

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

14 July 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Chace (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Bicknell, English, Goodheart, Huntley, Needs, Thurston, Warr and Worne

[Councillor English left the meeting during discussion of Minute 142 and was absent for the remainder of the items]

135. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Edwards and Pendleton.

136. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Goodheart declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Items 7, 8 and 10 as a Member of Bognor Regis Town Council.

Councillor Needs declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Items 8 and 10 as a Member of Bognor Regis Town Council.

Councillor Warr declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Items 10 as a Member of the Bognor Regis Beach Access Team.

137. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2022 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed at the end of the meeting.

138. 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

The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent matters for this meeting.

Environment Committee - 14.07.22

139. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

140. OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no updates from Members regarding Outside Bodies.

141. EXIT STRATEGY FOR WITHDRAWAL OF THE 1-2-3 FOOD WASTE & ABSORBENT HYGIENE PRODUCTS (AHP) COLLECTIONS

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager presented the report to the Committee. He explained the report sought Committee approval on the timing of the early withdrawal from the 1-2-3 Food Waste Collection Trial, due to the discontinuation of funding from West Sussex County Council (WSSCC). Following the Committee decision at the last meeting, which had been to retain a weekly residual service from black sacks until such time that the Government mandated food waste collections to all household, WSSCC through the Joint Project Board had questioned the added value of continuing the 1-2-3 collections in the trial area and had concluded that continuing the collections in the trial area would not present the best use of their Recycling Improvement Fund.

It was recommended that the trial continue until the end of September which would allow a coordinated exit strategy and appropriate resident communications. There was a financial implication which was noted in the report.

The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager stated that the trial had provided some significant learning and data which would be useful and could be applied to future roll-out of a food collection service when this was mandated in the future.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- Disappointment was expressed by Councillor Thurston, who wanted this to be recorded. Councillor Thurston felt the wrong decision had been made at the last meeting, and that this was a backwards step, she thanked the Officers for their work.
- It was asked whether the exit strategy had been drawn up. The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained the exit strategy would be drawn up after the Committee had made their decision.

- Clarification was sought around which budget the £35,000 would come from, which it was confirmed would only be required if Committee decided to retain the 1-2-3 trial until the end of January 2023.
- Clarification was sought on the Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) collection, which the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager confirmed was part of the trial and would be stopping.
- Further disappointment was expressed.
- Questions were asked regarding electric vehicles and seagull proof bags, which the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager would circulate information about outside of the meeting.
- It was stated the Council should press on with 1-2-3 collection as soon as possible.

The recommendations were Proposed by Councillor English and Seconded by Councillor Bicknell.

The Committee

RESOLVED – That

1. The withdrawal of the 1-2-3 collections to residents from the end of September 2022 be approved.
2. Approval be given to fund the remaining collection costs until the point from existing Neighbourhoods Group budgets.

142. OPTIONS FOR INTRODUCING FURTHER CONTROLS ON THE QUALITY OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

[Councillor English left the meeting during discussion of this Item]

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services presented the report to the Committee. He explained that at Full Council in February 2020 a Motion asked Officers to investigate means of improving the quality and standard of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within the District. At the Housing and Customer Services Working Group meeting on 5 November 2020 Members recommended to Cabinet to continue to research and gather further evidence to help establish whether additional HMO licensing or Selective Licensing of the private rented sector was justified. This decision was approved by Cabinet on 14 December 2020 and Officers instigated the process of procuring the services of a company to undertake the required additional research and provision of a supporting report.

Environment Committee - 14.07.22

This report provided a summary of the findings from the research undertaken and set out recommendations for additional controls that could be implemented to manage the quality of HMOs. The research supported the ability of the Council to introduce additional HMO licencing or Selective Licencing in three wards, which were Marine, River and Hotham. Data suggested there were issues of disrepair of houses, anti-social behaviour and deprivation in those wards. Selective Licencing would apply to the whole of the private rented sector, requiring landlords to obtain tenant references as the aim was to reduce anti-social behaviour. Additional HMO licencing would allow properties comprised of 2 or more households and 3 or 4 people to be licenced. In addition, any self-contained flats which were not fully building regulation compliant and in blocks where less than two thirds were owner-occupied would also fall within the additional HMO licencing regime. The benefits of introducing additional HMO licencing in the three Wards would be the requirement of certain amenity standards; to enable a fit and proper person check to be carried out on the Landlord; and to enable the council to undertake proactive inspections, a proportion of which were cost-recoverable under licencing fees. Introducing additional HMO licencing fit within the council's Vision. The recommendations were then explained to the Committee.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- Clarification was sought on the data, which was provided by the Group Head of Technical Services
- It was asked what would be considered 'appropriate action' in paragraph 1.19. The Senior Environmental Health Officer for Private Sector Housing explained the council already had detailed standards which sat behind the summarised sentence, which were not appended to the report but were available.
- Was additional HMO licencing expected to resolve issues of disrepair, deprivation and anti-social behaviour? The Group Head of Technical Services explained that the purpose of the licence was to increase the standard of HMOs within the District.
- It was asked whether the Committee would hear the result of the consultation, which it was confirmed they would.
- Clarification was requested regarding funding the additional staff and ongoing costs which was provided by the Group Head of Technical Services.
- Support was offered for the recommendations.
- It was suggested that HMOs could be required to provide adequate waste storage areas.
- One Member expressed the view that the number of HMOs in the area should be reduced.

The recommendations were Proposed by Councillor Bicknell and Seconded by Councillor Thurston.

The Committee

RESOLVED

1. That they agreed to instigating the consultation process subject to funding being approved for a proposed additional licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation for the wards Marine, Hotham and River, to cover privately rented properties occupied by three or four people making up two or more households and properties converted into self-contained flats that meet the definition of Section 257 HMOs at a cost of £40,000.

The Committee also

RECOMMEND TO THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE AND FULL COUNCIL

1. That a supplementary estimate of up to £40,000 for additional resources to support the consultation process required to implement the additional licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation be approved. This is a Band D Council Tax equivalent of 63p.

143. POTENTIAL INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF DESIGNATED BATHING WATERS IN ARUN DISTRICT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Engineering Services Manager presented this report to the Committee. He explained that since the report had been written the role of Director of Services had now been re-titled Director of Environment and Communities, so the recommendation was now slightly amended to reflect this change. The report sought authority to undertake the necessary investigation and survey work and then if appropriate to make representation to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), to increase the number of designated Bathing Waters in Arun District. The water sampling would be carried out by the Environment Agency (EA), so there would be no cost to Arun, and it would show the bathing water qualities at more points across the District, not just the six existing designated bathing water areas.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- Potential location of any new designated bathing waters. The Engineering Services Manager explained they were looking at West of the River Arun, potentially West Beach. The areas being looked at would be feasible in terms of facilities for users and landowners' agreement.
- It was felt important the EA sample the water for a broader picture.

Environment Committee - 14.07.22

- It was requested that a copy of the water sampling points be circulated to Members of the Committee, which the Engineering Services Manager agreed to do after the meeting.

The recommendations were Proposed by Councillor Worne and Seconded by Councillor Huntley.

The Committee

RESOLVED – That

1. Investigations, survey work and public consultation to ascertain whether or not any targeted beaches of the Arun District Council coastline, anticipated to meet the criteria for designating Bathing Waters, warrant a request to Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), to designate them as Bathing Waters under the Bathing Waters Regulation 2013, be approved.
2. The Director of Environment and Communities be authorised, in liaison with the Chair of Environment Committee to request that Defra considers designating any beaches found under 1 above to be suitable for designation.

144. KEYSTONE YOUTH CENTRE UPDATE

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained that the report was for the information of the Committee. He confirmed that the tenders had come in and were higher than budgeted for, so Littlehampton Town Council were examining options on that.

The Chair updated that it would be discussed at a Littlehampton Town Council Extraordinary Full Council Meeting next Thursday.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- It was asked where the additional funding would come from, which it was explained, would be for the Littlehampton Town Council to determine.
- Support was offered for this and it was hoped Arun would continue to support other youth projects around the District.

145. BOGNOR REGIS BEACH ACCESS WORKING PARTY - 06 JULY 2022

The Chair of the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party gave an update to the Committee. She explained that the survey results had been received, and there had been a great response to this. 588 people had completed the survey, and 4 members of the public had attended the second meeting of the Working Party to give verbal submissions. The evidence was now being looked at by Members of the Working Party and the Officers and a final report was due to come back to Environment Committee on November 17 2022.

It was asked where the location of the potential access would be. The Chair of the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party explained that there was no fixed idea of location yet as the evidence was still being assessed.

146. WORK PROGRAMME

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Environment and Climate Change introduced the Work Programme.

An update regarding the electricity supply at Place St Maur was requested. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained that they were waiting for the electricity supply to be connected, as the supplier were yet to provide the meter. Daily updates were being requested from the supplier. It was asked whether an update could be provided on whether this would be sufficient to power the ice rink. This would be circulated after the meeting.

It was asked whether an update on tree planting could be provided at the next meeting. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained that September would be too early for a tree planting update as it was too early in the season, but they would look at the November meeting.

The Work Programme was noted.

(The meeting concluded at 7.10 pm)