

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

14 November 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Wallsgrove (Chair), Worne (Vice-Chair), Blanchard-Cooper, P. Bower, Elkins, Greenway, Huntley, Madeley, Warr, Wiltshire and Tandy (Substitute for May)

Councillor Bicknell was also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

[The following Members were absent from the meeting during discussion for all or part of the mentioned Minuted Items:
Councillor Warr – 279 - 284]

273. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor May.

274. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Worne declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 8 as a Blue Badge holder.

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 8 as he had family and friends that were Blue Badge holders, confirming he did not believe his interest was prejudicial and that he would be approaching the item with an open mind.

Councillor Greenway declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 7 as a Member of West Sussex County Council (the Risk Management Authority for flooding); and a Personal Interest in agenda item 8 as a Member of West Sussex County Council (the Highway Authority).

Councillor Elkins declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 7 as a Member of West Sussex County Council

Councillor Wallsgrove declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 8 as a Blue Badge holder, confirming she did not believe her interest was prejudicial and that she would be approaching the item with an open mind.

275. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2024 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed after the meeting.

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276. 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.

277. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions had been submitted for this meeting.

278. GREENSPACE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT OVERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Matt Slorach (Operations Manager) and Iain Stockdale-Smith (Regional Director) from Tivoli.

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Parks and Cemeteries Manager presented the report, which provided an update in respect of the Council's Greenspace Management Contract over the past eighteen months. An audit undertaken by the Council's external auditors at Hampshire County Council in September 2024 for the contract, determined that there was a substantial assurance of governance, risk management and control in place for the contract. This was the highest level of assurance possible from this audit. He went onto explain that many key staff involved in the contract delivery and performance had been undertaking their roles for a considerable time, and almost all Tivoli staff lived in the district, which helped to promote pride of place in the contract delivery. Satisfaction levels for parks, open spaces and play areas was high with 75% of respondents of the Arun Residents Survey 2023 being either fairly satisfied or very satisfied. 90% were satisfied overall with the grounds maintenance service. The closest Local Government Association (LGA) comparison for satisfaction with grounds maintenance services for parks and greenspaces was 73%, putting the service higher than the national average. Quarter 1 was the first occasion since the start of the contract in January 2017 where Tivoli failed to meet the minimum contractual performance score of 66% over a quarter period. The average score was 63.94%, however the previous three months had been among the most challenging of the past 30 years.

The Operation Manager and Regional Director from Tivoli then delivered their presentation to Members [available to view on the Arun District Council Environment Committee web pages] which covered the following:

- About Tivoli
- Nurture Group
- Local Activity
- Tivoli's Values
- Sustainability Pillars
- Community Feedback

- Working in Collaboration
- Hive

Members (and a non-Committee Member given permission to speak) then took part in a question and answer session and the following points were raised:

- Several Members expressed their thanks to Tivoli for the presentation and the work being done by them.
- The Parks and Greenspaces Team were also praised for their work, and it was felt the Council were lucky to have the Officers within that team.
- It was asked what the synergy was between Tivoli and other contractors such as Biffa, particularly in relation to litter on the ground and who would collect this. The Environmental Services and Strategy Manager acknowledged there were opportunities for improvement and he would take this away and look into it.
- It was asked what the major challenges would be for Tivoli moving forward. The Regional Director from Tivoli explained that environmental changes had meant growth rates were significantly higher than three years earlier, so the grass needed to be cut earlier and later. For this reason, he felt they needed to change the way the contract was approached. Purchasing machinery had also been challenging due to non-availability, although this had now resolved.
- It was asked whether Tivoli and West Sussex County Council could sync their mowing schedules so the verges within and outside the pavement boundary were mown on the same day. Officers confirmed that for various reasons this would not realistically be a possibility.
- Tivoli were praised for their work in clearing one particular site.
- Confirmation was requested that if a job was not completed one day, it would be reassigned to another day. The Regional Director from Tivoli confirmed that was the case.
- It was asked how frequently an area was mown. The Parks and Cemeteries Manager explained the specification was based on performance not frequency, and sites received different amounts of cuts based on need.
- It was asked how deterioration of children's play equipment was dealt with. The Parks and Cemeteries Manager explained children's playgrounds were identified as high priority areas and any issues identified were often rectified within 24 hours. Members of the public were encouraged to report any issues to the Council.
- It was highlighted by one Member that Tivoli provided Arun's outdoor leisure, an area that never received complaints, and it was felt this was very positive and should be highlighted.
- It was asked whether there was anything Arun District Council (ADC) could do to support Tivoli increasing the number of apprenticeships they offered. The Regional Director from Tivoli would approach ADC for assistance if necessary.
- It was asked whether there was any benefit to engaging with Parish Councils regarding apprenticeships. Officers would look into this.

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The Committee noted the contents of the report and the presentation provided by the Council's incumbent contractor, Tivoli.

279. COASTAL ENGINEERS AND FLOOD PREVENTION ANNUAL SERVICE REPORT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager presented the report which primarily focused on Coast Protection works and the long-term investment strategy for the coastline. It set out the framework for managing the coastline by highlighting key strategic documents and how these documents informed investment decisions at a scheme level. The report did not go into detail regarding drainage as this had been covered in recent reports regarding the Arun Flood Forum. He explained the difference between Shoreline Management Plans and Coastal Defence Strategies, and how these fed into the Capital Investment Programme. Paragraph 4.18 listed the 7 pipeline projects. He drew Members' attention to Appendix D, photos of works being carried out. Arun were lucky to have in-house skilled operatives to carry out repair works, that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive. He also highlighted the Coastal Monitoring Programme outputs and the areas identified as part of the twice yearly laser scanning exercise.

Members (and a non-Committee Member given permission to speak) then took part in a question and answer session and the following points were raised:

- It was noted that the report stated that neither ADC nor the Environment Agency (EA) had a duty to protect from coastal erosion or coastal flooding. The Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager explained that as Arun was a coastal community, with significant development in the coastal plain developing all the way up to the coastline, ADC had a general duty of care.
- It was asked why ADC did not have a responsibility for Climping, as there was concern that if Climping flooded it would have a knock-on effect on the banks of the River Arun. The Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager explained the reason was that Climping was an area at risk of flooding and so was managed by the EA, whereas ADC managed reducing the risk of erosion.
- One Member had lots of questions and requested a walk-through of the seafront with the Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager in order to gain a better understanding. Other Members also expressed an interest in joining this, which the Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager would arrange.
- It was asked how much confidence Members should have that the projects could be delivered. The Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager explained that the money should be earmarked for projects already on the programme, although the timeframes may change if priorities changed. ADC had also previously established an earmarked reserve which would be used to partnership fund the programme.
- It was asked whether some of these projects should be added to the Planning Policy Community Investment Levy (CIL) funding investment study. Officers explained Arun currently held a reserve called the Community Flood Fund, to

partially partnership fund some of these schemes, although this would not cover the full costs. EA funding would be sought for projects involving high identified risks. Possible use of CIL funding would need to be discussed with the planning department.

The Committee noted the report.

280. VARIATION TO PARKING FEES AND PARKING SERVICE REVIEW

[Councillors Wallsgrove, Worne and Blanchard-Cooper re-declared their Personal Interests in this Item]

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services presented the report. The Off-Street Parking Strategy 2021-2026 set out that the Council would review the charges annually. Last year the Committee agreed to commission an independent review of the Council's parking service arrangements. Parking Matters were appointed and undertook that review, the recommendations of which were presented to Members at a briefing in October, where Members had the opportunity to ask questions to the consultants. Parking Matters' findings had informed the proposed revisions to the tariffs and tariff structures set out in the recommendations to Committee. He updated Members that recommendation F referred to section 4.20, not 4.17 as stated in the report. He then went onto explain the recommendations to Members.

The Chair felt it would be appropriate to vote on each of the recommendations separately. This was proposed by Councillor Worne and seconded by Councillor Bower, and upon taking the vote, APPROVED by Committee.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Worne and seconded by Councillor Wallsgrove.

The Chair then invited debate and Councillor Madeley proposed an amendment to recommendation J as follows (**additions shown in bold**):

j. Considers not introducing charges for the Shrubbs Field, **Links Avenue and Grassmere** car parks for the remainder of the political cycle i.e. not before May 2027

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Greenway, who hoped people would support it.

Upon returning to the proposer, Councillor Madeley hoped Members could support the amendment and felt very passionate about it. People should be encouraged into towns and villages, and Links Avenue and Grassmere car parks should remain free for the same reason that she felt Shrubbs Field should. Residents were not aware that parking machines may lead to charging, and she felt public consultation should be undertaken before this was considered.

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The Group Head of Technical Services explained that no decision had been taken that would lead to any charges in these car parks, and this amendment would confirm the position that these car parks would remain free of charge for the stated period.

Upon taking the vote, this amendment was CARRIED.

Returning to the debate on the substantive recommendations, one Member felt the extension of the hours of charging in Crown Yard car park from 8am – 6pm to 8am – 8pm should not be approved and asked whether this should be addressed by an amendment or voting against the Officer recommendation. Officers confirmed if Members did not agree with this recommendation they should vote against it. Other Members did not feel it would be fair to extend the hours of charging at Crown Yard car park, particularly as Arundel did not benefit from the 2 hour town centre free parking scheme.

Concern was expressed by some Members around the possibility of reducing free parking for blue badge holders to three hours. It was felt this would cause stress to blue badge holders and that it was not the right time to introduce charging. It was suggested that this recommendation either be removed or increased to more than three hours.

Some Members were concerned about the technology strategy (Appendix C), and the proposed move to cashless. The Group Head of Technical Services explained this was a direction of travel not defined by dates, but a monitoring exercise to see when the move would be acceptable. One Member stated that Members and Officers may take different views as to when this may become acceptable as it was subjective, so needed to be very carefully monitored. It was asked that Members be kept updated on this as the technology strategy was moving forward. The Group Head of Technical Services confirmed that he would ensure Members were kept updated regarding this.

Concern was expressed around recommendation h(i), as there was free parking on the highway close to the West Park car park, and it was feared more people may park on the road. The Group Head of Technical Services explained that the recommended change to the structure of fees were designed to avoid exactly that effect.

Members were not in support of delegating authority to the Group Head of Technical Services to increase or reduce the parking tariffs, and the view was expressed that Members' responsibility was to make the tough decisions on behalf of the residents.

One Member stated that the Parking Review was very useful, and they appreciated all the information and data being consolidated.

Support was offered for recommendation d and the tariff structure as set out in Option B.

Recommendation E was welcomed, and it was noted that this would actually reduce the charge for many stays within these car parks and make this a fairer structure.

Support was offered for recommendation g, creating two tiers (resident and non-resident) of town centre and seasonal parking permits and to separate town centre and seasonal parking permits between Littlehampton and Bognor Regis, and it was thought previous discounts were too high.

Members were in favour of the opportunity to explore the feasibility of using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).

The Group Head of Technical Services reminded Members of the comments made by the Section 151 Officer in the report, that the Council faced a significant financial challenge in addressing its structural budget deficit and one of the strategies it must adopt was to maximize its revenue from fees and charges. Ultimately the proposals in this report would increase its revenue stream from car parking fees and help to protect the provision of other services. He highlighted that Members needed to be aware that if the proposals were not approved, it would reduce this Council's ability to reduce its already sizeable structural budget deficit. Ultimately, this could result in service cuts and potential staff redundancies.

The Group Head of Technical Services suggested that Members consider making an amendment to recommendation f, to increase the amount of free parking for blue badge holders to 5 hours.

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper proposed that an amendment be made to recommendation f as follows (additions shown in **bold**, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

~~f. Agrees to introduce the option 3 changes to the Blue Badge parking policy as set out in section 4.17, with effect from 1 April 2025~~ **Agrees to limit free parking for blue badge holders to 5 hours**

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Worne, who suggested a change to it as follows:

f. Agrees to limit free parking for blue badge holders to 5 hours **and for this to be reviewed in 12 months time.**

The proposer of the amendment agreed to this addition, however after a short debate, the proposer, with the agreement of the seconder, withdrew the amendment.

The Committee Manager confirmed that approving the amended recommendation j would mean not introducing parking charges for the Shrubbs Field, Links Avenue and Grassmere car parks for the remainder of the political cycle, and if

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approved, the minutes would state that the Committee have agreed not to introduce such charges for this period.

A vote was then taken separately on each of the recommendations. Recommendation a, b, c, d, e, g, h(i), h (ii), j and k were APPROVED.

Recommendations f, h(iii) and i were NOT APPROVED as follows:

- f. Agrees to introduce the option 3 changes to the Blue Badge parking policy as set out in section 4.20, with effect from 1 April 2025 – NOT APPROVED
- h. Delegates to the Group Head of Technical Services to advertise, consider representation and determine the following proposed amendments to the Parking Order:
 - i. To extend the hours of charging in Crown Yard car park from 8am – 6pm to 8am – 8pm, with effect from 1 April 2025 - NOT APPROVED
- i. Delegates authority to the Group Head of Technical Services to either increase or reduce the parking tariffs in line with the Consumer Price Index +1%, with effect from 1 April annually, with all tariff increases to be rounded to 10p and £10 for permits. Any alternative proposals will be reported to the Committee for consideration - NOT APPROVED

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. The Technology Strategy (Appendix C) be agreed;
2. The Parking Service Delivery Strategy (Appendix D) be agreed;
3. The Parking Service Action Plan (Appendix E) be agreed;
4. It agrees to introduce the parking fee option B with effect from 1 April 2025;
5. It agrees to introduce the seasonal car park charging structure as set out in Appendix A with effect from 1 April 2025;
6. It agrees to create two tiers (resident and non-resident) of town centre and seasonal parking permits and to separate town centre and seasonal parking permits between Littlehampton and Bognor Regis;

7. Authority be delegated to the Group Head of Technical Services to advertise, consider representation and determine the following proposed amendments to the Parking Order:
 - ii. To agree the installation of a keypad to the machine located within West Park car park, with effect from 1 April 2025.
 - iii. To agree the charging structure as set out in Appendix A for West Park car park, with effect from 1 April 2025.
8. It agrees not to introduce charges for the Shrubbs Field, Links Avenue and Grassmere car parks for the remainder of the political cycle i.e. not before May 2027; and
9. It agrees to explore the feasibility of using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) within the Council's car parks, including by writing to government.

281. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2022-2026 - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2024 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Environment and Climate Change presented the report, which set out the performance of the Key Performance Indicators at Quarter 2 for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024. He reminded Members that at the Environment Committee meeting on 19 September 2024, a recommendation was made to Policy and Finance Committee to remove a number of KPIs from the list reported to Committee. These were CP37, CP38, CP39, CP40 which all relate to Building Control. At the Policy and Finance Committee meeting on 24 October the recommendation from the Environment Committee to remove these indicators was not approved. They were therefore reported, unchanged as previously, in the appendix.

The Chair then invited discussion and one Member raised CP37 – building regulation submissions processed within 5 weeks. It was felt ADC should try to encourage or assist those residents carrying out building works to get compliance in a timely manner. The report stated ADC were working to provide Building Control Management Support to another Council, and it was suggested that ADC should be prioritising contractors or those carrying out work in Arun. The Group Head of Technical Services explained there had been enormous amount of change to the building control regime, which essentially rendered CP37 redundant, however he pointed out that performance was only just outside the 15% tolerance for the target. All applications were progressed as quickly as possible, focusing on what was most important to customers, principally around delivering next day site visits. ADC had recently filled their long-term vacancy, and were in a unique position being fully staffed, as the average vacancies in this service were at around 40%. He was very happy that ADC was able to assist the neighbouring authority, and felt this would ultimately benefit ADC.

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Following this it was suggested by a Member that the KPI target may need to be reconsidered.

The report was noted.

282. BEACH ACCESS UPDATE

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager presented the report. He updated Committee on the process and outcome of the Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, which he felt was very productive and had gained lots of information. From this an action plan had been identified, which was shown in appendix B. He noted that there were multiple requests for provisions that already existed and so a communication package had been developed, which was shown in appendix C. Throughout the summer season the ramps at Gloucester Road and Blakes Road had been kept clear of shingle, which had been well received. As a result of the framework, some funding had been agreed by the Economy Committee, and it resolved that “a budget then be established representing 5% of the expected annual income from rental beach huts for the proposed 3-year term, for use towards the agreed beach access objectives at both Littlehampton and Bognor Regis.”

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Tandy and seconded by Councillor Worne.

The Chair invited debate on this item and Members thanked the Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager for all his work on this. It was a very informative report, and the funding from the Economy Committee was welcomed.

One Member had questions around the shared use of the ramps, and although welcomed the access to it for people with mobility requirements, felt it important that other users such as boats and jet-ski users, were still able to use the ramps as intended. She felt clear signage setting expectation was required. It was also felt important that people with mobility requirements were able to get off the ramp at the bottom. The Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager confirmed that he had been in contact with the sailing club, and they had been engaging with the process, attending the stakeholder workshop.

It was highlighted that one suggestion raised had been to remove one of the groyne to make accessibility easier, and it was felt this was a good idea as long as it did not cause an increase in flood or erosion risk.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1) the content of the report be noted;
- 2) the principles and agreed objectives (as shown in paragraph 4.3 of Appendix E) established by the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party be applied additionally to Littlehampton Beach.

283. OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no Outside Bodies update reports.

284. WORK PROGRAMME

At the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services presented the Work Programme.

It was asked that an update on the Cleansing Contract be provided. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change agreed to provide an update to Members.

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

(The meeting concluded at 8.19 pm)