

ECONOMY COMMITTEE

27 September 2022 at 6.00 pm

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

Apologies: Councillors Edwards and Seex

288. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Stanley declared a Personal Interest in Item 7 [Bognor Regis Business Improvement District Proposal – Second Term] as an employee of a BID levy paying business.

289. MINUTES

The minutes of the Economy Committee meeting held on 26 July 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

290. 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.

291. 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 questions had been submitted. The question was asked by the Committee Manager on behalf of the member of the public and this was responded to be 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.

292. BUDGET PROCESS REPORT 2023-2024

The Interim Financial Services Manager provided members with an overview of the 2023/24 Budget Process as agreed by the Policy & Finance Committee at its 6 September 2022 meeting. He explained that the process is detail in section 3 of the report and appendix A and additional approved budget information has been appended in appendix B, however advised that the purpose of the report before members tonight was not to discuss the budget figures. Discussion today was purely on the budget process only.

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Members were then invited to make any comment or ask questions about the Budget process presented.

It was queried who would be conducting the zero-based budget reviews and when would these be reported to the individual Service Committees and then on to Policy & Finance Committee. It was confirmed that additional temporary resource had been employed to complete this work and the Service Committees would receive their individual budget review reports in January and early February 2023, depending on the dates of the individual committees meeting during this cycle of meetings, with any comments or recommendations from the service committees feeding into the Policy & Finance Committee scheduled to be held on 9 February 2023. Recommendations from this committee will then be fed into the Special Council Budget meeting scheduled to be held 1 March 2023.

The Committee noted the Budget Process for 2023/23 as outlined in the report.

293. BOGNOR REGIS BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT TERM 2 BALLOT

The Group Head of Economy provided members with an overview of her report and highlighted its purpose was to inform the committee the proposal to conduct a ballot in order to enter into another 5-year term. As set out in the report the BID supports a vibrant and attractive town centre. She explained that tangible examples of the positive impacts of the BID was the low business vacancy rates this compares favourably against national averages. In summing up she confirmed that the report also advised members of the council's role as the ballot holder and its statutory obligations.

The Chair thanked the Group Head of Economy and the team for the detailed report provided to the Committee. Members were then invited to make comments or ask questions a summary of which is below;

Early comments made were in support of the work that had been delivered by the BID in its first term. It was also commented by several members that the success it had seen over its first term was felt to be hinged on the work undertaken by Heather Allen and her 'can-do' attitude and continued support provided.

A query was raised regarding section 7 of the report, where it stated that where the council incurred costs in running the ballot, invoicing and collecting the levy these costs could be recharged to the BID, the question asked was had this been done. The officer confirmed that she would check and provide an answer to this question outside of the meeting.

Final comments made expressed the valuable role the BID had played over the course of its first term, with a reminder that during this term they had to adapt and respond in how they dealt with the impacts the pandemic presented them with. One member who worked closely with the BID not only in his role as a District Councillor but also as a Bognor Regis Town Councillor advised the Committee and officers that it should be aware and consider the risks that could be presented with should the vote not be successful and the importance of ensuring that a Plan B was also given thought.

The Chair agreed that all comments made had proven that the Committee was in support of the proposal in the report and all members were mindful of the implications of the potential risks that had been expressed. His final comments before putting the recommendation to the vote were to echo the comments made regarding Heather Allen's work and the huge role, she plays within the entire BID process.

The recommendation was then proposed by Councillor Gunner and seconded by Councillor Dixon.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

It supports the Bognor Regis BID Term 2 Ballot Proposal agreeing arrangements as described in the report regarding Arun District Council's statutory roles as Ballot Holder and Billing Authority

294. OUTSIDE BODIES - FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS

It was confirmed by the Committee Manager that in the absence of Councillor Edwards the Council's nominated representative for the Bognor Regis Regeneration Board (BRRB) update that had been provided within the agenda pack any question may need to be answered outside of this meeting.

Councillor Stanley expressed that he wanted to congratulate Councillor Edwards on his nomination and appointment as the new Chairman of the BRRB and extend his thanks to the outgoing Chairman for the work he had completed during his Chairmanship. He then asked if the Group Head of Economy was aware if Butlins and Landlinks would remain as members of the BRRB. She confirmed that it was her understanding that they would continue in their role of supporting the BRRB but she would check and confirm this outside of the meeting. It was then requested by Councillor Walsh that their support was crucial to the BRRB and could the officer ensure that confirmation of their continued support was obtained in writing.

295. WORK PROGRAMME

It was queried if a report would be coming forward to Committee regarding the districts empty retail premises. It was confirmed by the Vice-Chair and Leader of the Council that discussions had started to take place with the Regeneration Consultant who will be starting to review the Councils property plan and options that are available, therefore an update will be provided but currently it cannot be confirmed when.

A request was made for consideration to be given to bring forward the report on the Bognor Regis Arcade which was currently scheduled for the committees February 2023 meeting to its November 2022 meeting. Additionally, a request for an update report regarding the Toilet Block in Wick that is currently redundant and out of use for some time was requested. The Vice-Chair and Leader of the Council confirmed this

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was being looked at, discussions were ongoing with a number of members and officers. He did reiterate that there were a number of vacancies within the Property & Estates Team which are responsible for this work and that workload was under review pending successful appointments to these positions with the Council.

It was noted that the Coach and Lorry Park item was no longer detailed on the work programme and queried what this meant. It was confirmed that negotiations were taking place and were progressing, however a timeline on when the report would be delivered to the Committee was unclear. Therefore, the Vice-Chair and Leader of the Council confirmed he would come back to the members with an update. He reassured members that this matter had not gone away or been forgotten about.

In summing up the Chair confirmed and repeated that his view on reports to this committee was that they be brought at their soonest availability.

The Committee then noted its work programme for the remaining months of 2022/23.

(The meeting concluded at 6.29 pm)