappointment was highlighted as there was still no record of when the committee would be receiving its performance report, as agreed by Full Council. It was confirmed by the Director of Growth and the Committee Manager that the meeting dates the reports would feed into had only recently been agreed by CMT and that the Economy Committee could expect to see these reports at their November 2022 and February 2023 meetings and that the Work Programme would be updated to reflect this by the committees next meeting in September.

The Committee then noted its work programme.

(The meeting concluded at 7.16 pm)