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159

## ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

7 September 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Blanchard-Cooper, Mrs Bower, Brooks, Greenway, Madeley, Warr, Wiltshire, Birch (Substitute for Wallsgrove), O'Neill (Substitute for May), Stanley (Substitute for Worne) and Turner (Substitute for Elkins)

Councillors Goodheart and Oppler were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

### 219. WELCOME

The Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) explained that he was opening the meeting as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee were unable to be in attendance. He explained the first business would therefore be for the Committee to appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair for the evening. He welcomed Councillor Stanley, who was substituting for Councillor Worne; Councillor Birch, who was substituting for Councillor Wallsgrove; Councillor O'Neill, who was substituting for Councillor May; and Councillor Turner who was substituting for Councillor Elkins.

### 220. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained that as stated in Part 5, Section 2, 3.1 (i) of the Constitution, the Committee needed to 'appoint a person to preside if the Chair or Vice Chair are not present'.

Councillor Stanley proposed that Councillor Birch Chair the meeting, which was seconded by Councillor Wiltshire.

Following a vote, this was declared CARRIED, and it was confirmed that Councillor Birch would Chair the meeting.

Councillor Wiltshire proposed that Councillor O'Neill should act as Vice-Chair for the meeting, which was seconded by Councillor Stanley.

Following a vote, this was declared CARRIED, and it was confirmed that Councillor O'Neill would act as Vice-Chair for the meeting.

### 221. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Wallsgrove, Worne, May and Elkins.

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222. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

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

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 10 as a Member of Littlehampton Town Council.

Councillor O'Neill declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 10 as a Member of Littlehampton Town Council.

Councillor Wiltshire declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 10 as a Member of Littlehampton Town Council.

223. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed at the end of the meeting.

224. 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.

225. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed two questions had been submitted, which are briefly summarised below:

- 1-2 From Joanne Hains to the Chair of the Environment Committee, regarding Bersted Brook Park.

*(A schedule of the full question asked and the response provided can be found on the [Environment Committee Public Question Web page](#))*

The Chair then drew Public Question Time to a close.

226. BUDGET 2024/25 PROCESS

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Interim Financial Services Manager presented the report to the Committee. The report provided a summary of the budget process for 2024/25. He highlighted the key dates in 3.7 of the report, and the Budget Process 2024/25 flowchart in Appendix A.

The Chair then invited questions. Councillor Turner confirmed that prior to the meeting he had raised with the Group Head of Technical Services the state of the car park behind the Bluebird Café in Ferring and the Rife River, which was in disrepair and needed urgent maintenance to improve it. He requested this be noted in the Minutes.

The Committee noted the Budget process for 2024/25 as outlined in the report.

227. QUARTER 1 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Interim Financial Services Manager presented the report to the Committee. He updated that there was an error in the report in table 1, and the line regarding Bus Shelters and Street Nameplates, should read an outturn of £210k, not £10k, so this was a nil variance.

The report set out in detail the Committee's Revenue and Capital programme budget performance projections to the 31 March 2024. The Interim Financial Services Manager highlighted Table 1 which detailed the 2023/24 forecast revenue budget outturn as at Quarter 1, which anticipated a minor overspend of £3,000; and Table 2 which detailed the 2023/24 forecast capital programme outturn as at Quarter 1 and showed an anticipated underspend of £200,000, which would be carried forward into the following financial year.

The Chair then invited questions and it was asked what the reason was for the slippage of £200k regarding the Skate Park project detailed in 3.4. The Interim Financial Services Manager would provide a written response to Members after the meeting.

The Committee noted the report.

228. Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI'S) WHICH FORM PART OF THE COUNCIL'S VISION 2022-2026

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services introduced the report to Committee. The report set out the performance of the Key Performance Indicators at Quarter 1 for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023.

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The Chair then invited questions and it was asked whether there was an update on the surveyor vacancy shown at CP39. The Group Head of Technical Services explained a temporary administrator had been appointed to deal with the vacancy and the ill health within the team. A market supplement proposal had been developed for consideration, to try and address the position regarding the surveyor vacancy.

The Committee noted the report.

## 229. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS FOR DOGS FOR ADOPTION

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Environmental Health Team Manager presented the report to Committee. The report sought to update Committee on the outcome of the public consultation process on the renewal of the Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) for the control of dogs following the report brought to Committee in June. He explained the PSPOs covered Fouling of Land by Dogs; Dogs on Leads; Dogs Exclusions; and Dogs on Lead by Direction. The results of the consultation had been provided in appendix 2, which showed overall support for the suggested actions. The recommendations were to renew the PSPOs for a further three years from November 2023 with amendments to The Dogs on Leads schedule to include a further three areas, and to delegate authority to the Council's Legal Services Team to seal the PSPOs.

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

- It was felt positive that there was roughly an equal split of feedback from both dog owners and people without dogs, and that dog owners were supportive of the recommendations.
- What was the process for dealing with specific feedback such as dog fouling in certain areas? The Environmental Health Team Manager explained that this feedback would be disseminated to the relevant departments to take action as required.
- Would dogs still be allowed in the majority of Hotham Park? The Environmental Health Team Manager confirmed dogs would still be allowed in the majority of the park.
- It was suggested that an additional section in the report, showing how the specific feedback had been addressed by Officers, would have been beneficial.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Blanchard-Cooper and seconded by Councillor Greenway.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. The renewal of the existing PSPOs for a further three years with effect from November 2023 be approved; with amendment to the Schedule within The Dogs on Leads PSPO to include the further three areas:
  - (i) Public Water play areas (fenced and unfenced) including Place St Maur, Bognor Regis
  - (ii) Hotham Park Discovery Garden
  - (iii) West Beach Board Walk
2. Authority be given to the Council's Legal Services Team to seal the PSPOs as above in recommendation 1.

230. TWO HOUR TOWN CENTRE PARKING SCHEMES

*[Councillor Blanchard-Cooper re-declared his Personal Interest as a Member of Littlehampton Town Council during discussion of this item]*

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services introduced the report to Committee. He explained that there were currently two town centre 2 hour free parking schemes in operation in the District, which both expired at the end of 2023. The purpose of these parking schemes was to support footfall in the town centres of Littlehampton and Bognor Regis. Both schemes currently used a cardboard clock disc.

In Littlehampton Arun made available 3 car parks and forwent car parking revenue from those 349 parking spaces. Littlehampton Town Council made a contribution to Arun of £28500 per annum towards this loss of revenue. Littlehampton Traders Partnership Ltd had been contributing £6,600 per annum, however were to be dissolved as they had been unable to collect the contributions from traders and owed the Council £14000 in outstanding contributions. Approximately 30,000 discs were produced and distributed to retailers each year at a cost of £4,500 per annum. The discs were given free of charge to drivers.

In Bognor Regis Arun made available 3 car parks and forwent car parking revenue from those 605 parking spaces. Bognor Regis Town Council made a contribution to Arun of £21000 per annum towards this loss of revenue. Bognor Regis Business Improvement District (BID) contributed £5000. Around 25,000 discs were produced and distributed to retailers each year by the BID at a cost of around £35-40K per annum. The discs were sold by the BID to businesses for £1.60, and the discs were retailed at £2 equating to gross profit for retailing businesses in total of around £10000 per annum.

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There were limitations of the current scheme, which included misuse as cardboard discs were impractical to enforce. Some clocks were moved forward once the initial 2 hour free period had expired leading to further lost revenue to Arun; The cardboard disc scheme provided the Council with no data on use of the scheme. This meant there was no data on how much these schemes cost the Council to operate. If each disc obtained by a driver each year was used for just 1 hour on one occasion, taking account of the contributions from partners, the schemes cost Arun £28K per annum. If each disc was used on average once per month for 1 hour, the schemes cost Arun £935,500 every year. This lack of cost information was clearly unsatisfactory.

The proposal within the report would address these limitations. It was proposed to continue to operate two, 2 hour free parking schemes in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton. Arun would operate these schemes by moving to a virtual permit using software and the MiPermit app it already used successfully for all other types of parking permits. Arun would sell cardboard discs alongside the virtual permit during 2024 as a transition year. If agreement could not be reached with Town Councils, who, along with the BID were not in favour of the proposal (their responses had been circulated to the Committee) the purchase price would be £3 for an annual permit. It was recommended that a working group would be established to steer the transition to virtual only schemes from January 2025 to provide assurance that the needs of elderly drivers would be adequately met. It was also recommended that the Littlehampton Traders Partnership Ltd debt of £14000 be written off.

The Group Head of Technical Services concluded by explaining the proposed virtual permit scheme would lower operating costs; did not rely on contributions from or administration by other organisations; would stop the malpractice of moving the disc clocks forward; would provide detailed usage information which would inform the Council regarding costs of operating the scheme and allow Committee to make informed decisions in the future.

The Chair invited questions or comments from Members. Councillor Stanley spoke on the Item explaining that he understood the aims of the report, and thanked Officers for this. However he was aware that both Littlehampton and Bognor Regis Town Councils, and also Bognor Regis BID had sent in strong representations, and he had concerns around the app only scheme. It was a delicate time for town centres and both Littlehampton and Bognor Regis town centres were in a state of flux. The disc scheme had provided a lifeline to the town centres through the pandemic and had supported residents during the cost of living crisis. Bognor Regis BID had raised valid points regarding the ability of the vulnerable and elderly to access and pay for the scheme if they were not able to pay by cash. He then proposed an amendment to the recommendations as follows (additions have been shown in **bold** and deletions in ~~strikethrough~~):

2.1 That Committee delegate authority to the Group Head of Technical Services to implement a further 2 hour free town centre virtual parking permit scheme administered by Arun District Council effective 1 January 2024 in Bognor Regis **for 2 years** and, to enter into and implement any further agreement with Bognor Regis Town Council and **Bognor Regis BID**, to make any necessary changes to Arun

District Council's Parking Orders and to take any other actions necessary to enable the scheme to take effect. ~~The scheme will include virtual permits and cardboard discs in 2024 before moving to virtual permits only from 1 January 2025.~~ **This scheme will include virtual permits alongside the existing cardboard disc scheme.**

- 2.2 That Committee delegate authority to the Group Head of Technical Services to implement a further 2 hour free town centre virtual parking permit scheme administered by Arun District Council effective 1 January 2024 in Littlehampton **for 2 years** and, to enter into and implement any further agreement with Littlehampton Town Council and **Littlehampton Traders**, to make any necessary changes to Arun District Council's Parking Orders and to take any other actions necessary to enable the scheme to take effect. ~~The scheme will include virtual permits and cardboard discs in 2024 before moving to virtual permits only from 1 January 2025.~~ **This scheme will include virtual permits alongside a cardboard disc scheme with the same parameters as that operating in Bognor Regis.**
- 2.3 **That Committee establishes a working party to comprehensively review the free parking scheme and report its recommendations to the Committee as soon as possible. The membership of the working party shall be made up of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee plus three other Committee Members who are also not town councillors, two named representatives from each of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton Town Councils, a named representative of the Bognor Regis Business Improvement District and a named representative of Littlehampton Traders. Only Arun District Council Councillors will have voting rights and substitutions are not permissible.**
- 2.4 That Committee approves the write-off of the balance of £14,770 that remains due from the Littlehampton Traders Partnership Ltd in financial contributions to Arun District Council.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Wiltshire.

Upon the invitation of the Chair, Members (and a non-Committee Member given permission to speak by the Committee, then took part in a debate which is summarised as follows:

- Support was offered for the amendment. Any changes needed to be accessible, and it was felt the amendment would ensure this.
- It was asked whether any adjustments to contributions had been made to reflect the fact that parts of St Martin's car park had been unavailable due to the Public Realm Project and the Covid Centre. The Group Head of Technical Services confirmed that there had been no adjustments to the contributions as a consequence of the reduced amount of parking spaces available.
- Further support was offered for the amendment.

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- It was stated that Arun were not necessarily losing money from the disc scheme. People that were using this, may not visit the town centres and use the car parks if the scheme were not available.
- It was suggested that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) should be used, which it was felt would provide clear evidence to ensure the car parks were being managed successfully.
- The Chair stated that the app would be user-friendly, and it would facilitate users paying for and adding additional time onto their parking allowance while they were out and about. The Group Head of Technical Services explained they would be able to monitor how often the virtual permit was used. He explained the use of the scheme would not be solely reliant on an app, and there would also be a telephone number users could ring.
- It was felt other technological solutions should be investigated such as Vehicle Management Systems (VMS). The Group Head of Technical Services explained that a report would be coming to Committee in November proposing that a review be undertaken to identify technological solutions. This proposal had already been put to Committee last year.
- It was felt the scheme needed to work for the whole District, and it was important that money was not solely spent in certain areas.
- The purpose of the scheme was to keep the footfall in both town centres high, which it was felt should be the key motivation for the Committee going forward.
- It was felt the report should have acknowledged and thanked the work of the partners facilitating the scheme.
- Some Members looked forward to using the app, however it was agreed the disc system should continue at present. When this did change it should be communicated well to residents.

During the above debate, it was noted that it would not be possible for each of the Committee Members that would make up the Working Party to not also be Bognor Regis or Littlehampton Town Councillors, as the Working Party would need to be politically proportionate and too many Members of the Committee were also Members of those Town Councils. It was suggested this be removed from the amendment in 2.3. This was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the amendment. Amendment 2.3 was therefore altered to:

**2.3 That Committee establishes a working party to comprehensively review the free parking scheme and report its recommendations to the Committee as soon as possible. The membership of the working party shall be made up of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee plus three other Committee Members ~~who are also not town councillors~~, two named representatives from each of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton Town Councils, a named representative of the Bognor Regis Business Improvement District and a named representative of Littlehampton Traders. Only Arun District Council Councillors will have voting rights and substitutions are not permissible.**



Following a vote, the amendment was declared CARRIED.

Following on from the previous amendment, the Director of Growth and Interim CEO suggested an additional amendment in the form of an additional recommendation, and asked that Members give consideration to proposing and seconding this as follows:

**2.5 In 2024 the Bognor Regis BID be permitted to sell to the general public and distribute to businesses for resale at face value cardboard discs procured by Arun District Council. All sales are to be accounted for and any excess income received over and above an agreed handling fee (as agreed in writing before any discs are distributed or sold by the Bognor Regis BID) shall be paid over to Arun District Council. All unsold discs are to be returned to Arun District Council for accounting purposes.**

The Director of Growth and Interim CEO went on to say that this would help the Council to be as transparent as possible around the sums of money generated in relation to the disc system. He explained it only referred to Bognor Regis as the proposal was that at Littlehampton the disc would be provided by the Council rather than a third party. A question-and-answer session then took place as follows:

- There was concern it would appear that Arun did not trust their partners to run the scheme. The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained this suggestion was about being transparent, and all information provided would be beneficial.
- It was asked why Littlehampton traders couldn't continue to sell the discs. The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained that the Littlehampton Traders Partnership Ltd were in a hiatus and were not in a position to deal with the financial element involved.
- There was concern that Littlehampton would suffer if the discs were not available to purchase in Littlehampton. The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained that following the amendment, Officers would need to look at how the discs would be distributed in Littlehampton, and whether there would be other options in addition to the Civic Centre.
- Clarification was sought on the financial element of the production of discs and whether Bognor Regis BID would be required to hand back any unused discs to Arun. The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained it was important that a handling fee be agreed with Bognor Regis BID, factoring in how much they were spending on the scheme in order that their costs be covered. The excess income would then be returned to Arun, alongside any unsold discs. The process should be transparent.

The suggested amendment of 2.5 was then proposed by Councillor Bower and seconded by Councillor Madeley. Debate on the amendment commenced as follows:

- Clarification was sought on why this was necessary. The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained it was about being transparent around the costs

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involved in making and distributing the discs and what happened to the excess income.

- It was asked whether Bognor Regis BID already provided any such information. The Group Head of Technical Services explained that limited information was provided but this was not as comprehensive as suggested in the amendment.
- It was stated that the surplus income was currently invested by Arun's partners back into the town centres. The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained that if excess income was being invested, it should be an explicit and conscious decision of the Council, not a by-product of the process.
- It was suggested that the audit trail could be something for the Working Party to consider.
- Clarification was sought on how Bognor Regis BID would be saving £5000. The Group Head of Technical Services explained that the proposal was for contributions from the Bognor Regis BID to cease, which would be a saving of £5000 for them.
- What would happen if there was not a surplus from the scheme at all, and maybe even a deficit? The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained he did not believe there would be a deficit, however full transparency would ensure Arun were aware of the figures.
- If some discs were missing, would it be Bognor Regis BID or the shopkeepers that were accountable for this? The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained there would be conversations with Bognor Regis BID to understand what had occurred, as in any audit when discrepancies were found.

The Chair suggested that the amendment be re-worded as she felt it was very rigid, and it was something the Working Party should be involved in. The following wording was suggested:

**2.5 Any Agreement between Arun District Council and Bognor Regis BID should have an audit trail as agreed by the two of them.**

This wording was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the amendment. Following a vote, the amendment was declared CARRIED.

For clarity, the Director of Growth and Interim CEO read out the substantive recommendations. He also explained that the Working Party would be politically proportionate, and the 5 Arun District Council Members from the Environment Committee would consist of 2 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Green Party and 1 Liberal Democrats Members. If Committee agreed the Chair and Vice-Chair formed part of the Working Party, the other Membership would be made up of 1 Labour and 2 Conservative Members, and would be agreed by Group Leaders.

Following the invitation of the Chair, a question and answer session on the substantive recommendations then took place as follows:

- Recommendation 2.3 mentioned a named representative from Littlehampton traders to be included in the Working Party membership, but it was asked how this would work if the Littlehampton Traders Partnership Ltd would no longer exist. The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained the representative would be one of the Littlehampton traders, and Officers would seek to identify somebody happy to sit on the Working Party and represent the traders.
- It was asked why the free parking on the app could only be used once per day. The Group Head of Technical Services explained the intention was to support visits to the town centres, but there should be a limit on the frequency this was used, just as there was for the duration.
- Could users automatically renew on the app? Or would they have to manually renew each year? The Group Head of Technical Services confirmed that users could set their profile to auto-renew each year.
- It was asked whether the wording of recommendation 2.1 removed the chance of a cardboard scheme continuing to operate from January 2024. The Director of Growth and Interim CEO explained that this would not be the case as in the last line of the recommendation it stated 'This scheme will include virtual permits alongside the existing cardboard disc scheme'.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Greenway and seconded by Councillor Stanley.

#### The Committee

RESOLVED that

- 1 Authority be delegated to the Group Head of Technical Services to implement a further 2 hour free town centre virtual parking permit scheme administered by Arun District Council effective 1 January 2024 in Bognor Regis and, to enter into and implement any further agreement with Bognor Regis Town Council and Bognor Regis Business Improvement District, to make any necessary changes to the Arun District Council's Parking Orders and to take any other actions necessary to enable the scheme to take effect. This scheme will include virtual permits alongside the existing cardboard disc scheme.
- 2 Authority be delegated to the Group Head of Technical Services to implement a further 2 hour free town centre virtual parking permit scheme administered by Arun District Council effective 1 January 2024 in Littlehampton and, to enter into and implement any further agreement with Littlehampton Town Council and Littlehampton Traders, to make any necessary changes to the Arun District Council's Parking Orders and to take any other actions necessary to enable the scheme to take effect. This

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scheme will include virtual permits alongside a cardboard disc scheme with the same parameters as that operating in Bognor Regis.

- 3 A Working Party be established to comprehensively review the free parking scheme and report its recommendations to the Committee as soon as possible. The membership of the Working Party shall be made up of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee plus three other Committee Members, two named representatives from each of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton Town Councils, a named representative of the Bognor Regis Business Improvement District and a named representative of Littlehampton traders. Only Arun District Council Councillors will have voting rights and substitutions are not permissible.
- 4 The write-off of the balance of £14,770, that remains due from the Littlehampton Traders Partnership Ltd in financial contributions to Arun District Council, be approved.
- 5 Any Agreement between Arun District Council and Bognor Regis BID should have an audit trail as agreed by the two of them.

#### 231. OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Wiltshire gave an update on The Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group (LGA Coastal SIG).

(A copy of this report *can be found on the* [Environment Committee Public Question Web page](#))

#### 232. WORK PROGRAMME

The Group Head of Technical Services presented the Work Programme to the Committee. He explained that a report on Bersted Brooks Park and a Budget Monitoring Report would be added onto the Work Programme for the November meeting.

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

(The meeting concluded at 7.55 pm)