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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

17 November 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Edwards (Chair), Chace (Vice-Chair), Bicknell, English, Goodheart, Madeley, Needs, Stanley (Substitute for Warr) and Wallsgrove

[Note: Councillor Wallsgrove was absent from the meeting for all or part of discussions at Minute Items 422 - 427]

422. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Huntley and Warr.

423. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Goodheart declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 10 as a Member of Bognor Regis Town Council.

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

424. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2022 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed at the end of the meeting.

425. 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.

426. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

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427. EAST HAMPSHIRE COMMERCIAL SERVICES ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager presented the report to the Committee. He explained that the purpose of the report was to seek the Committee's approval to extend the partnership agreement with East Hampshire Council Commercial Services, which provided a littering and dog fouling enforcement service at zero cost to the taxpayer. He highlighted paragraph 4.12, an update regarding the Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). The report also detailed a break to the service due to Covid-19, where patrols stopped in line with restrictions, however he noted that the Enforcement Officers were given alternative responsibilities during this period.

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

- It was noted that there was a cost to the public when additional litter bins were put in hotspot areas.
- Where should the public direct intelligence regarding hot spot areas? The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained people could get in touch directly with himself or Dan Cox, Cleansing Operations Manager.
- How much were the FPNs? Were these usually issued for large scale offences or singular items of litter? The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained the cost of an FPN was £60 if paid within the appropriate timescales, and these were usually issued for singular items of litter.
- Why was there a spike since May 2022? The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained there were usually more people out and about in the summer months and therefore the numbers of FPNs issued were usually higher.
- If this generated income, why would Arun not take this over themselves? The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained there was not huge profit generated from this service, it covered the baseline costs and East Hampshire were market leaders in the service and carried out the scheme very successfully.
- Was there an arrangement with local schools regarding the litter dropped by children? The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager thought this may have been done in the past, and could be something to look at reinvesting any income generated from the scheme into.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Chace and seconded by Councillor English.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That an extension to the existing agency agreement with East Hampshire Council Commercial Services for a period of up to 3 years in line with the principles as set out in the report, be supported.

428. SUNKEN GARDENS PROJECT, BOGNOR REGIS

[Councillor Needs declared a Personal Interest during discussion in this Item as a Member of Bognor Regis Town Council]

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Principal Landscape and Project Officer introduced the report to the Committee. She explained that two tenders had been received for the delivery of the Sunken Gardens scheme. They would usually expect more tenders, however contractors were being very selective around what they wanted to tender for in the current climate. Both tenders exceeded the previously approved works sum of £230k set out in the heads of terms for contract award. Approval was sought to increase this to £312k, which would still be within the approved £500k supplementary estimate. It was possible that the full £312k would not be required as this did include a contingency. The plan would be to commence work after Christmas, and was expected to take around 4 months to complete.

The Chair then invited questions from Members. Concern was expressed that Members did not get to see the tenders, and it was felt that it would be good to have a firmer idea of what would be eventually delivered, which could change from the initial artist impression shown to Members at a previous meeting.

Councillor Stanley then proposed an amendment to the Officer recommendation as follows (additions have been shown in **bold** with deletions shown using ~~strikethrough~~):

- 1) To approve an increase in value for the award of the construction contract up to a total cost of £312k **£500k** for the delivery of the Sunken Gardens scheme.
- 2) **Monthly updates would be delivered to all Members via email.**

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Worne.

The Chair then invited debate on the amendment and the following points were raised:

- There was concern around increasing the sum to £500k.
- There was concern that in order for the project to be delivered according to tender, the project may end up being a dampened down version of what was promised, however offering excess of the quote for the original project to be delivered was also not felt to be a good idea.
- One Member felt the additional money should be used to ensure all the required elements were included to a high standard, in particular the addition of a café. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained that the quotes provided by the contractors had been based on the design scheme published in February 2022 following the public consultation. There would be no requirement to spend money in excess of £312k.
- Some Members felt the contractors should be allowed to spend up to the full £500k in order to ensure the project was as good as it could be.

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Following the debate, at the request of Councillor Stanley a recorded vote was carried out for the first part of the amendment – part 1). Those voting for were Councillors Goodheart, Needs, Stanley, Wallsgrove and Worne. Those voting against were Councillors Bicknell, Chace, Edwards, English and Madeley. Upon this being tied, the Chair used his casting vote to vote against, and the vote was therefore declared LOST.

A vote was then taken on the second part of the amendment, with recommendation 1) reverting back to that of the original Officer recommendation as follows:

1) To approve an increase in value for the award of the construction contract up to a total cost of £312k for the delivery of the Sunken Gardens scheme.

2) Monthly updates would be delivered to all Members via email.

Following a vote, this amendment was confirmed as CARRIED.

Turning to the substantive, Members asked that the monthly update run concurrently and should include any agreed variations.

The substantive recommendation was Proposed by Councillor Stanley and Seconded by Councillor Bicknell.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1) an increase in value for the award of the construction contract up to a total cost of £312k for the delivery of the Sunken Gardens scheme be approved.

2) Monthly updates be delivered to all Members via email.

429. BERSTED COUNTRY PARK PROJECT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Principal Landscape and Project Officer introduced the report to the Committee. The report provided detail on the project to be undertaken in Bersted to create a country park and sought approval for the scope of the project. The Council was procuring the services of a landscape consultant to advise on and produce a masterplan for public consultation.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session, summarised below.

One Member had various concerns and said that Bersted Brooks was currently a nature reserve and turning it into a country park would be completely different. He felt consultation should have taken place with the relevant community groups prior to getting to this stage, to establish whether it was a good idea from an environmental perspective. There was concern as to whether sustainability had been considered; how the access would be improved; and the impact of anti-social behaviour that the report suggested may increase in the area. The Chair explained that these were all good points, but the project needed to be scoped out before consultation could take place, and it was then that the answers to these points would be looked at. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained they were aware of the huge habitat potential and this along with other environmental factors, would be respected in the proposals going forward. It may be that certain areas would be off-limits to the public and set aside for wildlife entirely. Full consultation would take place, first with stakeholders then with the wider public.

Consideration should be given to how the country park would be made accessible for everyone whilst working in harmony with nature. The access getting in and out would need to be improved and transport links should be considered.

It was felt the area should not be urbanised at all, and car travel to the site should be kept to a minimum. A minibus to transport people to the site may provide a solution to this.

Other Members agreed that the project needed to be scoped prior to consultation taking place.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Bicknell and seconded by Councillor Goodheart.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the scope of the Bersted Country Park project, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.

430. PARKING SERVICES REVIEW

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services introduced the report to the Committee. He introduced the Interim Parking Services Manager to Committee, who was also in attendance to help answer questions from Members. He explained The Council's car parks were important assets for directly contributing to the delivery of the Council's Vision aims, and indirectly through generating revenue to support delivery of other Council services. This report set out a proposal to commission a review of the Council's off-street parking services, which would be carried out by external consultants using existing resources to make

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recommendations on how to obtain best value from these assets. He highlighted paragraphs 4.5-4.18, which was the proposed scope, and he continued to go through each one. The recommendations from the proposed review would be reported back to the Environment Committee for consideration and implementation.

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

- Clarification was sought on some of the wording used in the report, which was provided by the Group Head of Technical Services.
- It was asked whether another report would be brought back to the Committee for the final scope of the review to be presented. The Group Head of Technical Services confirmed the scope was set out in this report.
- There was concern about trying to increase the revenue generated from car parks during a recession.
- It was felt that trying to predict how demand would change over the next 15 years would be a challenge.
- One Member felt it was clear which car parks were under-used and over-used, and a review was unnecessary.
- It was felt this was not the time to spend money on such a review due to the cost of living crisis.
- In what timeframe would the review take place, and would regular updates be provided to Members? The Group Head of Technical Services predicted this would take around 3 months to complete, and a report would be brought back to the Environment Committee.
- A breakdown of the figures was requested, such as how much car parks cost to run and how much income was generated from these. The Group Head of Technical Services would provide an update to Members outside of the meeting.
- It was thought Fitzleet Car park was under-used. A Member of the Committee had previously suggested that improved signage should be installed. It was requested that this be looked at by Officers.
- It was suggested that a Park and Ride scheme be looked into by Officers.
- Support was offered for alternatives to increasing more cars and looking at schemes such as Park and Ride.
- Would electric charging points be included in the review? Consideration should be given to making sure these were accessible for everyone. The Chair explained that the largest electric vehicle charging point project in Europe was currently taking place in the area.

The following recommendation was proposed by Councillor Chace and seconded by Councillor Edwards:

- 1) that a Parking Services Review be commissioned, and;
- 2) the scope of the Parking Services Review (as set out in paragraphs 4.5 – 4.18)

Upon taking the vote, this was LOST and therefore the Committee RESOLVED NOT TO commission a Parking Services Review.

431. TREE PLANTING STRATEGY UPDATE

[During discussion of this item Councillor English explained why he felt he did not need to declare a Personal Interest in the Item as a Member of Felpham Parish Council. He did not feel his interest was any greater than any other Felpham resident.]

[Councillor Goodheart re-declared his interest in this Item]

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager presented the report to the Committee. He explained the report provided an update for year one of the Council's adopted Tree Planting Strategy and proposals for year 2, which was on target.

The Chair issued thanks to everyone that had been involved with this. Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- Support was offered for this report, and the amount of trees being planted in the area.
- One Member felt more trees should be planted in Yapton, Ford and Climping. The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager believed the Council were about to donate some trees to Yapton Parish Council. He would update relevant Members about this outside the meeting.
- It was asked whether more trees would be planted in West Park. The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained that some trees had already been planted there and when deciding where to plant trees they were required to think of how the space was used.
- It was felt existing trees needed to be supported as well as new trees being planted.
- Support was offered for the Parish Trees Scheme initiative.
- There was concern expressed for the use of whips unless there was sufficient budget and plans in place to nurture and care for them.

The Committee noted the report.

432. VIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL COSTS RELATING TO COMBINED CLEANSING SERVICES CONTRACT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Environmental Services & Strategy Manager presented the report to the Committee. He explained that due to rising national inflation, supply chain and wage pressures within the waste industry and collections sector, an agreed pay settlement between the Council's contractor Biffa and the GMB Union in August 2022 averted the threat of summer holiday strike action for waste services in Arun. The result was that a virement from inflation contingency budget was required for

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this financial year to meet the increased costs of the Combined Cleansing Services Contract. This ensured that this local workforce were paid within market rates, and put the contract in a stronger, more sustainable position going forward. Whilst Members were not required to approve this as the proposed virement was within delegation levels assigned to the Group Head of Finance, it was important to bring this report to Members' attentions so they were aware of inflationary pressure.

The Chair then invited Member questions. It was asked whether the Council's costs may increase if another pay increase was requested by BIFFA next year. The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained that this was a 2 year pay deal, so the figures in the report factored in the pay increase for year 2.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Bicknell and seconded by Councillor Edwards.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That a virement of £269k from the inflationary pressure reserve, to cover in year costs associated with rising inflationary costs and the recent nationally negotiated pay deal for Biffa staff on the Combined Cleansing Services Contract, be noted.

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

The Chair confirmed that the report was an information paper with no recommendations for the Committee to consider.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions as summarised below.

CP12 – There were occasions when the green waste bin had not been collected and it was thought BIFFA had confirmed they would not refund customers, but would make a donation to the community instead. Was there any update on this donation? The Environmental Services & Strategy Manager explained the delays collecting the green waste bins were due to driver shortages at the time. It had been agreed that as part of an offer to compensate residents, BIFFA would collect additional bags left out by those residents.

Members then noted the report.

434. OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no updates from Members regarding Outside Bodies.

435. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

(The meeting concluded at 8.01 pm)

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